



## Nazarbayev Hosts Poroshenko, Then Putin; Situation in Ukraine Features on Both Agendas



### Kazakh, Ukrainian Presidents Discuss Trade, Int'l Issues in Astana

By Malika Orazgalieva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev met Oct. 9 with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko during the latter's official visit to the nation. The parties discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in the spheres of trade, economy, the coal industry, agriculture, transport and logistics. The two leaders exchanged views on topical international issues, including the situation in southeastern Ukraine and

implementing the Minsk agreements. Nazarbayev noted Poroshenko's official visit will contribute to improving economic cooperation and will allow the countries to "synchronise watches" on regional and international matters. "We have a full understanding on many issues. During the upcoming meetings of the interstate commission, all key areas will be worked out in detail," he said.

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### Putin's State Visit Reconfirms Kazakh-Russian Strategic Partnership

By Malika Rustem

ASTANA – Russian President Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to Kazakhstan Oct. 15 at the invitation of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. The two leaders met in the Akorda Presidential Residence, participating in one-on-one and extended-format sessions. Nazarbayev noted that he and Putin regularly "coordinate positions" and try to quickly find solutions to issues of bilateral relations in various areas of cooperation, reported the Akorda press service.

The Kazakh President also mentioned the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit on Oct. 16, and added that the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is expanding and acquiring respect and credibility in the international arena. "I think we are on the right track," he said. The sides recalled their recent meeting in Sochi, where they discussed the main areas of their bilateral relationship.

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## EAEU Leaders Discuss Economic Policy, Agree to Open Free Trade Talks with Israel

By Aiman Turebekova

BURABAI – The leaders of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) met Oct. 16 at a hotel in the Kazakh resort area to discuss pressing issues facing the fledgling organisation. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev hosted his colleagues Serzh Sargsyan of Armenia, Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus, Almazbek Atambayev of Kyrgyzstan and Vladimir Putin of Russia for discussions on further integration within the union, international issues and the strengthening of cooperation with other countries. Following the meeting, the parties signed documents defining

the economic development of the EAEU in the near future. Particularly, President Lukashenko announced that 16 issues were on the agenda and all of them were accepted at the meeting. Participants signed two documents: "The main directions of the international activity of the EAEU for 2015-2016" and "Approaches to the development of trade and economic cooperation with key partners of the EAEU in the medium term." Moreover, the leaders of the EAEU adopted a package of documents regarding Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its relation to the EAEU.

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## CIS Summit in Burabai Addresses Security Challenges

By Aiman Turebekova

BURABAI – President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev chaired a meeting of the Heads of State Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Burabai, Kazakhstan, on Oct. 16, which focused intensively on security challenges such as terrorism. Seven foreign heads of state flew to Kazakhstan to attend the meeting: President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev, President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon and President of Uzbekistan Islam Ka-

rimov. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova Andrei Galbur and Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan Satlyk Satlykov represented their countries, while Ukraine sent a charge d'affaires from its Astana embassy. Opening the meeting, the President of Kazakhstan congratulated Lukashenko on his victory in Belarus's recent presidential elections, as well as Atambayev on the successful holding of parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan. Nazarbayev noted that Kazakhstan, since the founding of the CIS, has consistently advocated for increasing multilateral cooperation among the countries and deep integration in key areas of cooperation.

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## Kazakhstan Becomes Major Supplier of Uranium to U.S., Production Set to Grow Further

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Kazakhstan became the leading supplier of uranium last year for the 100 nuclear power reactors operating in the United States, providing 5,443 tonnes (12 million pounds) of the 24,176 tonnes (53.3 million pounds) purchased by reactor owners and operators, according to an Oct. 5 report by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). The nation's total volume of the share

amounted to 23 percent, almost double compared to 2013, when Kazakhstan supplied nearly 3,000 tonnes (6.5 million pounds). The numbers address the diversification of purchases pursued by American energy companies, and fulfilling 23 percent of market demand has allowed Kazakhstan to rank as a leading uranium supplier. "Speaking about the coverage of the U.S. market, it is necessary to understand that Kazakh-origin uranium is supplied to the American market both by the Kazatomprom

[national atomic] company and its joint venture partners in our country," a representative of Kazatomprom explained to this reporter, asking not to be identified as he was not authorised to speak on the subject. "The supply of Kazakh uranium to the U.S. market by large traders that have contracts with U.S. energy companies is also not ruled out." Over the past two years, the average prices for Kazakh uranium have been lower than those of other major supplying countries – \$44.47 per pound in 2014 com-

pared with the overall weighted-average price of \$46.65, according to the EIA. Uranium production in Kazakhstan has more than tripled since 2007. The country became the world's leading producer in 2009, surpassing Canada, according to the EIA. Kazatomprom, created by the Kazakh government in 1997 in an effort to boost the country's nuclear industry, controls uranium production and exports.

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## In Historic First, Kazakhstan Launches Domestic Rail Production

By Nazgul Zhenis

ASTANA – The first rollout of domestic rail products in Kazakhstan took place Oct. 16 at the Aktobe Rail and Section Works

(ARBZ), reported the press service of Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ), the national railway company. Beginning domestic rail production is a significant event in the history of the country's industrial development, it noted.

The enterprise is the first of its kind within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the press release explained. During December's national teleconference "New industrialisation of Kazakhstan: results of 2014 and of the first five-

year plan" with the participation of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the green light was given to launch the first phase of rail production. Construction of the plant and the process of running the assembly line were completed in the shortest possible time and the company has initiated production of finished products, stated the release. The ceremonial launching was attended by KTZ President Askar Mamin, Siemens SpA head Giuseppe Ferrario, Kazakh Minister for Investment and Development Asset Issekeshov, Aktobe region Akim (Governor) Berdibek Saparbayev, Kyrgyzstan Minister of Transport and Communications Erkinbek Malabaev and Azerbaijan Railways Chairman Javid Gurbanov. Deputies of Kazakhstan's Parliament, heads of CIS and Baltic country railway administrations and representatives of railroad products enterprises were also present for the event.

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## GGG Triumphs



Gennady Golovkin celebrates his win with his coach Abel Sanchez at the Madison Square Garden on Oct. 17. See full story on Page B7.

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## NATION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

# Astana Implements Additional 'Smart' Projects, Seeks Entry into Top 50 'Smart' Cities

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Akim (Mayor) of Astana Adilbek Dzhaksybekov launched a series of "Smart" projects in July. Smart Astana project includes several directions, such as Smart Clinics, Smart Schools, Smart Street Lighting and Smart Payments.

A Smart Clinic has been already implemented in Public Health Clinic No. 4, but there is now also one working in Clinic No. 10, reported Astana.gov.kz, the city administration's official website, on Oct. 14.

"In order to avoid queuing, to create comfortable conditions, to regulate the flow of adults and children, as well as to exclude their intersection at the reception and near specialists' offices, we introduced the Triage System, which allows hospitals to receive visitors depending on the type of their treatment and on the severity of their condition. These passages do not overlap with each other, which is essential for the maintenance of the sanitary-epidemiological status of the facility and for the preven-



tion of the spread of various diseases," said the head of the Astana

Health Department Yerik Baizhusnussov.

Public Health Clinic No. 10 has an outpatient surgery centre with

modern equipment, which allows it to offer a wide range of surgical procedures on an outpatient basis, such as paediatric, adult surgery, urology, gynaecology and others. The clinic also plans to introduce cosmetic surgery.

The innovations will also include the introduction in 2016 of electronic medical records for patients in all medical organisations to eliminate paperwork and increase convenience.

According to city administration's official website, the concept of Smart Astana was created to improve the quality of life of the population of the capital. The implementation of information systems will significantly improve communication within health organisations. Some of them already have electronic queue systems, online registry to visit doctors and electronic medical records.

Smart Astana was created and is being implemented by Astana Innovations to create conditions and infrastructure to become one of the top 50 Smart cities of the world. All Smart projects are being implemented by investors without the involvement of public funds.

## NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) supported an Oct. 5-7 training seminar for law-enforcement officers on best practices and international standards in policing in multi-ethnic societies in Aktobe, the OSCE reports. Co-organised by the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Internal Affairs, with financial support from the Swiss Embassy in Kazakhstan and the Convivenza International Centre for Minorities in Switzerland, the training gathered some 20 senior police officers from around the country as well as local representatives from Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan and the Prosecutor General's Office to learn about the importance of police sensitivity to inter-ethnic relations and how to build capacity in dealing with inter-ethnic relations within police structures.

Representatives of Eco Mangystau, Eco Museum and CINEST from Karaganda as well as Arnika from the Czech Republic visited local communities in Mangystau Oblast during the first week of October to consult with them on ways to solve environmental problems, the Prague Post reported. The organisations are part of a Small Grants Programme that allows citizens to submit projects to solve environmental problems and receive financing of 1,500 to 3,000 euros to implement them. Arnika expert Martin Skalsky said the group was pleasantly surprised by the number of civic initiatives that received funding in this round as compared to the previous selection round. Four local groups supported within the first round are now running their campaigns, covering mitigating the impact of landfills, teaching citizens to compost, improving sewage and waste management and stopping illegal wildlife trade.

A Kazakh film and an Iranian film have won the top prize at this year's Busan International Film festival. "Immortal," by Iranian director Hadi Mohaghegh and "Walnut Tree" by Kazakhstan's Erlan Nurmukhambetov took home the New Currents award for first- and second-time filmmakers, Yahoo! News reports. "Walnut Tree" explores human relationships within a small community and "proves how humour, kindness, and forgiveness connect us all," according to New Currents jury president and veteran Taiwanese filmmaker Sylvia Chang.

Kazakhstan's flagship air carrier, Air Astana, will resume direct services to Dubai from Astana International Airport on Oct. 25, Air Transport World Online reports. The service, which is resuming after a five-year hiatus, will run four times per week. The service was originally established in 2002 but was halted in 2010 after the United Arab Emirates restricted the number of carriers it allowed certain countries, including Kazakhstan. Air Astana was reinstated as a European Aviation Safety Agency-certified airline in 2015, and was granted International Air Transport Association Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) certification in May of this year.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan has chaired a meeting of the country's Security Council, during which Kazakhstan's participation in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as well as geopolitical issues were discussed, the Akorda reports. First Deputy Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev reported on developments in the EAEU to the meeting, which was also attended by members of the government and the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs. Nazarbayev stressed the opportunities the EAEU presents, despite challenging market conditions. However, he said measures are needed to foster Kazakhstan's continued development, he said. He drew attention to the steps being taken to protect and support domestic producers and increase their competitiveness. The need for equal and fair conditions for competition in the EAEU was stressed. At the meeting of the Security Council, issues in the Middle East and Afghanistan were discussed, with Nazarbayev noting the need for threat prevention.

# Cell Phone Users to Change Operators While Keeping Their Numbers Starting in 2016

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – A draft law under consideration in the Senate of Parliament would allow mobile phone users in Kazakhstan to keep their phone numbers even when they change service providers.

The draft law "On changes to some legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan concerning informatisation" will reinforce the competitive activity of mobile operators, decreasing prices for mobile communication services beginning Jan. 1, 2016. It will also improve the security of critically important objects of communication infrastructure.

"The introduction of mobile telephone numbers' transfer option will give the opportunity to choose any mobile operator for users on their own, keeping their numbers. It is supposed that this change will reinforce the competitive activity of mobile operators, decrease prices for mobile communication

services, while users won't need to use several sim cards. The Communication, Informatisation and Information Committee of the Ministry for Investments and Development created a centralised database of mobile telephone users

## The draft law will reinforce the competitive activity of mobile operators, decreasing prices for mobile communication services beginning Jan. 1, 2016.

and today mobile operators are upgrading and testing their networks," said a representative of the committee.

The bill was approved in its second reading by the Mazhilis (lower chamber of Parliament) and specifies tightened control of furnished mobile communication services by an authorised body that is yet to be created. The proposed body will monitor mobile operators to ensure that they meet certain quality standards, do not provide ser-

vice without contracts, provide full coverage in the areas they are required to cover and allow numbers to be transferred between providers.

The draft law will also solve problems of information security

and measures, which are taken by state bodies to protect the information and personal data of Kazakhstan citizens.

Such definitions as "critically important objects of communication infrastructure" were introduced in the draft law for the first time. The operation of the most important communication objects is lifesaving because any malfunction or breakdown can lead to an emergency, social and/or technology-related disaster or sufficient negative consequences for

defence, security, foreign affairs, specific fields of economy, infrastructure of the state or human life support.

Also, common standards for information and communication technologies have been developed. All critically important state electronic resources and systems and critically important objects of communication infrastructure will correspond to the standards. The draft law was sent to the Senate of Parliament for review and approval.

# Kazakhstan Becomes Major Supplier of Uranium to U.S., Production Set to Grow Further

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By working with international companies to encourage investment in Kazakh mining projects, the company sought to increase domestic uranium production capacity and also worked to expand the country's uranium export markets, noted the EIA statement. The country's sole nuclear power reactor, which began operation in 1972, was closed in 1999.

"Kazakhstan's ability to export uranium increased after the U.S. International Trade Administration terminated the 1992 antidumping investigation on uranium from Kazakhstan and lifted restrictions on the sale of uranium from Kazakhstan to the United States in 1999," reported the EIA.

In related news, Kazatomprom Managing Director for the Nuclear Fuel Cycle Sergey Poltoratsky said Kazakhstan's known uranium

reserves will last for about 80-100 years, Kazinform reported, adding that this estimate does not include assessments of any future explorations.

Speaking at a meeting of the "Expert" club in Astana on Oct. 8, he noted that Kazatomprom is already the leading natural uranium producer in the world, satisfying about 35-40 percent of global demand, and will increase the production of uranium by the end of 2015.

The company's uranium production is regulated by contractual obligations, he explained. "We complete obligations prescribed in the contract. By the end of 2015, Kazakhstan will slightly increase uranium production. Last year uranium output reached 22,827 tonnes; this year's production will be about 23,000 tonnes. The mines are reaching their designed production capacities," he said.

# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan's national railway company, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, will build a 1 million 20-foot-equivalent unit container terminal in Klaipeda, Lithuania, JOC.com reports. Klaipeda has one of the largest ports on the Baltic Sea. The project is to be commissioned in the middle of 2016 and is intended to tap into the growing container rail volume between Asia and Europe. The new terminal will be Kazakhstan Temir Zholy's second terminal in the Klaipeda seaport – the company opened its first intermodal container terminal, Klaipeda West Gate, there in June with local real estate developer V. Paulius & Associates Real Estate, a local real estate developer. Kazakhstan is currently developing a variety of transit and logistics projects to become the transit hub of Central Asia.

Kazakhstan and Iran are eager to expand their trade ties, according to Kaznex Invest Almaty Office Director Sabit Narbayev. The Tehran Times reports that Narbayev told Vice Chairman of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture for International Affairs Ali-Akbar Farazi as much in a meeting on Oct. 12 when the two discussed incentives Kazakhstan could offer Iranian investors. Farazi was in Astana as part of an Iranian trade delegation including Agriculture Minister of Iran Mahmoud Hojjati, who on Oct. 4 co-chaired a meeting of the Kazakhstan-Iran Joint Economic Committee with Kazakh Minister of Investments and Development Asset Issekeshev.

Director of Dubai Customs Ahmed Mahboob Musabih recently met Consul General of Kazakhstan in Dubai and the Northern Emirates Arman Issagaliyev, along with CEO of DC World and Director of External Relations at Dubai Customs Faisal Eissa Lutfi, the Albabwa website reports. The meeting covered possibilities for cooperation in economic and trade relations between Dubai and the UAE in general and Kazakhstan. Issagaliyev expressed Kazakhstan's desire to establish partnerships with Dubai in trade and customs. He also invited Chairman of DP World and Chairman of Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem and Musabih to attend and be part of Kazakhstan's national day celebrations.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has officially confirmed its participation in EXPO 2017, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports. As confirmation, Director-General of IRENA Adnan Amin handed EXPO 2017 Commissioner Rupil Zhoshybayev a corresponding letter addressed to Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov at a meeting held in Abu Dhabi on Oct. 12. During the visit, bilateral relations in politics, trade, the economy and investment were discussed, and an agreement on signing a protocol on mutual visa-free travel was reached.

Director of the Centre for Judicial Examination of the Ministry of Justice of Kazakhstan Isidor Borchashvili and Chairman of the State Committee of Judicial Examinations of Belarus Andrey Shved have signed the cooperation agreement in the area of judicial examinations, BNews reported on Oct. 15. The document was signed during the "East-West: Partnership in Judicial Examination" conference. The parties said the agreement will be an incentive for a stronger strategic partnership between the countries and a stronger legal basis for relations.

Kazakhstan's banks have received more than 230,000 applications to compensate for the differences in foreign exchange on retail deposits in tenge due to the transition to the country's new monetary policy, Bnews reports, citing Director of the Financial Services Consumers Rights Protection Department of the National Bank of Kazakhstan Alexander Terentyev. President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev had called for the development of a compensation mechanism for term deposits opened by Aug. 18. Investors may apply for re-registration of deposits until Dec. 1.

## Kazakh, Ukrainian Presidents Discuss Trade, International Issues in Astana

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Poroshenko noted the presence of numerous political, economic, cultural, humanitarian and social ties between the countries. He also emphasised his interest in intensifying all-round collaboration and gave Nazarbayev high marks for his efforts to help maintain peace in Ukraine.

"I appreciate your intention to develop political dialogue between our two countries based on trust and mutual respect. I am convinced that we have to realise the potential of Kazakh-Ukrainian relations. Kazakhstan's commitment to the fundamental principles of international law and its high role in international organisations are of great importance for me and all Ukrainians," he said.

"Both sides support the peaceful resolution of any conflicts, since

there is no alternative to it," Nazarbayev said at the joint briefing after the talks. "Overall, we are satisfied with the execution of the Minsk agreements. Our country will continue providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. We will also transfer funds through the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Chernobyl 'Shelter' Fund."

"Kazakhstan wishes peace to Ukraine so that the people of that country continue their development in calm and security," he added.

Poroshenko also congratulated Nazarbayev on the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate, pointing out the importance of the event as a symbol of statehood and the deep historic roots of the country.

During the meeting, Nazarbayev also stressed the deep historical connections between Kazakhstan and Ukraine, highlighting the fact

that more than 300,000 Kazakh citizens of Ukrainian descent live in the country and are an integral part of society.

After the meeting, the presidents attended the Kazakh-Ukrainian Business Forum, where a road map of cooperation between the two countries for 2015-2017 was signed.

"The document identifies the priority areas of cooperation and specific practical steps that will be taken by our governments to ensure that this cooperation is mutually beneficial. First of all is cooperation in the fuel and energy sector, infrastructure development and engineering, including the agriculture and space industry," said Poroshenko.

One concrete agreement relates to the supply of coal from Kazakhstan for Ukrainian power stations.

"We appreciate the interest of business circles of Ukraine to-

wards mutually-beneficial cooperation with our country. Despite the decline in turnover and investment activity, I believe that the potential of Kazakh-Ukrainian relations has not run dry," said Kazakh First Deputy Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev at the forum.

"The fact that the forum is attended by the presidents of our countries shows the importance of establishing strong economic contacts between Kazakhstan and Ukraine. I believe that the potential of Kazakh-Ukrainian relations is not fully used. Therefore, we are open to international cooperation, regardless of the political or economic situation," he added.

Sagintayev noted that 400 companies supported by Ukrainian capital operate in Kazakhstan. At the same time, there are more than 120 Kazakh-Ukrainian joint ventures working in Ukraine.

"In the near future, Kazakhstan will strive to position itself as a big business, transit and logistics hub of Central Asia. Kazakhstan can become a platform for delivery of Ukrainian products to Central Asia and China. Therefore, I invite the Ukrainian side to use the new transport and logistics opportunities of Kazakhstan," noted Nazarbayev in his remarks at the forum.

It was also announced during the visit that the monument to Taras Shevchenko, Ukraine's most famous poet, who was exiled to Kazakhstan during Tsarist rule, would be erected in Astana.

"We hope Kiev will see the unveiling of a monument to Abai which will be another link between the two countries," Nazarbayev said at the joint press briefing.

During his visit to Astana, Poroshenko also met with Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov on Oct. 8. The sides discussed a wide range of issues of bilateral cooperation, including in the trade and economic spheres, energy and agro-industrial complexes.

## EAEU Leaders Discuss Economic Policy

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"This agreement will come into force on completion of ratification procedures in the parliaments of all EAEU member countries, which should be completed by Dec. 15, 2015," said Viktor Khristenko, chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission, at his briefing for journalists following the talks.

He also commented that the

EAEU Board (Collegium) from Feb. 1, 2016, will be composed of 10 members (ministers), meaning two people from each of the five member countries. It was decided that the next chairman of the EAEU board will be former Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan.

Also, the main directions of economic policy coordination up to 2030 were accepted during the

meeting, which is, according to Khristenko, "extremely important in today's turbulence in the global economy."

He also emphasised that the leaders of the EAEU are monitoring the situation in the world in terms of the formation of new alliances, particularly the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Transatlantic Alliance. The parties decided to closely cooperate with these two

new organisations. In addition, the leaders foresee a key role for China's Silk Road Economic Belt, which would be, according to the chairman of the EAEU Board, one of the most important areas in terms of building the external outreach of the union.

Khristenko also announced that the EUAU leaders agreed to launch free-trade agreement talks with Israel in addition to negotia-

tions already going on with Egypt, India and Iran. Earlier, on May 29, 2015, Vietnam became the first country to sign a free trade agreement with the EAEU.

The EAEU is an economic union created by a treaty signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia in Astana on May 29, 2014. The union went into effect in January 2015. During 2015, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joined the union. The EAEU treaty outlines four freedoms of movement of goods, services, capital and workforce.

## CIS Summit in Bishkek Addresses Security Challenges

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"The CIS is a unique platform bringing together 11 post-Soviet states. In such meetings, we can openly share our views on the most pressing issues of international politics and discuss any questions of our multilateral cooperation. I am confident that today's event will contribute significantly to the development of the CIS," said Nazarbayev in the beginning of half day of talks.

Lukashenko began by awarding Nazarbayev the Order of Friend-

ship of Peoples of Belarus, saying that "the Kazakh President implements his wealth of experience and makes a contribution to the strengthening of cooperation between our countries."

The agenda of the CIS summit included 17 issues. The heads of state adopted joint statements to mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, the 30th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident and a joint statement on combating international terrorism. Nazarbayev repeated his proposal to create an international network

under the auspices of the UN in order to combat terrorism effectively.

The CIS heads of state also adopted a CIS cooperation programme in strengthening border security for 2016-2020. The programme envisages a wide range of measures aimed at improving protection of the CIS external borders, coordinating activity of border agencies and improving the legal framework.

Important decisions were taken to strengthen humanitarian cooperation, including the legal frame-

work of migration processes in the CIS and the implementation of the interstate programme CIS Capitals of Culture. Turkmenistan's Dashoguz was announced the CIS Capital of Culture for 2016.

"The signed documents have a great practical value, and their adoption will contribute to deepening the cooperation between our countries," said the Kazakh President upon conclusion.

In December 1991, the leaders of 11 former Soviet republics – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova,

Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan – signed the Alma-Ata Protocol establishing the CIS. Georgia joined two years later, in December 1993; in 2009, Georgia withdrew from the CIS.

The CIS has coordinating powers in the realm of trade, finance, lawmaking and security. Eight of the CIS member states participate in the CIS Free Trade Area, and five of these form the Eurasian Economic Union. In addition, six member states participate in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

## Putin's State Visit Reconfirms Kazakh-Russian Strategic Partnership

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Relevant documents were prepared for signing as a result of the previous talks

"I would also like to add that our relations are developing on the basis of the treaty 'On good neighbourliness and alliance in the 21st century.' The alliance is secured by the Collective Security Treaty and economically by statutory documents of the EAEU. Kazakhstan was, is and will always be the closest and most reliable neighbour of the Russian Federation. It is in the fundamental interests of the people of Kazakhstan," said Nazarbayev.

In turn, Putin said there is no need to categorise Russian-Kazakh relations.

"It is not just a trustworthy partnership, but it is also a friendly relationship in every sense of the word. Kazakhstan is one of our largest trading partners. Today, almost 6,000 Russian companies are working in Kazakhstan. A large amount of investment has been accumulated in dollar equivalents. Your brainchild, the Eurasian Economic Union, is actively developing and creating conditions for the effective development of our economies. We see that many of our partners are willing to cooperate with the EAEU in different formats," he emphasised.

A number of agreements were signed during the extended meeting. The documents included the amendments to a 1998 agreement between Kazakhstan and Russia on the delimitation of the northern

part of the Caspian Sea that would help the two governments exercise sovereign rights for subsoil use and proceed with joint exploitation of the Tsentralnoye and Hvalynskoye oil deposits.

The sides also inked agreements between the governments on cooperation in the field of aviation search and rescue and the coordination procedure during rocket delivery from the Dombrovskiy missile launching area using land within Kazakhstan's territory as an area for separating parts. An agreement on expanding strategic partnership between the car manufacturers Bipek Avto Kazakhstan and AvtoVAZ was signed in their presence.

The presidents exchanged views on cooperation between Moscow and Astana in the framework of the EAEU, as well as touched upon the situation in Syria and Ukraine. Particular attention was paid to building up trade and economic cooperation.

"We understand the need to take coordinated measures both on the national level and the level of the EAEU," Nazarbayev said at the joint press briefing with Putin following their talks. "We should use reserves to mitigate consequences of economic problems. The Eurasian Economic Union can exist in the conditions of equality of all of its members; representatives of our countries should work in the interests of all countries and in accordance with the common economic position."

In turn, Putin noted Russian investments in Kazakhstan's economy exceeded \$9 billion, while the bulk of Kazakh oil transit to global mar-

kets goes through Russian territory. In addition, attention was drawn to the presence of large-scale joint projects in the field of high-tech industry, agriculture and energy.

"Kazakhstan and Russia have a long and ... successful experience of cooperation and friendship. Each of our meetings [results in] achievement of the specific agreement on implementation of joint projects and promotion of new directions of cooperation on mutually beneficial conditions," said Nazarbayev.

A set of specific measures to mitigate the effects of world economic problems was defined, he added.

"[The measures concern] transit of Russian gas and oil to China through Kazakhstan, joint development of the Caspian oil fields of Tsentralnoye and Hvalynskoye, cooperation in the coal industry and transit using a new road along the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf. Separately, we discussed completion of the Western Europe-Western China [transcontinental road] project, as well as the conditions of cooperation in the infrastructure sector. These areas have great potential for further development of partnership," said the Kazakh President.

Separately, Nazarbayev focused on the prospects of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

"Russia has traditionally been a major trade partner of Kazakhstan. The average annual volume of trade is about \$21 billion. Russian companies are involved in the development of Kazakhstan's largest hydrocarbon deposits. In Kazakh-

stan, more than 5,600 enterprises actively work with Russian capital. Today, within the framework of the Industrialisation Map of Kazakhstan, 20 major joint investment projects have been implemented, four are in the implementation stage and three are being planned [to implement] in the future," he said.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for Kazakhstan and Russia to voice their opinions on the most important problems of the international agenda.

"We discussed the implementation of the Minsk agreements and the issues of building up interaction within the framework of global and regional organisations, including [responsibility for providing] stability and security in the Central Asian region. For this matter, the situation in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq is important. Together, we discussed the current situation in the region. Today, we hear active speculation around the confrontation between the Shia and Sunnis; however, these talks have nothing to do with reality. The current situation in Syria is a common threat for all of us, especially for Central Asia. In this regard, we support the idea of a forum on Islam against terrorism," said the Kazakh President.

The head of state expressed confidence that the arrangements reached will serve to further strengthen cooperation between the two countries on a range of interaction in the spirit of friendship and mutually-beneficial partnership. Nazarbayev ended by thanking the Russian side for its active assistance in organising the third space

expedition in Kazakhstan's history with the participation of cosmonaut Aidyn Aimbetov.

In turn, the Russian president described negotiations as very "constructive" and "fruitful."

"Traditionally, the negotiations went smoothly and in a friendly atmosphere. We exchanged views in all areas of bilateral relations, focusing on such areas as trade, investment, energy, transport, space and peaceful use of nuclear energy," he said.

The Russian president touched upon key areas of cooperation between the two countries and specific projects implemented together. The Russian-Kazakh intergovernmental commission is called upon to give additional impetus to the expansion of cooperation in the trade and economic sphere which will take place before the end of this year, he said.

Putin also noted expansion of humanitarian cooperation. In particular, he noted the number of scholarships in the 2014-2015 academic year for Kazakh citizens to study in Russia has doubled.

"During the talks, we discussed the keys to regional and world problems. We have informed [President] Nazarbayev on the main outcomes of the meeting of the Normandy Four in Paris, as well as on the situation in Syria," he said.

The Russian president also expressed support for his Kazakh counterpart's initiative to join efforts by all countries, especially those with Muslim majorities, in the fight against terrorism.

# ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## National Bank: State Loan Office Starts Operations

By Kseniya Voronina

The new State Loan Office, which is a nonprofit subsidiary of the National Bank of Kazakhstan, started operations on Oct. 1 and is now accepting personal credit reports as part of its lending operations.

Since April last year, the organisation has been preparing to bring information systems in line with Kazakh laws concerning the operation of loan offices in the country.

According to the press service of the National Bank, the loan office has successfully passed the test of the state commission. A personal credit report can be issued and sent by mail or introduced personally in the office at the following address: Almaty, 10a Abai Avenue,

9th Floor. The first calendar year report is provided for free.

A personal credit report contains personal information of the debtor, as well as details concerning his current and completed loan agreements, including the number of active and canceled bank or other contracts.

The information about borrowers is provided by 36 commercial banks, 56 microcredit and micro-finance institutions, as well as 14 organisations engaged in certain types of banking operations, which cooperate with the loan office.

The office was established Aug. 7, 2012, by the order of the National Bank of Kazakhstan. Its main activity is to create credit histories and provide credit reports in order to build a reference database of credit histories in the country.



PHOTO: kreditnaya.com

### ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Fitch Ratings has affirmed the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund's long-term foreign currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at BBB+, Reuter's reports, citing a Fitch statement of Oct. 8. The long-term local currency IDR is A-, the national long-term rating is AAA (kaz) and the short-term foreign currency IDR is F2, and outlooks on long-term ratings are stable, according to the report. The affirmation of IDRs and senior debt ratings reflects the fund's strategic importance and its special legal status as the state's key asset management company, according to the report. The rating reflects Kazakhstan's rating (BBB+/A-/Stable), the fund's status as an extension of the Kazakh government and its strong operational and financial integration with the sovereign, Reuters reports. Samruk Kazyna's senior unsecured domestic bonds have been rated long-term local currency A- and national long-term AAA (kaz).

The debt of Kazakh national companies on bank loans increased by five times over one year to reach a record 2.6 trillion tenge (US\$9.42 billion) in the first half of 2015, Azer News and the Trend News Agency report. The debt burden in the first half of 2014 was 510.1 billion tenge (US\$1.84 billion). National companies began to actively seek loans in the second quarter of 2014. Now, according to preliminary estimates, bank debts amount to 68 percent of the payables of national companies. After the devaluation of the tenge, experts say, national companies that had borrowed in foreign currencies seeking lower interest rates faced pressure and needed to increase the volume of their bank loans. The tenge has lost more than 31 percent of its value against the dollar since switching to a free-floating exchange rate in August.

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services has lowered its long- and short-term foreign currency issuer credit ratings on the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) to BBB-/A-3 from 'BBB/A-2', Azer News reported on Oct. 13, and they say the outlook remains negative. The Kazakhstan national scale rating was also lowered from kzAA+ to kzAA. In a statement, S&P said the ratings reflect its view on the bank's strong financial profile and weak business profile. The EDB's ability to attract financing in tenge and in dollars has deteriorated, S&P said. Difficulties in attracting funding would increase the bank's tenge funding gap and hurt its ability to lend in local currency. S&P also expect long-term funding in tenge to remain tight over the next two years, further straining the EDB's ability to place sufficient bonds to support tenge-denominated loan generation.

OPEC projects that Kazakhstan's oil production will decrease by 20,000 barrels a day in 2015 to average 1.62 million barrels per day in its October oil market report, the Trend News Agency reports. In its September oil market report, OPEC predicted that the country's production would decrease by 10,000 barrels per day in 2015. OPEC also said that Kazakhstan's output in August declined by 86,000 barrels per day from a month before, to 1.51 barrels per day, the lowest level since October 2014. The organisation also forecast that oil production in Kazakhstan will decline by 30,000 barrels per day to average 1.57 million barrels per day in 2016, 10,000 barrels per day more than forecast in September.

The World Bank predicts that Kazakhstan's gross domestic product growth will be 1.5 percent this year and increase to 3 percent by 2017, Bnews reports, citing World Bank Lead Economist in Central Asia Christos Kostopoulos. The forecast takes into account a number of factors, he said, including predictions of an increased role by the private sector in investment and consumption and a number of fiscal policy, business environment and industrial policy reforms. The World Bank also predicts that oil prices will return to \$50-\$60 per barrel in the near future, he said.

## EBRD, TCO to Launch Small Business Support Programme in Kazakhstan



### European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA—A new, two-year support programme for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kazakhstan has been launched by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Tengizchevroil (TCO), Kazakhstan's top oil producer, the EBRD announced Oct. 6.

The roughly \$515,000 programme, which will run from 2015–2017, will cover SMEs across Kazakhstan and promote entrepreneurship and help promising SMEs innovate, compete and reach new markets, according to the EBRD. It will include existing and potential suppliers to TCO, which operates the country's giant

Tengiz oilfield, as well as SMEs with no links to the company, according to the EBRD.

The programme aims to increase SME access to know-how and finance, strengthen links between businesses and improve the market for advice and the exchange of best practices through business clinics and seminars on strategy, marketing, human resource management, finance and bookkeeping and other topics. Eligible SMEs will also have a chance to work with local consultants and international industry experts on a cost-sharing basis, with the possibility of having up to 75 percent of their costs covered, the EBRD announced.

"SMEs are vital to sustainable economic growth and diversifying the economy of Kazakhstan.

It is very important that SMEs are made aware that this opportunity exists and that the EBRD can assist them to access it on a cost-sharing basis. This new programme will also assist in improving and enhancing public-private dialogue by supporting local supplier initiatives and events," said Janet Heckman, director of the EBRD in Kazakhstan, according to the EBRD press release.

"TCO's support for this programme demonstrates our continued commitment to helping Kazakh SMEs improve the quality of their goods and services and reach new markets, both domestically and internationally," said General Director of TCO Tim Miller upon the announcement.

The project was signed off on during the Aktau Declaration: Synergy and Localization forum in Almaty.

The EBRD launched its Women

than \$43 million in grant financing towards several EBRD programmes to promote SMEs and regional investment. The government of Kazakhstan, BG Kazakh-

**HECKMAN: "SMEs are vital to sustainable economic growth and diversifying the economy of Kazakhstan. It is very important that SMEs are made aware that this opportunity exists and that the EBRD can assist them to access it on a cost-sharing basis."**

in Business credit line for women entrepreneurs in the country last month, and in May 2015 the Kazakh government provided more

stan and the EBRD Shareholder Special Fund are core donors to the EBRD Small Business Support team in Kazakhstan.

## Shortage of New Apartments Expected Over Next Two Years, Say Developers

Staff Report

The Developers Association of Kazakhstan forecasts a shortage in new apartments over the next one to two years as a result of projects frozen by leading construction companies.

According to the association, since 2006, Kazakhstan has introduced from 6.5 to 7.5 million square metres of living area every year. However, the supply in the primary real estate market has decreased by 20 percent over the last six months and the decline continues.

"Despite a record number of introduced housing areas in the market in August 2015, which included about 720,000 square metres, construction companies have frozen all new projects. This was a result of the increased costs of materials and services that appeared in light of the devaluation pressure and market volatility, as well as because of the absence of reasonable state programmes

to support housing construction development in Kazakhstan. The prices for imported materials have increased by 35 percent, while the price difference for locally produced materials has increased by 15 percent," announced Developers Association Executive Director Aslan Tukiev.

The association also warns that unreliable developers may appear in the market during these difficult times for the industry.

"This is a very important aspect since even among well-known, large foreign developers operating in Astana, there were cases when the construction process of residential complexes has been unexpectedly stopped. Small developers usually work with one or two projects, which are under great pressure and huge risks to remain unfinished," said the association's representative.

Most of the large construction companies are implementing anti-crisis programmes right now and reducing the total volume of their construction projects.

# BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

**BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF**

Companies from Kazakhstan and Ukraine have signed an aviation cooperation deal, Vestnik reported on Oct. 14. Kazakhstan Aviation Industry, a subsidiary of the Kazakhstan Engineering national company, and Ukraine's Ukrspetsexport signed a deal on exporting and importing products and services for military and special purposes. The cooperation will cover several areas, including organising a service centre for maintaining and repairing Antonov aircraft in Astana, providing for the replacement and modernisation of engines of AN-2 and AN-2-100 planes and the industrial assembly of MS-14 turbo-propeller engines. The sides agreed to begin jointly developing and producing unmanned aerial vehicles and supplying, repairing and maintaining aviation simulators.

Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov met President of Avtovaz Bo Inge Andersson and Chairman of the Bipek Avto-Azia Avto Group Anatoly Balushkin according to an Oct. 14 press release by the companies. The parties discussed progress in the construction of a full-cycle vehicle production plant at the Azia Avto site in Ust-Kamenogorsk. Construction on the plant, which is to have a capacity to produce 120,000 cars, including welding, painting and producing components, began in November 2013. Massimov noted the importance of car assembly plants in Kazakhstan for the development of the country's automobile industry. The Azia Avto Kazakhstan project is included in the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (SPAID) and the Industrialisation Map. When running at full capacity, according to the companies, the plant will create 12,000 jobs. The project is to be completed in 2017.

Kazakhstan has asserted its right within the framework of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to establish local content requirements in contracts in the oil and gas industry at 50 percent, Vice Minister of Energy Magzum Mirzagaliyev said at an Oct. 13 briefing in the Central Communications Service. WTO accession will be a challenge for the country, given its limits on state support, but will also expand possibilities for Kazakh producers, he said. The government is keeping its commitments to local producers through the transition period, which will last until 2021. The term "local producer" will undergo changes, he said. Now, a 20 percent discount is applied in the procurement of work and services from local producers where at least 75 percent of skilled workers are citizens of Kazakhstan. In 2021, this figure could be reduced to 50 percent, he said.

A Silk Road Pavilion of 30,000 square metres has been created in Lianyungang City in China's Xuwei New District to provide a trading and demonstration platform for Kazakh goods seeking to enter the global market, Bnews reports. The Pavilion is to demonstrate the goods and trade between countries along the Silk Road, and provide a year-round site for exhibitions, sales, trading and other channels for the movement of goods.

More than 95 percent of all materials used to build roads in Kazakhstan are sourced from Kazakh suppliers, Deputy Chairman of the KazAvtoZhol National Company Ulan Alipov said at an Oct. 14 press briefing in the Central Communications Service. He said that production standards for construction companies in Kazakhstan meet international standards, and that therefore domestic suppliers can provide high-quality materials to make high-quality roads. He also noted that through the Nury Zhol economic stimulus programme, work is underway on a number of large-scale land transport projects, including traffic arteries radiating from Astana.

The growth of retail trade in Kazakhstan slowed to 6 percent for the first nine months of 2015, down from 19 percent for the same period a year ago, Kapital.kz reported on Oct. 14. The biggest slowdown was in the trade of non-food products.

## Astana Auto Show's New Trend: Low-Price Cars

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA –The capital served as host for the third Astana International Auto Salon (AIAS 2015) Oct. 9. This year, participants Renault, Peugeot, IVECO, Hyundai, JAC, GAZ, KAMAZ and Samand put their emphasis on low-priced passenger cars and commercial vehicles.

"Renault began its push in the Kazakh market when new car sales sufficiently increased, reaching 165,000 vehicles per year [for all brands]," said the company's Director of Kazakhstan Sales Sergey Kuzmin.

"In spite of several economic problems in the state, we are very optimistic and plan to increase sales in the next five years. Three years ago, Renault's market share didn't exceed one percent. In August, it amounted to 9.5 percent. Our success is based on several factors: our products, price and adaptation to local conditions," he added.

Kuzmin noted that Renaults "can sell themselves on their own," as the cars are geared to accommodate the local climate, fuel quality and road conditions and the company has a developed dealer network.



Urban Electric's first electric car in Kazakhstan.

"To be exact, the cars must operate if it is -40 or +40, because they are sold in a state with a severely-continental climate. And they do, because they are adapted," he added.

Because not every station in Kazakh cities can offer high-quality fuel, the cars are designed to consume low-quality fuel and still correspond to the strict Euro 5 standards. When only low-quality gasoline is available, the result is not serious, said Kuzmin.

"Kazakhstan has greatly im-

proved the condition of its roads, but its territory is so huge that it is impossible to construct roads everywhere. That is why we design cars which can be driven in the Great Steppe, too. All our vehicles have completely-galvanised bodies, increased road clearance and reinforced suspension. Besides, all our cars have under cover in their basic configuration," he added.

Renault Kazakhstan plans to sell Dusters with the company's start system, which will automatically start the engine in winter to keep

it in good working condition even during hard frosts. The system is unique, because it will be installed ex-factory and be part of the essential structure.

"All Kazakhstan clients will appreciate this. Also, we understand that price is one of the most important factors. Our products are designed for the Kazakhstan middle class. That is why we are working on the price of maintenance of our products, too," said Kuzmin.

Virazh manager Asset Berdimuratov demonstrated a new model of the Gazelle, the most popular van and truck in the territory of the former Soviet Union. The Gazelle Next and a version with an all-metal body were presented at the exhibition.

The main advantages of the new Gazelle are its low price, which is at least 20 percent less than competitors can offer, sufficiently cheaper maintenance and ease of access to spare parts. The model has a much larger and higher body with very a nice interior, said Berdimuratov.

"Gazelle Next has two engines, an American 3.0 litre, a four-cylinder diesel produced by Cummins and a 2.7 litre, four-cylinder gasoline Evotech, which is produced by GAZ," he added.

Designers at the GAZ plant also implemented smart decisions such as magnets on the van's body, which protect the chassis and can hold the doors, and limited-slip differential, which greatly improves off-road capability in snow and provides traction on ice.

Iranian automaker IKCO (Samand) presented the Denna and Runna models, which are considered to be rivals in the B and B+ segment. They are attractive based on their low price, which starts at \$6,500.

Kazakhstan's Urban Electric presented its own platform designed for the nation's first electric car, which is ready for production and can be used to build any model. The initial Kazakh electric car will cost \$12,000 and have a driving distance reaching 200 kilometres. The vehicle's full speed is 200 kilometres per hour and it can easily be charged in five hours using an ordinary 220 volt electrical grid. The main idea of the platform is its permanent use, as the customer would buy it once and could readily change the design of his or her own car by replacing some of the details. The price would be only 30 percent of the car's cost instead of buying a new one.

## In Historic First, Kazakhstan Launches Domestic Rail Production

Continued from Page A1

Mamin noted the project was completed through the partnership with leading companies such as Alstom, General Electric, Siemens and Talgo.

"On request of the President in the framework of the industrialisation programme, a new branch of railway engineering was created in

a short time period in Kazakhstan. Moreover, new factories for the production of freight and passenger locomotives, electric locomotives, railcars, railcar castings and engineering tools infrastructure [were built]," he said.

ARBZ design capacity is 430,000 tonnes of steel per year. The company began producing hardened 120-metre, R65 mark

rails created for high-speed railways and will produce 230,000 tonnes of rolled steel beams, angles and channels. The production will satisfy the need of Kazakhstan and neighbouring countries in rail and structural steel products.

The same day, ARBZ hosted a roundtable on the development of railway engineering in Kazakhstan and prospects for international co-

operation, reported the press service.

Presentations were made on Kazakh railway products by manufacturers Tulpar Talgo, Electric Kurastyru Zauyty (EKZ), LKZ locomotive plant and export tools support from the Development Bank of Kazakhstan (DBK).

According to the participants, a fruitful dialogue was conducted between the producers of railway-related goods and services in the Eurasian region and the financial institutions.

In particular, those involved be-

came acquainted with the DBK programme supporting Kazakh exports.

"The Development Bank of Kazakhstan took part in financing the construction of ARBZ and is now ready to provide financial leverage to expand the supply of plant products to foreign consumers," said Chairman of ARBZ Bolat Zhamishev.

In addition, memorandums of cooperation for delivery of finished goods were signed between ARBZ and the railway administrations of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

# '15 ASTANA INVEST FORUM

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Kazakh Minister for Investment and Development Asset Iskeshev (L), President of KTZ Askar Mamin (second from left) and others attend the rollout of Kazakhstan's first domestically produced railway products.

## Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran to Establish Competitive Railway Tariffs

By Staff Report

ASTANA – Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran recently agreed to establish competitive tariff conditions on the new Uzen – Bolashak – Serhetyaka – Akyayla – Incheburun international railway line, according to information from the press service of Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ), Kazakhstan's national railroad company.

KTZ, Iran and the Turkmenistan Ministry of Railway Transport agreed to establish unified rates beginning Oct. 15 for container trains travelling from China to Iran through their territories.

"The implementation of this measure will attract cargo flows from maritime transport and im-

prove the attractiveness of land transcontinental corridors," a representative at KTZ explained.

The sides also agreed to preferential tariffs on the transportation of grain, ferrous metals, aluminium and ferroalloys on their territories traveling from Kazakhstan to Iran towards the port of Bandar Abbas.

Preferential tariffs for Kazakh exports are expected to help develop new markets in India and Persian Gulf countries.

The parties also said that they would try to agree in 2016 on unified rates on their territories on the growth volume of cargo traffic in wagons and containers. The heads of the three states' railroads are expected to meet again in December in Ashgabat.

# EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## Astana International Financial Centre to Cement Capital's Place in Global Finance

The world's great financial centres of New York, London, and Tokyo have led the way in economic prosperity for decades. But the giants are now facing competition from dozens of smaller, ambitious challengers. Cities in Asia, the Middle East and Africa can increasingly offer investors better access to some of the world's fastest growing financial markets.

Among the cities moving up the financial ranks, catching up to Dubai, Shanghai and Johannesburg, is Astana. Kazakhstan's capital has surged ahead in the Global Financial Cities Index and is now ranked ahead of Warsaw and Moscow.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev clearly sees the city's potential. At the Astana Economic Forum (AEF) earlier this year, he announced his plan to create the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), an ambitious project to cement Kazakhstan's position as a leading centre for finance.

The AIFC has a number of objectives. It will attract foreign investment, open up the Kazakh banking sector and make it easier for insurance companies and Islamic finance institutions to do business. It will attract world leaders in financial services, which in turn will promote best practices in Kazakhstan. It can be expected that the AIFC will boost Kazakhstan's economic stability and help the country along the path to becoming a top 30 global economy by 2050. The AIFC will launch against the backdrop

of challenges affecting countries throughout Eurasia. President Nazarbayev has spoken of three such challenges: uncertainty and conflict in Europe and the Middle East, climate change and food security. The nature of such threats demands cooperation between nations and action from international institutions, such as the United Nations. But the Kazakh President is clear: Kazakhstan can help mitigate these threats to its own future by taking action now. That means diversifying the economy and tapping into new financial opportunities. The AIFC can play a role in both.

Set to officially launch on Jan. 1, 2018, the AIFC will use the innovative infrastructure already built for EXPO 2017. It will be modelled on Dubai's own financial centre. Kazakhstan has already hired consultants from Dubai who will help with the establishment of the AIFC. Like Dubai, the AIFC will feature a financial court with international judges and a legal framework based on the principles of English law. English will also be used in official documentation and court proceedings. This will reassure investors and promote transparency and best practices. Experts have been impressed with how Dubai has boosted investor confidence in its transparency and reliability. So it is reassuring that Kazakhstan will regularly speak to counterparts at the DIFC Court to ensure the AIFC is progressing.

The new centre will see the National Bank and the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange relocat-

ing from Almaty to Astana. The President has also proposed listing the five most successful companies in the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund on the stock exchange. Both these measures will offer new opportunities to investors and boost growth for Kazakhstan.

While the country can be optimistic about such an ambitious project, challenges remain. The centre faces a battle in convincing those already working in Kazakhstan's financial sector that this is a positive step. Some have raised concerns that the centre may put institutions already operating in Kazakhstan under threat. Others have expressed unease over the decision to exempt AIFC residents from taxes. And while it is widely acknowledged that the AIFC is seeking external advice, some want to be reassured that there will be no issues of conflict of interest between Kazakhstan's legislation and the AIFC's legislation. To ease any lingering tensions, the AIFC should work in close partnership with both local and international experts.

But none of these challenges are insurmountable. Kazakhstan should not allow such challenges to thwart its pursuit of becoming a major global financial hub. The centre represents an unprecedented opportunity for Kazakhstan to strengthen its economy and attract world class international investment. The AIFC can only be seen as a significant step forward in turning Astana into the financial capital of Central Asia.

## Traditional Kazakh Wrestling Grows in Leaps and Bounds, Promoter Says

By Ruslan Eskendir

Kazak kuresi, or Kazakh wrestling, is an old sport with roots stretching deep into history. Since ancient times, nomads of the Great Steppe have mastered martial arts, which helped them to survive in an environment of constant conflict and warfare. The 2015 celebration of the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate serves to highlight the significance of Kazak kuresi in the life of Eurasian nomads, as the sport is not only gaining popularity among Kazakh people, but has gone global.

The culture of nomadic civilisation has been related through Kazakhstan Barysy (Kazakhstan's Snow Leopard), an effort which through the years developed into Eurasia Barysy, then Alem Barysy (The World's Snow Leopard). President of the Kazak Kuresi Federation Arman Shurayev shared his views on the development of this project.

*In honour of the celebration of the historical anniversary for the Kazakh people, what projects is the federation working on?*

As you know, the main large-scale event associated with the celebration of the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate took place on Oct. 8-9 in the city of Taraz. In the framework of this event a traditional Eurasia Barysy tournament took place. It brought together eight teams from Turkic-speaking countries.

Kazak kuresi has a history of several centuries. Since ancient times, it was assumed that sponsors and those who provided significant support for this sport were khans. They used to organise large tournaments involving the best wrestlers from among the warriors. The event was comparable to military exercises. Then, in peacetime between wars, khans initiated large competitions in Kazak kuresi to support the fighting spirit of the soldiers. At that time, the winner of a competition received an alтын tai tuyak – a gold medallion the size of a horseshoe. The gold was of great value and the prize could feed a family and even more kin of the batyr – the warrior – for several years. Nowadays, we try to follow this precedent. As a prize, we give out a gold ingot weighing 777 grams, which is handed to the winner of the Kazakhstan Barysy tournament.

*How popular has Kazak kuresi become domestically?*

This can be judged based on official statistics of the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sport. In 2010, when we started the project, the number of people engaged in national wrestling in Kazakhstan was about 30,000. Today, their numbers exceed 120,000. The number of wrestlers has quadrupled in five years. Thereafter, it affected the quantity of sections in which athletes were engaged, besides opening additional workplaces for coaches. We can say that Kazak kuresi is already becoming a real sports industry. If parents were previously reluctant to send their children to engage in national wrestling because it was considered to be a 'decorative' sport with no future, now thanks to the work of the federation and the Kazakhstan Barysy fund, people purposefully engage in this sport. I think our national wrestling is now experiencing a rebirth.

The popularity of this martial art



Arman Shurayev

is gaining momentum. This can be illustrated by the expanding geography of its tournaments. Before there was Kazakhstan Barysy, then the Eurasia Barysy project was developed and later the Alem Barysy competition began at the world level. In addition, there is a Zhas Barysy (Young Snow Leopard) project, which will be held for the fourth time. The competition has taken place in Kyzylorda, Pavlodar and Taldykorgan. This year it will be held in Karaganda. It is gratifying to observe that while in the past this type of wrestling had traditionally been developed almost exclusively in the southern regions of our country, now the popularity of Kazak kuresi is growing in our northern regions, too.

*To what extent is Kazakh wrestling interesting to people abroad?*

We hold the Eurasia Barysy annually and athletes from many countries of Europe and Asia enjoy coming to this tournament. In turn, Alem Barysy gathers heavyweight fighters from all five continents of the planet. In most cases, those athletes who came to our tournament are now engaged in the promotion of this form of martial arts at home. For example, the Cuban fighter who won our Alem Barysy tournament has developed the sport in Cuba. Now, they have about 500 children engaged in Kazak kuresi.

If approaching it objectively, our wrestling is no less entertaining to watch than Greco-Roman wrestling, which is included in the Olympic programme. Kazak kuresi is not inferior to judo, freestyle wrestling or sambo. I think we have a good chance to at least make it part of the programme of the Asian Games. Then, we will see what will happen.

As a television professional myself, I can say that sports channels such as Russian Boyets (Fighter) or Turkish TRT AVAZ that broadcast our very long tournaments in Kazak kuresi would not have been paying for more than six hours of air to show something that is not interesting to their audiences. In Turkey, they can measure TV ratings every minute; consequently, they can track the number of viewers during the broadcast of the tournament. According to their observations, the audience of Kazak kuresi is increasing and reaches its peak by the finals.

In our country, the rating of the Kazakhstan TV channel during the broadcast of tournaments comes to 36 percent in the equity ratio, which means up to 7 million people may be watching the competitions on TV screens. This suggests that the tournament is interesting not only for the domestic audience, but also far beyond the borders of our country.

**This article first appeared in Liter newspaper and is translated and used here with permission.**

## Currency Interventions Required to Improve Business Climate

In order to ensure the implementation of a new monetary policy, the National Bank of Kazakhstan abandoned the exchange rate corridor of the national currency, the tenge, Aug. 20 and switched to inflation targeting and a free-floating exchange rate. As a result, the tenge depreciated against the dollar by 26 percent.

Since the adoption of a free-floating market rate in August, the value of the tenge has swung between 208 and 300 tenge to the dollar.

Currency depreciation, if orderly and gradual, improves a nation's export competitiveness and may improve its trade deficit over time. But abrupt and sizeable currency depreciation may scare foreign investors who fear the currency may fall further and lead to them pulling portfolio investments out of the country, putting further downward pressure on the currency.

Since 2005, Kazakhstan has attracted gross foreign direct investment (FDI) of more than \$208 billion due to the political stability and favourable business climate.

Sudden bouts of currency depreciation, especially in emerging markets, inevitably raise the fear of "contagion," whereby many of these currencies become afflicted by similar investor concerns. There have been a number of such episodes, among the most notable being the Asian crisis of 1997 triggered by the

devaluation of the Thai baht. In the summer of 2013, the currencies of nations such as India and Indonesia traded sharply lower on concern that the U.S. Federal Reserve was poised to wind down its massive bond purchases.

In order to prevent the situation from happening again, the Kazakh government decided to stem volatility by currency interventions and in excess of \$1 billion has been spent since August.

Central banks typically react to the currency pressures by both raising domestic interest rates and intervening in foreign exchange markets.

Under perfectly flexible exchange rate and wages, real money balances would fall through an increase in the exchange (with no changes in international reserves or interest rates). In that case, the exchange rate depreciation is costly because it leads to a lower real wage and lower employment. Given this adjustment cost, there may be room for policies that prevent the exchange rate from moving.

In this regard, non-sterilised intervention is considered an effective tool to stabilise the exchange rate designed to keep the value of a domestic currency down relative to foreign currencies. In summary, Kazakhstan's central bank resumed foreign exchange interventions due to the increased volatility of the tenge exchange rate, which is due to the speculative operations of participants in the currency

market in the absence of objective and significant changes in fundamental macroeconomic factors.

As a result of currency interventions, the tenge rate has increased from nearly 300KZT/USD in mid-September to 276.10KZT/USD as of October 19.

Moreover, depreciation of the national currency makes exports in the depreciated currency less expensive, whereas import prices become more expensive. Consequently, it will help Kazakh companies to be more competitive in a foreign market and the country's consumers will try to buy local products because of the price.

In addition, a new monetary policy may further attract FDI to the country in addition to 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; the right to employ foreign labour until one year after construction is finished and free of quotas and permissions.

In addition, Kazakhstan will be introducing a visa-free regime with the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This will provide additional impetus to improve the business climate.

## Why Khorgos Is a Timely Investment

Kazakhstan has set itself the ambitious target of becoming one of the world's 30 most competitive economies by 2050. Boosting trade with Kazakhstan's partners is essential to meeting that goal. One such partner is China. In challenging economic times, strengthening economic links between our two countries offers enormous opportunities for both of us.

Trade between China and the five post-Soviet Central Asian states has soared from \$1.8 billion in 2000 to \$50 billion in 2013. The country has surpassed Russia to become Central Asia's single largest trading partner. This is why the Khorgos Special Economic Zone (SEZ), the Khorgos Dry Port and the Khorgos International Cross-Border Cooperation Centre on the border with China – as well as the wider initiatives, including Kazakhstan's massive Nurly Zhol infrastructure development programme and China's One Belt, One Road programme – are so vital to securing Kazakhstan's position in the global economy.

The One Belt, One Road concept has enjoyed enthusiastic support since first announced by President Xi Jinping on a visit to Kazakhstan in 2013. The initiative will

see significant new investment to open trade routes across land and sea, and will strengthen the strategic partnership between China and Kazakhstan.

The Khorgos SEZ is Kazakhstan's gateway to China's vast market. It will accelerate trade flows and economic prospects. With billions expected in investment, the free trade zone spans 185 hectares in southeastern Kazakhstan and a further 343 hectares in China. It will include a state of the art international business centre, freight terminals, an airport, a tourism centre, and sports facilities. Visiting traders are already able to stay visa-free for 30 days, and potential investors are exempt from all taxes and customs.

Khorgos projects are among several projects that make up the One Belt, One Road initiative, and are arguably among the most important. Landlocked countries have historically been overlooked in the pursuit of maritime trade. But as companies increasingly opt for shorter journeys from China to Europe – 14 days by train compared with a month by sea – Kazakhstan finds itself in an enviable geographical position. Sandwiched between China, the world's largest industrial producer, and Europe, the largest consumer market, Ka-

zakhstan will profit as Khorgos becomes a hub for regional and international trade. To view Khorgos as a gateway to the East is simplistic: it is also vital part of our nation's position in facing all markets towards the west.

The benefits of Khorgos to Kazakhstan and the rest of Central Asia have been felt already. The promise of tens of billions of dollars in investment will reshape the former Soviet economies. It will help shield the region from falling commodity prices and the recession in big neighbouring economies. Trade by train is booming, with the number of containers travelling this way between China and Kazakhstan increasing 18 times between 2011 and 2014. Kazakhstan is on track to capture 6 percent of the trade between China and Europe by 2020. Favourable trading conditions continue to attract businesses to the region. Leading global companies like Hewlett Packard, Toyota and DHL are all opening distribution centres.

There will always be those quick to criticise bold and ambitious economic plans. But there should be no doubt that Khorgos, and indeed the One Belt, One Road initiative and the Nurly Zhol programme, are essential to realising Kazakhstan's goal of becoming a top economy by 2050.

THE ASTANA TIMES

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# OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## Paris Conference on Climate Change: Critical Milestone with Long-Term Implications

By Bérengère Quincy

In six weeks, COP 21, the 21st Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, will open in Paris. A total of 195 countries plus the European Union and other parties to the convention will meet from Nov. 30 – Dec. 11, gathering around 20,000 delegates surrounded by 20,000 representatives from all sectors of civil society and some 3,000 journalists. It is the biggest conference ever held in Paris, an honour and a heavy responsibility for France, which will host and chair the conference. Laurent Fabius, the French minister of foreign affairs and international development, will chair it.

Let me address four points that I will be happy to debate on in your universities this week.

1. It is not a conference among others, it is our future, your future that we will shape.

Climate change is no longer a distant perspective for “our children and grandchildren,” it is an urgent challenge for us, here and now. Every day, somewhere in the world, ice is melting, violent cyclones devastate coastlines, destroying homes and schools; droughts ravage crops and cause water shortages; sea-level rise endangers coastal areas all around the world; heavy floods displace thousands and damage valuable farm land. These are not mere “changes,” they are disruptions.



Disruptions of our food security, our development efforts, disruptions of democracy, stability and security.

Therefore this climate conference is crucial. It must result in a universal and legally binding climate agreement with a long term vision, enabling us to limit global warming to below 2 or 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the threshold beyond which the scientific community warns of the irreversible effects of global warming. Urgent action on both mitigation of emissions and adaptation to the consequences of climate change and an ambitious global framework are needed to put us on a path consistent with this goal.

In front of the current UN General Assembly, President of France François Hollande (who visited Astana last December) has de-

tailed the three conditions needed for Paris to be a genuine success: this universal and legally binding agreement, rooted in national contributions of all countries to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change consequences; a long lasting agreement with a review mechanism that will make it possible to evaluate regularly, measure periodically and even revise every five years our national contributions; and financial commitments, with transparency and predictability, to support the energy transition, adaptation and technology transfer of the developing countries taking action in this regard.

Today more than 149 countries, accounting for 87 percent of emissions, have voluntarily submitted their own national contributions, nationally and voluntarily determined, with propositions for mitigation and for some adaptation; some of these countries have done this for the first time. More are to come before COP 21. It is a remarkable achievement and a strong sign of the common will to fight climate change together, knowing that the developed countries are to take the lead in view of their responsibilities in climate change (the common but differentiated responsibility principle).

2. COP 21 will not only be the conclusion of six years of negotiations after the failure of COP 15 in Copenhagen, it has to be a starting point for action and implementation, a clear signal to our govern-

ments, our fellow citizens around the world, our local authorities and our businesses, that we are making a resolute transition towards lower-carbon and more climate-resilient economies and societies, while guaranteeing everyone fair access to sustainable development.

If we want to succeed in combating climate disruption, we need the involvement of the stakeholders: businesses, cities and regions,

**Fighting climate change is not only an obligation, it's an opportunity.**

On the road to COP 21, we have already defined how to finance development in Addis Ababa in July and adopted the UN Post-2015 universal Sustainable Development Goals in New York in September. The eradication of poverty

wide target of 15 percent to 25 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990. It is already committed to energy efficiency and renewable energies. It has adopted a Concept on Transition to a Green Economy, able to create growth and jobs. Five cities have already taken commitments, as well as national railway company Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, on the Low-Carbon Sustainable Rail Transport Challenge. Kazakhstan is therefore fully ready to participate. Fighting climate change is an opportunity for your country, it's an opportunity for you.

**It has to be done now, with you!**

If we don't start now, it will be too late. The more we wait for, the smaller a margin to manoeuvre we have.

Fighting climate change requires commitment, policies, finance, technology and international cooperation. Science is also required – scientists have been at the forefront, enlightening our endeavours – knowledge, education and awareness. For all this, we need the young, the educated, those who are aware and committed. We need you. Embark on this journey, it's a fantastic opportunity!

**Ambassador Bérengère Quincy is the special envoy of French government for COP 21.**

## Major World Economic Trends and Kazakhstan's Anti-Crisis Strategy

By Leila Muzaparova

The world economy, according to the latest estimates, has greatly slowed its pace of growth, which is significantly below expectations.

In June 2015, the World Bank published its data on global growth in 2014, which it estimated to be only 2.6 percent, while the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) data from its April 2015 World Economic Outlook showed growth to be 3.4 percent. These both testify to the sharp slowdown of global development and to the excessively optimistic current expectations of international organisations.

World economic dynamics show that in major developed economies – the U.S. and the Eurozone – growth until recently had not been accelerating as had been forecast by the international organisations, but rather is stagnating at a low level (as in the Eurozone) or slowing down to values significantly lower than expected (as in the U.S.).

Forecasts by the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies (KISI)



will have a rather negative impact on developing economies as slowing growth and restricted demand in developed countries will put pressure on export and manufacturing and the stagnating environment of the commodity markets does not favour high growth rates for commodity-based economies. Thus, there remains a probability of further expansion of the global financial crisis, which hits emerging markets the strongest.

Thus, we view the world economy's prospects in the medium term as rather negative, and believe the current trend of growth stagnation

of the 1930s resulted in a transition to a new industrial stage of development. The energy crisis of the 1970s led to the transition to a post-industrial phase.

Today, as we see, the role of global and national regulation of the financial markets is increasing. Financial systems have become global, easily flowing from one region to another, and their regulation remains a subject of care for the national governments. This is one of the contemporary age's main structural contradictions that cannot be solved straight away by creating supranational regulators.

Therefore, it is important to develop a mechanism for regulating global finances in the absence of a global government, a proposal that has been repeatedly voiced by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in various international fora and in his writings.

This is evidenced by the unfolding weakening of national currencies in many countries of the world. This year has seen the weakening not only of the Russian rouble but also of the Chinese yuan and the currencies in Canada, Australia, Norway, Turkey, Brazil, Colombia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Ukraine.

The devaluation of the yuan by 4.6 percent, conducted by the National Bank of China in August of this year, will certainly have the greatest impact on the global economy. According to KISI analysts, it resulted from the effects of a number of problems in the Chinese economy (first of all, systemic and fundamental ones) and also the adverse external background.

Generally, the current crisis raises the issue of a new global financial architecture. As a result of the crisis of the 1930s, the world was formed with a single reserve currency – the U.S. dollar. After the crises of the 1970s, there has developed a dual-currency system (dollar and euro).

Probably in the medium term, the role of the Chinese yuan and regional reserve currencies will increase. Regional trade and economic associations are beginning to play an increasingly important role. The specific of our time is “regionalisation of globalisation” that can affect the configuration of currency systems.

Thus, it is possible to conclude the financial crisis is an essential

element of the current crisis. And the confluence of two crises upon each other complicates the return to a trajectory of steady growth, as well as causes a need for implementing significant structural and institutional reforms.

Besides, the current crisis also differs from previous ones as it is accompanied by an increase in international and geopolitical tensions. We are witnessing serious geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts in the world today and the new balance of forces in global politics is being created. With the development of the situation, contours appear of a multi-polar world in which two or three key economic centres will coexist.

These are the common characteristics of the current global economic situation. But, like any economic phenomenon, the economic crisis also has positive sides along with negative effects.

So, the positive effect of the current crisis could be the formation of a new model of economic growth, envisioning structural modernisation in both developed and developing countries and the creation of new technological drivers. His-

tory shows that after crises, new industries take shape, creating the preconditions for the emergence of new challenges and instruments of economic policy. In other words, in the end, the current crisis could bring the global economy to a qualitatively new level of efficiency and productivity.

A systemic crisis cannot be overcome by measures of macroeconomic policy alone.

As the new technological base is created today in the world economy, both structural and institutional decisions providing modernisation of national economy are important.

On the other hand, such crises create preconditions for economic breakthroughs in individual countries. Those that manage to most precisely understand the challenges of the new era and to find adequate answers to them (first of all, institutional responses) earn their chance for a breakthrough. It was through systemic crises that some of the brightest moments of acceleration of certain countries' development occurred, bring them to join the ranks of advanced countries. No matter how hard the crises had been, market econo-

mies always emerged out of them stronger and more competitive.

Therefore now, at this stage of the crisis, it is very important for countries such as Kazakhstan, which want to significantly enhance their competitiveness and achieve a higher level of economic development, to develop an appropriate development strategy and take active steps not only to overcome and prevent the negative impact of the crisis, but also to implement a strategy of economic breakthrough.

In this sense, the Five Institutional Reforms proposed by President Nazarbayev cannot become just an effective mechanism to respond to the current crisis. They contain a verified step-by-step plan of recovery from the global crisis that includes the use of resources of the National Fund. Kazakhstan's strategic advantage lies in the offensive nature of anti-crisis measures, as it prepares a platform for an economic breakthrough in spite of the difficult situation in the global economy.

**The author is first deputy director at the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies (KISI) under the President of Kazakhstan.**

**It is important to develop a mechanism for regulating global finances in the absence of a global government, a proposal that has been repeatedly voiced by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in various international fora and in his writings.**

under the President of Kazakhstan suggest that the growth rates of the leading advanced economies in 2015-2017 will be significantly below those which currently appear in the forecasts by the IMF, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

During the considered-time horizon, it is possible as well to expect phenomena significant for the world economy, such as stagnation in the financial markets, change in the rhetoric of the United States Federal Reserve System (FRS) towards new mitigation of the monetary policy, depreciation of the dollar, growth of the price of oil in 2016-2017 and nearing of growth rates in the economies of the Eurozone and Japan to zero levels with a subsequent slide into recession by 2017.

In 2016-2017, global factors

in the leading economies, with the accumulation of a number of unsolved fundamental problems, can result in further deterioration of the global economic situation. Therefore, the major global economic challenge today remains a systemic economic crisis, which has continued since the late 2000s and still determines the development of many of the leading countries of the world.

We believe this crisis is both cyclical and structural. It is associated with the passage of the world through a deep institutional and technological change with the change of the technological base of the global economy.

In general, as history shows, during any systemic crisis there is a change of the model of social and economic regulation. So, the American Great Depression of



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The Astana Times

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# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

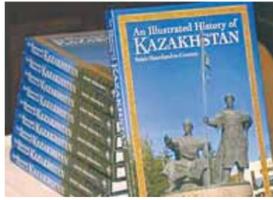
## 'An Illustrated History of Kazakhstan' Presented in U.S.

By Anastasia Schwartz

"An Illustrated History of Kazakhstan," a recent book co-authored by several prominent experts and edited by Jeremy Tredinnick, was presented in Washington during an Oct. 6 event dedicated to the celebration of the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate.

The ceremony followed last month's visit to the United States by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to participate in the 70th session of the UN General Assembly and meet with U.S. President Barack Obama, said Kazakh Ambassador to the U.S. Kairat Umarov at the event. The head of state's address to the international community during the anniversary carried deep meaning and symbolism, since Kazakhstan is recognised as a successful independent state with prospects of robust growth in the coming years, he added.

"We are proud of our history, the development of which has led us to the peace and good neighbourly relations in which we live. Openness, hospitality, tolerance, perseverance and determination, qualities that we got from our ancestors, have enabled us to succeed in diplomacy and in search for ways of



mutually-beneficial cooperation and new friends," said Umarov.

The event was attended by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs William E. Todd; representatives of the U.S. Congress; individuals in diplomatic, research and analytic circles and the media. Guests noted such events are useful for promoting Kazakhstan among the U.S. political and business elite.

Renowned archaeologist Michael Frachetti, who conducted his research in Kazakhstan, noted that the land contains 5,000 years of history and the Great Steppe was the home of ancient civilisations. He praised the country's achievements in the consolidation of society through the study of a common past.

Hudson Institute Senior Fellow and Director of the Centre for Political-Military Analysis Richard Weitz, whose article about the re-

cent history of Kazakhstan was included in the book, cited Astana's multi-vector foreign policy as an example for many nations in the region.

Kazakh PEN Club President Bigeldy Gabdullin also attended the evening and presented translations of classic Kazakh literature to the American public. "My Name is Kozha" by Berdibek Sokpabayev and a collection of poems by Mukagali Makatayev will give readers an opportunity to "know the soul and the aspirations of the Kazakh people," he said.

"An Illustrated History of Kazakhstan," which uses colourful materials to acquaint the reader with the historic heritage of the country and its people, was presented by the author. He noted the history of the Great Steppe country from ancient times to the present has many epoch-making events and interesting facts and attracts the attention of all who love to study the past.

"Today, Kazakhstan is one of the fastest-growing countries in the world. It is no accident that it is called a regional leader. The country set a goal to become one of the 30 most developed countries of the world by 2050. I believe this ambitious goal will be achieved," added Tredinnick.

## Kazakhstan, China Strengthen Defence Ties



By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan visited Astana on Monday and met with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Kazakh defence officials.

Nazarbayev congratulated the minister of defence of China on the success of the Beijing military parade dedicated to the 70th anniversary of victory in World War II. The President of Kazakhstan emphasised that in the course of the event, the People's Liberation Army demonstrated to the world its power and technical equipment. In this context, the importance of strengthening cooperation between the defence ministries of the two countries was stressed, reported the President's press office.

In addition, the President noted that Kazakhstan highly appreciates China's so-called negative security guarantees on the Treaty on the Zone Free from Nuclear Weapons in Central Asia. In turn, Chang thanked Nazarbayev for the meeting and conveyed the greetings of President Xi Jinping.

During the meeting, the President noted that Kazakhstan and

China are at a new stage of cooperation.

Furthermore, Chang announced that China was donating some military trucks to Kazakhstan, according to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defence. An agreement to this effect was signed between the vis-

the near future, joint tactical anti-terrorism exercises are planned on the territory of China and Kazakhstan," said the Kazakh Minister of Defence.

As a result of the meeting, the ministers signed an agreement on China's free-of-charge technical

**As a result of the meeting, the ministers signed an agreement on China's free-of-charge technical assistance to the Kazakh Army.**

iting Chinese official and his Kazakh counterpart, Minister of Defence Imangali Tasmagambetov.

During their Oct. 12 meeting, Chang and Tasmagambetov discussed special forces training. "Training and exchange of experience in the sphere of combating asymmetric threats (training special forces units) is an important aspect of cooperation," Minister Chang highlighted.

"Kazakhstan is interested in organising joint events on mountain training, training of military swimmers, actions in urban environments for special forces. In

assistance to the Kazakh Army. Based on the signed agreement, China will provide bolster-type tractors with trawls and loading-unloading platforms for the Kazakh Army.

Tasmagambetov presented an invitation to Chang for China to take part in the International Military Exhibition KADEX-2016 in Astana to showcase his country's technical capabilities. "I hope that China's military-industrial complex will be presented on a high level. It will give an additional boost to our military and technical cooperation," Tasmagambetov said.

## Parliament to Play Key Role in Reaching Climate Change Goals, Say Paris Climate Conference Participants

By Michelle Witte

Participants of the Oct. 12 roundtable discussion of Kazakhstan's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) for the Paris Climate Change Conference.

ASTANA – The role of Parliament emerged as a major theme at a roundtable discussion in Astana Oct. 12 on Kazakhstan's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) ahead of the Paris Climate Change Conference, as officials and experts from Kazakhstan and the EU discussed Kazakhstan's voluntary commitments regarding climate change and created recommendations for the country on reaching its goals.

The Paris conference in early December – the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) – must achieve a new global agreement on climate change, applicable to all countries, that aims to keep the global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius, according to conference organisers. Kazakhstan's INDC is to unconditionally reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 15 percent by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, and includes a conditional target of reducing emissions by 25 percent by that date.

"These are rather ambitious commitments, which will require the adoption of comprehensive measures to purify that national economy by decarbonisation measures, the introduction of innovative green technologies and the development of the national carbon market," said Minister of Energy Vladimir Shkolnik in his opening remarks at the discussion.

To implement the INDCs between 2021–2030, the conference recommended improving state monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, introducing low-carbon technologies in all sectors of the national economy; creating a concept for developing Kazakhstan's forestry industry in light of carbon depositing and the adaptive capacity of forests; expanding international cooperation with global green funds to attract research and investment; improving the emissions trading system, including reporting and transparency issues; proposing public hearings on improving green economy legislation; and conduct information campaigns on the INDC and COP 21.

It was suggested by a representative from the GIZ office in Kazakhstan that the recommendation to create a strategic document covering all areas of the transition to a green economy be added. Other suggestions included abandoning carbon emissions trading in favour of focusing on renewable energy and forestry and fishery support.

Ambassador of France to Kazakhstan Francis Etienne noted in his opening comments that to succeed, COP 21 needs political solidarity in the cause of preventing a temperature rise "expressed in a universal commitment to a universal cause, binding us all;" a solid agreement bound by proper legislation and regulation (on this, "Parliaments will have, everywhere in the world, a key role," he said); and financial systems to help the transition. COP 21 envisions a \$100 billion fund to support green economy development, with more than \$60 billion pledged already, he noted.

Kazakhstan's commitment, and its potential climate impact, was called "huge" repeatedly during the discussion. "The adoption of national commitments by Kazakhstan, a reputable and responsible member of the global community, will contribute to the struggle to curb the pace of global climate change," said head of the EU Delegation in Kazakhstan Trian Hristea in his opening remarks.

Hristea echoed the importance of passing legislation to adapt to climate change, a theme picked up by other speakers. "I hope that members of the Parliament will meet the expectations of the public by ratifying relevant legislation. This is in the best interests of the society and a new stimulus for future investments in time of the diversification of economy," Hristea said.

Kazakhstan's lower chamber of Parliament is considering changes to the ecological code aimed at transitioning to a green economy, Shkolnik mentioned, including the functioning of the national system of emissions trading.

Director of the Centre for Environmental and Natural Resource Economics at Russia's Higher School of Economics Georgiy Safonov pointed out that Kazakhstan has already decreased its greenhouse gas emissions by 26 percent since 1990 and saved almost 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide in the process. "The contribution of

Kazakhstan in the mitigation of climate change is huge and there is a huge potential for further decreasing this impact," he said.

Sergei Tsoi, deputy director general of Zhasyl Damu, which administers the emissions trading system in the country, noted that the organisation would be focusing on improving monitoring and reporting systems. The use of quotas has caused confusion in the first two pilot years of the programme and better monitoring and a more stringent approach to providing additional quotas are needed. Both need to be supported by legislation. A draft plan is under consideration now for 2016–2020, which he notes will not be a pilot, but a "serious effort" at creating a working programme.

To meet its goals, Kazakhstan will need to increase the price of carbon emission quotas and reduce the current national plan of emissions quotas by half, said Asset Magauov, general director of the Executive Committee of Kazenergy. The country needs to focus mostly on implementing the national programme of energy saving and energy efficiency in all sectors involved with electrical power.

In his concluding remarks, Shkolnik called for more international technology and experience exchange on energy-saving. Kazakhstan spends around 400 kilograms of oil per unit of gross domestic product, he said, while developed countries spend more like 100–200.

Kazakhstan must move away from dependence on fossil fuels and upgrade its economy if the country is to reach its goal of becoming one of the 30 most competitive countries, he said. To become more competitive, the energy intensity of the country's gross domestic product must be reduced.

"And when we are saying we need to reduce emissions, of course it's unequivocal – because our products will not be bought," Shkolnik said. "Under EU legislation, products that don't meet environmental standards are banned. So if it's not [environmentally friendly] a product cannot be sold in the EU. Industry cannot be competitive; our country cannot be competitive if it's not environmentally friendly. It's just not possible, by definition. That's the truth. That's the work that we are talking about. ... Whether we want it or not, these tasks must be implemented."

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# Nation & Capital

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**ATOM Project, Other Nonproliferation Initiatives Highlighted at PNND Forum in Prague**

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**CULTURE**

**Forgoing Meat in the 'Land of Wolves'**

**B3**

**CAPITAL**

**Kazakh Capital Offers Array of Kid Friendly Venues**

**B8**

## Kazakh Skating Star Tursynbayeva Wins Skate Canada Int'l Tournament

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Elizabet Tursynbayeva, Kazakhstan's rising figure skating star, won the adult competition of the Skate Canada Autumn Classic International Tournament held Oct. 13–15 in Barrie, Ontario. The 15-year-old skater earned a career-best 179.72 points, Vesti.kz reports.

Tursynbayeva was in second place after the short programme, but won the free skate to win the tournament. Haruka Imai of Japan came in second with 174.89 points and Angela Wang of the United States was third with 172.36 points.

The young Kazakh skater came in fourth at this year's Junior World Championship in March and made her adult skating debut only in mid-summer. She is the Kazakhstan 2015 National Champion and in September took silver at the 2015 U.S. International Figure Skating Classic in Salt Lake City, Utah. She moved to Toronto, Canada, in May and



Elizabet Tursynbayeva is shown here in a file photo.

works with Canadian coach Brian Orser.

Tursynbayeva's next competition will be the Grand Prix Skate

America on Oct. 23–25, according to Vesti.kz.

## Kazakh TV Director Hopeful of Medium's Future in Face of Mobile Tech, Economic Challenges

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – On the threshold of Kazakh TV's 13th anniversary on Oct. 23, The Astana Times had an opportunity to interview its director, Andrei Tarakov, to learn about the channel, its content and future plans.

The channel has become a link between the numerous ethno-cultural associations abroad and those at home by promoting the cultural and spiritual legacy of the Kazakh people.

"Our channel was originally created as an all-embracing broadcast and at the same time as a unique media resource in three languages, Kazakh, Russian and English," said Tarakov. "The channel has become sort of a 'window' on Kazakhstan, targeting the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) who had historical, cultural and spiritual roots in our country or had relatives. Back in the early 2000s during the 'transitional' years when the old unions were parted with and the new ones were being established,

the mass media was the only link that had kept millions in touch," said Tarakov.

Ironically, Kazakh TV is not well-known in Kazakhstan, as the channel's target audience is foreign viewership.

"It is true that the news approach is different for Kazakh and foreign audiences. What interests us might not interest foreign people and vice versa. The ways of presenting information is also different. As for the programmes on our channel, they're made in a way to satisfy both Kazakh and foreign audiences," Tarakov said.

"We are an image broadcast and this allows us to combine concepts of various channels, like National Geographic and Discovery, at the same time. The format encompasses viewers of many age and social groups with different interests and hobbies," he added.

Tarakov noted the importance of broadcasting content which is interesting to foreign viewers, such as history, ethnography, tourism, travel, economy and business.

Continued on Page B2

## Afghan Scholarship Student Emerges as Hero in Almaty Tram Accident

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Afghan student Basharat Khan Yousefi has emerged as a hero of the Oct. 13 tram accident in Almaty and is being hailed for preventing more damage and injuries. The scholarship student, who is studying medicine at Asfendiyarov Kazakh National Medical University, is credited with staying in the driverless tram while other passengers leapt off, breaking through the glass panel of the locked cabin door and pulling the emergency brake, Tengrinews and other sources report.

"I was about to get off, but I

looked back," Yousefi said, according to an Oct. 16 Tengrinews story. "I saw women and children crying. I realised that if I leave now, something will happen to them. I tried to open the driver's door, but it was locked. I started to hit it with my hands and feet. After I broke it, I began to press different buttons. Then I realised that I need to pull the emergency brake."

Five people were injured, and 14 cars were struck in the accident, which began when the driver got out of the tram to fix a problem while at an intersection. The driver had asked a passenger to push the brake button, according to reports, but the passen-

ger pushed the wrong button and the tram began accelerating without a driver. According to accounts, passengers began jumping off the tram, but elderly passengers and women and children were left inside.

Looking at them, Yousefi thought of his parents, he said. "I remembered my mother. I miss my parents. So I decided for myself, it is better for one person to die than 40," said Yousefi.

Yousefi is in Kazakhstan through a scholarship programme that provides grants for Afghan students to study in Kazakh universities. The five-year, \$50 million dollar programme has already educated nearly 900 students in medicine,

engineering and public administration so far and has just been extended, Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov announced at a sideline meeting of the UN General Assembly last month. Yousefi plans to return to Afghanistan to practice medicine after his studies, he told Tengrinews.

Rector of Asfendiyarov Kazakh National Medical University Aikan Akanov told Tengrinews that he would recommend Yousefi for the annual "Pride of the University" honour this year, and called the student a credit to his parents.

Continued on Page B5

## Experts Discuss Challenges of Introducing Trilingual Education System in Schools

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Experts discussed the introduction of a trilingual (Kazakh, Russian and English) system of education in schools during roundtable talks by the analytical group, the Club Institute of Political Decisions (CIPD), reported Tengrinews. The specialists believe such a programme would grant children access to a wider scope of available information and technologies.

Some experts, however, oppose the idea. Director of KIMEP University's language centre Zhuldyz Smagulova believes the trilingual

education system talks are premature, as the practice would be successful only if the teachers were fluent in the languages they were to teach and were using proper study manuals. She added that learning languages also requires individual skill sets.

"I have seen many children who first studied in Kazakh and then studied Russian, then they travelled abroad to learn a foreign language. As a result, these children can't speak any of these languages properly," said Smagulova. "We need to conduct a detailed analysis of all the pros and cons of all interested parties."

Continued on Page B5

## Taraz Celebrates 550th Anniversary of Kazakh Khanate in Style

By Daniyar Baibekov

TARAZ – President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev took part in the opening ceremony of a monument in Taraz dedicated to the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate. The ceremony was part of celebrations that began in Astana and continued in Taraz Oct. 7–8.

"Over the years of independence, expeditions were organised in various parts of the world in order to study and collect information about our ancient past. Our history dates back to the Saks, Huns, Turks and continues with the move of Khans Kerey and Zhanibek to the banks of Chu River, where the flag of the Kazakh Khanate was raised. We hold these festivities to demonstrate the antiquity of our history to the younger generation and the whole world," Nazarbayev said in his opening speech.

Nazarbayev emphasised that the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate is a national holiday.

"On this occasion, Taraz city's appearance has been transformed. We thank all cities of Kazakhstan for their participation. The commitment of the current generation displays their honour to the legacy of our ancestors and to the spirit of the Great Steppe. We thank guests who arrived from 17 countries," said Nazarbayev.

The President also drew attention

to the dynamic development of the Zhambyl region. He emphasised that this year the region commissioned 170,000 square metres of housing and opened seven schools, three kindergartens and hospitals. Nazarbayev also noted that the Western China-Western Europe transportation corridor will run through the territory of the region.

Despite global instability, conflicts and wars, Kazakh citizens live in an atmosphere of peace

and mutual respect, he said in his remarks, which were broadcast live on television. Today, Kazakhstan is a recognised and respected country. Kazakhstan performs as a mediator in conflict resolutions and holds the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. These things have been achieved thanks to the unity of the Kazakh people, Nazarbayev added.

About 5,000 people attended

the opening ceremony. The monument is 27 metres in height with nearby sculptures of Khans Kerey and Zhanibek that are 4.2 metres high.

The Oct. 7–8 celebrations included motorcycle racing, the presentation of an encyclopedia called "Kazakh statehood," as well as singing poetry competitions, concerts and theatre performances, and sports competitions including horse racing, horseback wrestling, polo and others.



**THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO**

<b>ASTANA OPERA</b>	
<b>October 22 at 7 p.m.</b>	Traviata, Opera
<b>October 24 at 6 p.m.</b>	Karagoz, Ballet
<b>October 27 at 7:30 p.m.</b>	Astana Ballet Gala
<b>November 2 at 7 p.m.</b>	Swan Lake, Ballet
<b>RESTO-BAR 6/45</b>	
<b>October 23 at 8 p.m.</b>	Fryday Astana Networking
<b>GORKY STATE THEATRE</b>	
<b>October 29 at 7 p.m.</b>	Tomiris the Tsarina
<b>TLEP KOBYZ SARAIY</b>	
<b>October 29 at 7 p.m.</b>	The spirit of Deshti-Kipchak, Concert
<b>ASTANA ARENA</b>	
<b>November 3 at 9 p.m.</b>	Astana-Athletico Madrid, Football

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

# Kazakh TV Director Hopeful of Medium's Future in Face of Mobile Tech, Economic Challenges

Continued from Page B1

"Our goal is to encourage the foreign audience to learn more about our country, about its rich history and culture, beautiful nature and its dynamic economy which is open to foreign investment," he added.

Kazakh TV is broadcast in its various languages based on the time of day; it is aired in English in the U.S. and Western Europe in the daytime (their local time) and in Russian and Kazakh in Kazakhstan.

"As for a 100 percent English-broadcasting possibility, we are going towards that in spite of all the legal issues. According to legislation, we have to provide 50 percent of the content in the state language. As an option, we are considering broadcasting in three language tracks that will allow viewers to choose their own audio language using a remote," Tarakov explained.



Andrei Tarakov

Being creative with the content and producing interesting programmes, however, is only half the battle. Today, there are thousands of channels worldwide that

are constantly working on ways to discourage viewers from pushing the 'next' button on their remote. What makes Kazakh TV stand out, we asked the channel director.

"We are not tasked as other image channels to monetise the product. The very existence of the satellite channel, which can't be afforded by every state, is a good investment in the popularisation of a unified 'Kazakhstan' brand. The competitiveness of our products can be characterised, as an example, by the fact that Kazakh TV television projects regularly win prestigious international contests," said Tarakov.

Despite the global financial economic decline, which also recently affected Kazakhstan, the director of the only English-language channel in the country sees profitability for his network.

"We tend to perceive the crisis as an opportunity for development. It is a good time to test strength and

resourcefulness. The global recession also affects our neighbours and partners and because of that they come up with rather interesting proposals on acceptable terms. In addition, this is a temporary circumstance that we simply need to wait to pass. And the quality of the content is in no way to be affected by it. Viewers are accustomed to the existing level of [the product] and low-standard products just will not be acceptable," he added.

Tarakov remains hopeful of the significance of television amid the rapid growth of modern gadgets and mobile apps.

"Ten years ago, no one could have assumed that a linear television would turn into an interactive one and the viewers would have access to archives of past programmes and films. No one could think that it would be possible to rewind and pause live programmes on television, all in the comfort of your armchair.

And no one in their wildest dreams could think that it will be possible to watch TV on a smartphone or a tablet; these gadgets didn't even exist 10 years ago. However, not only the means of delivering television have changed, but also production and customisation. Today, programmes can be subtitled into many languages at the same time without an army of interpreters," Tarakov said.

"In the modern world, people simply have no time to sit in front of a television set. There was a time when a wired telephone used to stand on a chest of drawers; today, it is always next to our hand. Perhaps televised news in the classical form will also soon become history. Today, smartphone users receive the latest news via push notifications; all who are interested can just click on the link to view what has been uploaded by the group that arrived first," said the director.

Despite the changes, Tarakov not-

ed it will be the method of delivery, not the substance, which will change.

"The Roman expression 'bread and circuses' is relevant to this day. The future of television is based on the entertaining content – and it is inconceivable to [create] it without the classic directors, cameramen, script writers and a dozen masters of certain specialisations. So, we shouldn't expect a revolutionary change in the production of television's content. But in the way it will be delivered to the audience, yes, we should expect major changes. Viewers will not watch one specific channel nor will they be flipping them on a remote, but they will be able to make their own playlists of all varieties based on personal preferences. Whoever introduces the best technical solution that will allow people to save both time and money will be extremely successful, while cable operators will be out of work," he said.

# Russian Mountaineer from Kazakhstan Portrayed in 'Everest' Film

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Anatoli Boukreyev, a professional Russian mountaineer from Almaty, Kazakhstan, was the lead climbing guide for the 1996 Mountain Madness expedition to Mount Everest and became widely known for saving climbers during the disaster on the world's tallest peak. He is portrayed by Icelandic actor Ingvar Eggert Sigurðsson in "Everest," the recently-released film directed by Baltasar Kormákur.

An experienced high-altitude climber, Boukreyev scaled 10 of 14 mountain peaks above 8,000 metres (26,247 feet) without supplemental oxygen and made 18 successful ascents of 8,000-metre peaks from 1989 through 1997. He died Dec. 25, 1997.

Boukreyev had a reputation in international climbing circles as an elite mountaineer for summiting K2, the world's second highest mountain, in 1993 and Mount Everest via the North Ridge route



in 1995. Eight climbers died in a blizzard May 10-11 the following year while attempting to reach the summit.

According to an April 28 article in The New York Times, 12 people died trying to reach the summit that season, making it the deadliest day and year on the mount until the 2014 Mount Everest avalanche that took 16 lives and the 2015 Nepal earthquake that resulted in avalanches and 18 deaths.

The 1996 disaster gained wide publicity and raised questions about Everest's commercialisation. Numerous climbers in large

and small teams and even some soloists were near the top during the storm, dying both on the North Face and South Col approaches.

Journalist Jon Krakauer published the 1997 bestseller "Into Thin Air" that related his experience while on assignment from Outside Magazine. He was on a team led by guide Rob Hall, four members of which died on the south side.

Boukreyev, whose team lost expedition guide Scott Fischer but no clients, co-authored "The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest" the

same year in response to Krakauer's criticism of his actions during the 1996 disaster.

"The core of the controversy was Boukreyev's decision to attempt the summit without supplementary oxygen and descend to the camp ahead of his clients in the face of approaching darkness and blizzard," according to the 1998 "Review of the Climb."

He defended his decision to move down the mountain ahead of the expedition clients with the argument that someone needed to be at the camp to get them safely into their tents, warmed up and out of their gear. Most importantly, he wanted the climbers to be rested in case a rescue was necessary, which it was, according to Chloe Johnson's "The Climb" and a June 7, 2012, review of "Into Thin Air."

"Boukreyev rescued four out of six people lost in the storm and went back up toward the summit the next morning in an unlucky attempt to rescue his guide Fischer, who was missing and found frozen

to death," wrote Johnson.

Boukreyev's supporters point out that his return to camp allowed him enough rest to mount a rescue attempt and lead several climbers to the safety of the camp when the blizzard subsided around midnight, noted Sherpa Lopsang Jangbu in response to Krakauer's article on Outsideonline.com.

His detractors said that Boukreyev could have better assisted clients down the mountain if he had simply stayed with them, although every one of his clients survived, including three whom he rescued May 11 after being rested and overcoming hypoxia, reported the article.

"The only client deaths that day were suffered by the Adventure Consultants expedition, led by guide Hall, who lost his own life when he choose to stay and help a client to complete a late summit rather than helping to go down and replenish," it added.

In 1997, Boukreyev was pre-

sented with the David A. Sowles Memorial Award, American Alpine Club's highest honour, in recognition of his role in rescuing the climbers during the 1996 Everest disaster, according to Americanalpineclub.org.

The climber was killed in 1997 avalanche during a winter ascent of Annapurna in Nepal with Dimitri Sobolev, a cinematographer from Kazakhstan who was documenting the attempt.

Boukreyev dreamt in detail of dying in an avalanche exactly nine months before his death, only he did not know on which mountain it would occur. Others attempted to convince him to take a different path in life but he refused, saying mountains were "his life and work" and that it was too late for him "to take another road," according to his companion Linda Wylie. She edited and published his memoirs in the 2002 "Above the Clouds: The Diaries of a High-Altitude Mountaineer."

# ATOM Project, Other Nonproliferation Initiatives Highlighted at PNND Forum in Prague

By Aiman Turebekova

Parliamentarians and nonproliferation activists from Kazakhstan addressed the fifth Prague Agenda Conference and the 2015 Assembly of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (PNND) held in Prague Oct. 14-17, discussing Kazakhstan's latest nonproliferation initiatives.

PNND connects a network of more than 800 parliamentarians from more than 80 countries working to prevent nuclear proliferation and achieve nuclear disarmament. Since U.S. President Barack Obama's 2009 announcement of his long-term nuclear disarmament vision in Prague and the following signing of the 2010 U.S.-Russia START Treaty there, Prague has established itself as a venue for discussion and taking stock of issues related to nuclear arms control, nuclear security, disarmament and nonproliferation.

Members of national parliaments, political leaders, public figures and representatives of the UN, international organisations and the academic community as well as experts in this field attend this conference annually.

This year, special attention was paid to debating the contribution of parliamentarians to nonproliferation, legal frameworks for controlling nuclear materials and fulfilling obligations related to export control mechanisms.

On Oct. 16, Victor Rogalev,



The ATOM Project Honorary Ambassador Karipbek Kuyukov addresses the gathering at the Czech Senate on Oct. 16.

Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Mazhilis (lower chamber of Kazakhstan's Parliament) and member of the Council of the PNND Forum elaborated on recent international initiatives in this area adopted by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The parliamentarian stressed the importance of galvanising general public opinion against nuclear testing and in favour of banning nuclear weapons.

"Kazakhstan has a moral right to raise this issue, since approximately 450 nuclear tests were conducted in our country between 1949 and 1989. As a result of these tests more than 1.5 million people in Kazakh-

stan suffered, and we are still experiencing negative consequences today," Rogalev highlighted.

Rogalev also presented The ATOM Project ("Abolish Testing. Our Mission") to the gathering. The ATOM Project is committed to creating global support for a comprehensive nuclear test ban and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Honorary Ambassador of The ATOM Project Karipbek Kuyukov, a painter and long-time international activist against nuclear testing, addressed the conference.

As a second-generation victim of nuclear tests, Kuyukov spoke about his life, his hardship and the tragic fates of his compatriots, who have also suffered from the nuclear testing

conducted on the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. He also noted that he counted among his friends many people who had worked to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986, and who were also well aware of the suffering nuclear testing and nuclear accidents could wreak. Kuyukov, who was involved with the famous Nevada-Semipalatinsk anti-nuclear movement in the 1980s and early 1990s, expressed his gratitude to Nazarbayev for his decision to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, which he said inspired him to make his own contribution to the struggle for a nuclear-weapon-free world. He stressed that one of humanity's main missions on the planet should be to do whatever it takes to prevent ordinary people and future generations from suffering from nuclear testing.

An exhibition of Kuyukov's paintings, expressing the pain and tragedy of nuclear testing for the land and people of Kazakhstan, was also held within the event, as was a photo series on nuclear security in today's world.

Kazakhstan has launched a number of disarmament and nonproliferation initiatives, including the successful negotiations to establish a Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, the proposal to establish the International Day Against Nuclear Tests (which was passed by the UN in 2009) and The ATOM Project, which was launched at the 2012 PNND Assembly in Astana with Kuyukov appointed honorary ambassador.



LEARN MORE  
TheATOMProject.org

# CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## In Kazakhstan, East and West Meet in Ancient Superstitions

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Every nation has its superstitions, which people follow in different ways. Some still believe in them, some think they are old and best left to history.

From a young age, children are taught by their elders about signs of good or bad luck. Most superstitions can be traced to ancient times and at some point became part of the culture. Their roots are forgotten and people often believe and practice them without knowing how they originated or what they really mean.

Since Kazakhstan is located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, many of its superstitions come from far-flung regions of the world. A lot of people here believe it is bad luck to take photographs of people while they are sleeping. Evgeniya Fedorova, a 27-year-old mother from Karaganda, follows this belief, though she does not know where the superstition arose. According to numerous resources, the idea that photographing sleeping people brought bad luck was spread in Europe in the 19th century, when there was a tradition of taking pictures of

the dead as if they had just fallen asleep. It was believed that during sleep, a person is most vulnerable to the evil eye.

“My grandmother used to tell me that it is bad to take a picture of a sleeping person. Now that I have a little son, I don’t allow my husband to shoot him while he sleeps, because I remember my grandmother’s words and I think I believe that something bad could happen to my child,” said Fedorova.

Another popular superstition involves a black cat crossing the road, a common sign of bad luck in many countries. Black cats are associated with bad luck and it is believed this myth came from the times when horseback riders met black cats on dark roads. The animals were often scared and made sharp movements, causing the riders to fall and black cats became associated with evil spirits.

“When a black cat crosses my way, I usually say ‘zholseniki, bakhymeniki,’ which means ‘the road is yours, but happiness is mine.’ I don’t even know who taught me that; I just remember always saying that whenever I see black cats. Actually, all of my friends and relatives do the same,”

said Sabina Smagulova, a 25-year-old accountant at a local construction company.

Many superstitions in Kazakh culture are connected with the evil eye. It is believed little children are most frequently exposed to the evil eye, hence the tradition of “40 days after birth.”

For 40 days after a child is born, he or she is usually shown to no one except those closest to the family. According to pre-Islamic ideas, the feeling existed that during his or her first 40 days of life, an infant must be protected from evil spirits that might replace the baby. Parents light lamps at night, because evil spirits are thought to be afraid of fire and light. Once the days have passed, the ritual of “kyrkynan shygaru” is held for the newborn. Kyrkynan shygaru literally translates as “coming out of the 40 days.” The ceremony is carried out after a child reaches 40 days of age and is considered a second birthday. The essence of the ritual is the bathing of the baby in 41 spoonfuls of water, usually measured out with a new spoon purchased for the ritual. Participants of the ceremony are usually respected older and younger wom-

en. Forty-one coins (a symbol of wealth) and 41 kumalaks (pellets or beans symbolising a long and hearty life), are also thoroughly cleaned and put into water. Guests pour 41 spoons of water in the bowl while offering best wishes for the baby. It is believed they charge the water with their positive energy.

Participants take care to cover every part of the baby with water, as it is believed any parts missed out will be vulnerable throughout its life. After the bathing, women trim baby’s hair and nails. After the ritual, the coins, bowl and spoon are distributed among guests as souvenirs, so they could have in their house the same joy the birth of a baby brings.

Parents also often put black paint or soot on the child’s forehead when they go into crowded places: the practice is thought to thwart the evil eye by distracting potential evil-doers with the black spot. Special amulets with eyes on them, known as “kozmonshak,” which literally means “beads with eyes,” are also thought to help ward off the evil eye. Similar amulets have become popular among car owners, who hang them

in their vehicles in the belief they will bring an “open road” and luck.

Kazakh culture is also rich with superstitions connected with bad spirits (“shaitans”). Refrigerators, closets and boxes in Kazakh homes should not remain open and everything should be cleaned after the evening meal or the house will attract bad spirits that can harm the owners. The roots of this superstition are unknown, but some people say they were created for educational purposes. Fearing the spirits, young girls were taught housework and cleaning skills.

“I do not think that I believe in any superstition. But now, when I am really thinking about it, I start realising how many of them I follow,” said Zhanna Akhmetova, a 33-year-old nurse at a local hospital. “The ones I can think of right now include first not eating from a knife. My mom used to tell me to never eat from a knife (in ancient times, a knife was used for spiritual rituals and also could be dangerous). Second, I was never allowed to clean a table with a paper towel or napkin. I was told that it leads to being poor. Another one, my mother never allowed me to put my bag on the floor. She used to say that some-

thing bad is going to happen. And if I come back home when I am in a rush, when I forgot something, I always have to look in the mirror.”

Several superstitions were spread throughout the world and believed by many people, like throwing salt over one’s left shoulder or knocking on wood for a good luck, the unlucky nature of the number 13, people making wishes when they throw coins into a fountain or see falling stars or the groom not seeing the bride in her wedding dress before the nuptials.

The origin of many superstitions remains unknown. Certain ones are related to religious beliefs of the period, while others were created to scare the younger generation and control their behaviour. In certain instances, they existed because of harsh times, such as not allowing people to cut their nails in the evening. Kazakhs did not have electricity and it was feared the nails would get into clothes or even food. Some superstitions have been passed through centuries and societies and reached the present totally transformed. Some vanished and others lost their original meaning, but superstitions remain as part of the cultural heritage of any society.

## Forgoing Meat in the ‘Land of Wolves’

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – For foreigners, being vegetarian in Kazakhstan can be challenging, but for locals, it’s practically subversive. This is a culture, after all, that has given rise to the saying, “The only creatures that eat more meat than Kazakhs are wolves.” With a cuisine dominated by meat and dairy and the presentation of a sheep’s head a standard way to honour guests, Kazakh vegetarians and vegans find themselves with a lot of explaining to do.

evening. Those were the only two instances – otherwise, I’ve turned vegetarianism into a chance to share my beliefs and philosophy.”

With the number of available imported products – and perhaps ideas – growing steadily and an increasingly cosmopolitan population, it is getting slightly easier, and slightly more common, to live meat-free in Kazakhstan. Currier has seen huge changes happen since he first arrived, he said.

“While people might not be vegetarian, there are many more vegetarian options available at restaurants, cafes and gyms,” he

critical. “When I explain to people that I’m vegetarian, they don’t usually accept it immediately – instead, they become aggressive in pushing their own beliefs.” Now, she says, her family accommodates her by serving her food prepared separately at family events.

Founder and director of Astana’s vegetarian VedRosy Flower Cafe near the Diplomat Hotel Vladimir Sarayev says they got the idea for the cafe after his mother, Tatyana, decided to go vegetarian and then shift to a raw food diet for health reasons. “We were thinking that there’s no vegetarian or raw food

their families hate it. At celebrations, they face a lot of problems.”

And while not many of his friends are vegetarian, they are all happy to eat his vegetarian food, he said.

“I feel happy. I have a lifestyle without violence. I am a peaceful man,” Chikunov said. As for other people’s negative reactions, he said, “I have responsibility only over myself, not over other people’s thoughts or reactions. I feel sometimes that I am rejected, but I am stronger than this.”

Chikunov never really liked meat, he said. “My parents pushed me to eat meat. They said I would be sick and weak if I didn’t eat meat. But now they realise that they were mistaken.”

Marketing professional Tatyana Plotnikova, 30, described herself as someone who tries to eat and live ethically in an interview with The Astana Times Oct. 16. This means sticking to a generally plant-based diet.

“Frankly speaking, Kazakhstan is not the most suitable place to have a plant-based diet,” she said, though it is easier now than it was 15 years ago. Still, today, sometimes even a basic understanding of what is or is not acceptable for vegetarians is sometimes lacking, she said.

“Once, I was assured by a waitress that their soup had no meat, and when she brought it, there it was – bacon. She thought, ‘It’s not meat, it’s just bacon.’ Many also believe that the fish, chicken, shrimp – all this may well be part of a vegetarian table. And, of course, the probability of having meat in soup broth is close to 100 percent,” she said.

Vegetarians can deal with this two ways, Plotnikova said: either take these misunderstandings in stride or eat at home. “My way is in the middle: I try to eat at home, but if you eat out and something isn’t right, don’t fall into rage or despair.”

The cultural component is a more difficult question. “Indeed, weddings, birthdays, banquets all create good chances to encounter misunderstanding,” she said. “I’m not talking about insults or bad attitudes, just a lot of questions, astonished eyes, a lack of alternatives on the table.” Over the years, her circle of friends has come to include more and more vegetarians and people who try to avoid cruelty or be environmentally aware in their consumption habits, and those who don’t share her lifestyle generally understand and accept it, she said.

Still, it is so unusual to be vegetarian in Kazakhstan that she often doesn’t bother telling anyone but close friends. “I’m just tired of responding to the same question a thousand times.”

## Kazakh Singer Wins Second Place in International Contest

By Zhaniya Urankayeva

ASTANA – Kazakh singer Ademi recently captured second place and the Audience Award at the international contest New Wave in Sochi, Russia.

Kazakh singer Ademi, who came in second place and won the Audience Award at the New Wave international singing contest in Sochi, Russia.

This year the competition attracted 15 finalists from Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Ukraine, Switzerland and Russia.

Kazakhstan was represented by Dinara Kairova, also known by her stage name Ademi. She is a specialist in international relations and international tourism. Kairova has participated in various international music festivals, and she had dreamed of winning the New Wave contest since she was little.

“Because the previous New Wave contests coincided with my birthday, I always dreamed of becoming a winner and I thought it would be the best gift! I have been watching this competition since

2002. I think the brightest performer is Jamala from Ukraine. She is a unique singer with amazing charisma! After I found out that I was in the finals, it changed my son’s life even more than mine! He said that a lot of people started to recognise him because his mother became famous,” said the singer.

The contestants received crystal statuettes representing three waves with keys. The main prize was 3.5 million roubles (US\$55,754) and the winner’s title went to Damir Kedžo from Croatia. Second place and a prize of 2.2 million roubles (US\$35,045) was shared by Ademi from Kazakhstan and Millane Fernandez from Indonesia. The Ukrainian group The Pringlez took the third place and 1.3 million roubles (US\$20,708).

The New Wave contest for young pop singers was held in Sochi for the first time. From 2002 to 2014, the annual competition had been held in Jurmala, Latvia.

Each year the jury consists of the most popular artists and musicians of Russia and other countries. The chairman of the jury is People’s Artist of Russia, producer and composer Igor Krutoi.



Stanley Currier (R) and Baur Safi (second from left) at a vegan cooking class in Compote Studio, Almaty.

“I’ve been vegetarian for ethical reasons since the age of 14, so when I came to Kazakhstan at the age of 24, I’d already been vegetarian for 10 years and was not going to compromise,” Stanley Currier, co-founder of the Vegetaristan website, told The Astana Times in an Oct. 5 interview. Over 15 years in Kazakhstan, there were only two times he felt he absolutely had to eat meat, he said.

“My first meal with my host family in the Peace Corps was one. Even though they had been ‘prepped’ that I was vegetarian, they still prepared a sheep’s head in my honour on the day I moved it. I took a very tiny bite under the watchful eyes of my host parents,” Currier said.

The other time, in Kyzylorda, “I was the only foreigner at the event and was put at the head table. Over the course of several hours the only food served (along with copious amounts of alcohol) was meat and boursaks, and again, I had many expectant eyes on me through the

said. “I’d even say that it’s become somewhat trendy to eat more of a plant-based diet among the health-conscious crowd.”

With Vegetaristan, Currier and co-founder Baur Safi of Almaty wanted to promote vegetarian recipes using products from local bazaars or supermarkets. “We wanted to highlight healthy, plant-based recipes, and also show people that many traditional Central Asian dishes can be made without meat,” even plov, lagman and manty, he said. The Facebook page has more than 2,000 followers now, and the group works with the Compote Studio in Almaty to lead vegetarian and vegan master classes, which they say are attended by primarily non-vegetarians curious about a vegetarian diet. There are also other social media groups for people to swap recipes and plan vegetarian events.

Still, it is a controversial choice, Safi said. Her mother accepted it and took the opportunity to eat less meat herself, but her father is still

cafe here in Astana, so we decided to open one,” he said on Oct. 12.

The feedback is generally very positive, Sarayev said. Since the cafe doesn’t serve alcohol either, many people are starting to choose the cafe as an option for kids parties, birthday parties and other events intended to be healthy and family-friendly.

Ilya Chikunov, a chef at the cafe, has been a vegan for five years. He changed his eating habits to reflect his belief in the importance of animal rights and animal welfare, he said, but since he quit eating meat, he has lost weight and seen the health problems that plagued him disappear. That doesn’t mean that it has been easy, he said. “But if you want to do something, you can do it.”

Chikunov also says being from an ethnically Russian family made the change easier. “If I had been born in a very traditional Kazakh family, it would be hard. I know a couple of people born in Kazakh families [who are vegetarian] and



Kazakh singer Ademi came in second and won the Audience Award at the New Wave international singing contest in Sochi, Russia.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## Kazakh Car Growth Rate Is Ahead of That of Population

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Figures show there are 252 cars for every 1,000 people in Kazakhstan. The data was compiled by PricewaterhouseCoopers and made public by the company's Kazakhstan Director of Consultancy Services in automotive and logistic fields Shalkar Nurtleuov during the third Mechanical Engineers of Kazakhstan forum in Astana.

"The pool of automobiles in Kazakhstan makes up 4.4 million units. The growth rate of cars is ahead of population growth rates. There are 252 cars for every 1,000 people in Kazakhstan now ... there is a big enough potential in Kazakhstan for the share of new cars per capita to increase," he said, according to a Tengrinews report on Oct. 1.

Almaty, Astana and the North Kazakhstan and Pavlodar regions lead in the number of cars per capita. The growth in the northern regions and cities increased in the last year, noted Nurtleuov, pointing to the area's geographic loca-



tion and proximity to Russia as the primary reason.

"People rushed to Russia for cars and this index increased exactly in the northern regions," he said, adding that enormous potential can still be seen in the South Kazakhstan and Kyzylorda regions as the number of cars per capita is still low despite the very high population density.

Speaking about the share of imported and domestic car sales, Nurtleuov noted domestic carmakers are interested in seeing further

development of the mechanical engineering sector, wrote Tengrinews.

"We are now seeing the dynamics of the outflow of Kazakhstan buyers from Russia to the domestic market, because the Russian rouble is not discordant in relation to the tenge and there is no longer any sense in going to Russia," he said, adding citizens are already oriented towards domestic carmakers.

Representatives of official Kazakh car brands made projections

on the stabilisation of the situation in the domestic car sector after a series of economic upheavals including the global drop in oil prices and devaluation of the rouble and tenge.

According to Tengrinews, Ford Kazakhstan Regional Sales Director Mikhail Kvetnis is confident the nation's new car market is stable and showing growth year by year.

"The market grew by 24 percent in 2014 against 2013, for example, and it has grown by 17 percent in the first seven months of the current year," he said.

Similar optimism was expressed by Renault Director of Kazakhstan Sales Sergey Kuzmin.

"Renault started to work in the Kazakhstan market when new car sales sufficiently increased in the country, reaching 165,000 new cars per year. Despite a series of economic troubles in the state, we are very optimistic and plan to increase sales in the next five years," he said in an Oct. 9 interview during the Third Astana International Auto Salon (AIAS 2015).

## Chevron, KazMunayGas Partner to Enhance Kazakhstan's Technical Capabilities

By Arsen Nurzhanov

KMG delegation visiting the ETC laboratory in Richmond, California

Since the start of its operations in Kazakhstan in 1993, Chevron has continuously invested in developing and training its local workforce to meet the increasing demands of Kazakhstan's oil and gas industry. Together with its partner, Kazakhstan's national oil and gas company KazMunayGas (KMG), numerous programmes have been developed to improve the capacity of local companies and specialists, including training, delivery of new technologies and assistance to purchase technologically advanced equipment and software programmes.

As part of the technology development programme, in 2014, a group of 13 specialists from KMG and its subsidiaries visited Chevron Energy Technology Centre (ETC) offices and its laboratories in Houston, Texas and Richmond, California. During the visit, they were introduced to ETC's worldwide technology portfolio and engaged in discussions on developing organisational capability, technology delivery models, i-field (Integrated Field) Upstream Workflow Transformation, next-generation

seismic, reservoir and well productivity technologies, as well as core analysis technologies and methodologies.

Chevron also sponsored KMG's Scientific Research Institute of Production and Drilling Technology by purchasing "INTERSECT" next generation reservoir simulation software. This advanced technology allows research teams to simulate large, complex reservoirs and highly heterogeneous systems,

including Tengiz and Karachaganak.

In 2015, 19 KMG operations specialists visited Chevron's Mid-Continent Business unit in Midland, Texas, participating in intensive overview sessions on rod pump design and optimisation and visiting Chevron operated fields and local service companies that support its operations.

Frank Cassulo, EBU deputy managing director commented

on the programme saying, "The Eurasia Business Unit is extremely pleased to partner with KMG and its experts to further enhance KMG's technical capabilities." He added, "Chevron believes this workforce development programme will enable KMG specialists to leverage Chevron's experience to enhance their base business operations and develop expertise in production optimisation to increase oil recovery."



KMG delegation visiting the ETC laboratory in Richmond, California.

## East Kazakhstan State Technical University Contributes to Development of Technical Professionals

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan is working on industrial and innovative development, but that development is impossible without a highly-qualified technical staff.

East Kazakhstan State Technical University (EKSTU) in Ust-Kamenogorsk, one of the oldest universities in the state, is working jointly with major local industrial companies. A very effective and modern university, it provides engineering and technical staff for the country.

The major academic centre of the East Kazakhstan region, EKSTU was included in the list of the 10 best universities of the state, training highly-qualified specialists for the second stage of the state programme of industrial and innovative development.

The university has three faculties, engineering, geoscience and



The EKSTU main building.

IT and business, comprised of 22 academic departments with 84 educational programmes, including 41 specialties for bachelor's degrees, 36 for master's degrees and seven for PhDs.

Established Aug. 5, 1958, EKSTU was founded to fill the rapid

development needs of the East Kazakhstan region industry and became a critical necessity for engineering and technical staff. In 2005, the university was renamed for its first rector, Dautlet Serikbayev, a World War II veteran and great scientist who

made many contributions to the school.

In the difficult years of the 1990s, EKSTU didn't strive merely to survive, but became one of several Kazakh universities providing multi-specialty education. At the time, the university had 23 specialties, six of which were unique to the young state. By 1993, 17 scientific laboratories, three regional scientific centres and one experimental area were operating.

For many decades, the university has had excellent connections with the major industrial companies of the region. Such close cooperation makes training very effective, because companies can stipulate what specialists they need and graduates can translate their knowledge and skills into practice. As a result, all 86 academic departments organise their practical trainings, laboratories and profes-

## Almaty Parking Day Reimagines City Parking Spaces as Mini-Parks

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – In connection with a project to promote Car Free Days in Almaty, the UNDP and its Global Environmental Facility (GEF) held a festival dedicated to finding creative ways to use parking spaces in the city.

"Almaty designers, artists and young architects used parking spots to organise so-called 'parklets' – mini-zones for recreation – where citizens could rest and see for themselves how the urban space could be changed in just one day," the UNDP said about the project in an article on the organisation's website.

The project, which is also supported by the akimat (city administration) of Almaty, is intended to demonstrate the inefficiency of using city space for parking cars, according to a UNDP article about the event, by showing alternative uses for parking spaces.

Public coordinator of the campaign and landscape architect at the Gorod Projects Laboratory Katerina Novoselova said, "The purpose of the Parking Day is to show that the city is a common space for all of us and how the vast territories occupied by vehicles could turn into parks, cafes and recreation areas for our citizens. This campaign is a small drop in people's consciousness, an attempt to demonstrate to the citizens that our city is communal and we're able to fill it with useful content," according to the UNDP story.

Manager of the City of Almaty Sustainable Transport Project Yelena Yerkovich told The Astana Times that "Almaty has nice streets with greenery and sidewalks but all this space is not distributed between all street users equally, and pedestrians and cyclist have not enough space or are locked out by parked cars. ... Our partners and pedestrian walking around supported the idea of sharing space for some alternative activities and highlighted problems with transport-related air pollution."

More than 60 cyclists and 1,000 pedestrians took part in the event, according to the UNDP, taking pictures in parklets, talking and relaxing. Alesya Nugayeva, one of the pedestrians who dropped by the event, said, "For me it was the first experience of successfully combining something dynamic and something static: the speed of passing cars, people hurrying to work and the dangling green oasis of calm in the midst of a city centre with its smiling people inviting



Photo credit: eve.com.mt

you to enjoy pastry, sit in a chair, have a chat, play games, ride a bike – to dedicate one day to take care of the city, to stop and breathe the scent of September after a morning rain and to take a walk," the UNDP reported.

The parklets created for Parking Day were chosen for their locations near sidewalks, cafes and small shops in order to emphasise the mission of the campaign: to remind people that parking spaces are common areas of city citizens, not the private property of motorists, the UNDP said. They noted that the campaign also attracted media attention and is generating stories. The project was supported by students from the city's universities as well as small businesses in Almaty.

The UNDP is in the last stages of the 2011–2015, \$81 million City of Almaty Sustainable Transport project funded by the UNDP/GEF, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Almaty city government and the World Bank to reduce the growth of transport-related greenhouse gas emissions in the city while also improving urban environmental conditions.

The project notes that Kazakhstan is the largest greenhouse gas emitter in Central Asia, and that the country's transport sector is the fastest-growing source of carbon dioxide emissions, with Almaty's ground transport providing a significant share. The overall project aims to improve the management of public transportation and air quality in Almaty, build capacity in Almaty to holistically plan and implement improvements in the efficiency and quality of public transport, build capacity to holistically plan and implement integrated traffic management measures in Almaty City and to raise awareness and increase knowledge of sustainable transport, according to the UNDP.

According to a Tengrinews report in November of last year that cited UNDP data, only 30 percent of all journeys in Almaty are taken using public transport. Meanwhile, motorised transport accounts for more than 80 percent of urban air pollution in the city, according to the report. They forecast a 75 percent increase in air pollution by 2023 should the amount of carbon dioxide emissions rise from 2.65 million tonnes in 2012 to 4.99 million tonnes.

# SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## Nation's Charitable Organisations Attempt to Boost Philanthropic Culture

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – There are thousands of charity funds in Kazakhstan, but none is receiving enough aid from those who are prosperous. To encourage citizens to share, a new bill was drafted in March which stipulates a tax decrease for those who give to charities, but charity organisations are not too hopeful about its ramifications.

“The new bill won't be effective for the development of philanthropy [culture] in Kazakhstan,” said Aruzhan Sain, head of Mercy Volunteer Society, as quoted at the time by Tengrinews.kz. “The document stipulates awards, but it would be more useful if we used other methods. For instance, if an individual spends up to five percent of earnings on charity, he or she would be exempt from taxes on transportation ... But at this point we don't need this bill ... We don't have anything to attract businessmen except for moral satisfaction.” Sain, however, feels that high



Mercy Voluntary Society

officials could make a more concerted effort.

“Thanks to the efforts of many people and organisations in different ways, we helped 1,304 children from all regions of our country,” she said, and 1,819 surgeries have

been paid for, including multiple surgeries for some children. “The amount for paid surgeries from 2007 to 2015 is \$10,782,795. This amount does not include surgeries where funds have been transferred straight to the accounts of the par-

ents as well as surgeries conducted by foreign doctors in Kazakhstan.”

“Except for the President [Nazarbayev], I don't know any other ‘generous’ high official. There are some who help by other means; for instance, Mazhilis Member Maulen Ashimbayev, Secretary of State Gulshara Abdykalikova and Kazakhstan's Prosecutor General Askhat Daulbayev,” she said.

The website outlined the society's purpose and concerns.

“The main objective of our fund is to be a ‘communication link’ between those who want to help and those who are in need. Sometimes people want to be helpful and, most importantly, to have the opportunity to help: with money, services or with their hands or professional knowledge. But many of them simply do not know how they can realise their potential. Often it happens that a person needs somebody's help when he or she does not know where to go and what to do. We are happy to help you in

choosing the best way to help the kids,” it states.

The public charitable foundation Nur Alem Kazakhstan is another example of a thriving philanthropic cultural society, according to its president Natalya Konovalova.

“Thanks to the state support of the employment and social programmes, they are important and play a huge role in the existence of our organisation. Since our founding, we have collaborated with government agencies, acting as sponsors and seeking opportunities among the population of the city of Astana. For example, we have established very warm relations with the Sandkytau orphanage No. 3 in the Akmol region and they always greet us like family. The orphanage is located in the forest area of the Sandkytau village, 400 kilometres from Astana. Every year we visit the talented children engaged in artistic activities, local history and tourism. There are lots of great athletes among the kids, who have

won prizes and awards at [different] competitions,” she said.

Konovalova added that Nur Alem Kazakhstan was conceived with the concept of promoting the country's philanthropic culture.

“I would like to add that before launching our foundation, we made it our mission to develop a culture of philanthropy in Kazakhstan. Under the chosen mission, we tried to scatter the grain of goodness by our example, to show the public the needs of children and try to engage others. We tried to raise the moral and spiritual level of society in our country, because the foundation for the future was in our hands and in our actions. Our task is to unite the people of our peace-loving country, continuing the traditions established by many generations. And the name of the fund Nur Alem Kazakhstan was chosen with an ulterior motive – a patriotic character and most importantly – faith in the people of the country!” she said.

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## Newly-Launched Acts of Kindness Action Brings Hope for Better Society

By Kseniya Voronina

“Do good things and post them on social media” is the motto of Acts of Kindness, a social action programme presented Oct. 6 in Astana. Initiated by the National Volunteer Network and supported by the Seventh TV channel, organisers believe the measure will help them achieve several goals at once: helping those in need, spreading the word about citizens' acts of kindness and increasing the amount of positive content in the media.

“During these difficult times when we face more negative than positive content every day, simple acts of kindness made by ordinary Kazakh citizens living from Aktau to Ust-Kamenogorsk can inspire people to do good deeds more often. That is why we have launched the social prize for kindness in Kazakhstan and we call on you to expose your own or other people's good deeds and share them with us on our website or post them on social media platforms like VKontakte and Facebook in the form of a photo or video message,” said National Volunteer Network expert Zhanara Omarova.

The planners noted one of the main obstacles in promoting the initiative is the question of morality, as it is usually not acceptable to “boast” about doing kind things or helping others.

“We understand that. After all, people do not do good deeds for the public and therefore feel ashamed writing about them. We focus on Western public charitable actions and flash mobs which generate so much positive energy that other people start joining the initiative. Another option is to write about other people who,

in your opinion, deserve to be mentioned for their kindness and willingness to make this world a little better. We are going to encourage our participants by establishing special categories,” added Omarova.

The Naimi.kz project, one of the initiators and a participant in the action, provides free assistance with home repair for socially-disadvantaged citizens.

“This month we have completed repairs for three pensioners. However, the number of requests is still pretty low,” said Naimi Executive Director Erlan Esemseitov.

Kazakh celebrities were among first activists to support the cause. Actor and head of the Astana Zhastary Youth Resource Centre Anuar Nurpeisov stressed the importance of the action, noting how “truly touched” he was earlier this year when he read about the ways people united to help flood victims in the Karaganda region.

“People didn't just express kind words, but really helped by bringing food, warm clothes and building materials and collecting money. Such happenings give us hope that our society is able to support others during the hard periods we all experience once in a while. Let this story be the proof that kindness does exist and will continue existing. Tell the world about good things happening by sharing them on social networks and don't forget to put the hashtag #DoGoodThings,” he said.

Applications for participation can be submitted until Nov. 10. The list of participants will be published Nov. 13, followed by public voting through Nov. 19. The gala award ceremony will take place Nov. 20 and be aired Nov. 27 on the Seventh TV channel.



## Almaty Public Transport Introduces New Electronic Ticketing System

By Julia Rutz

ASTANA – Starting from Oct. 1, Almaty city public transport has been operating an electronic ticketing system for passengers, reported Tengrinews.kz. The system utilises different types of Onai cards and validators for checking.

**There are two types of cards: for those who have no exemptions and for socially vulnerable citizens. The second type of cards are planned to be distributed for free at schools, universities and colleges starting from Oct. 5.**

Passengers trying to use cash for city transportation will be given one warning. It will be explained to passengers where they can acquire the card they need and how to use it. The Almaty subway will join the new ticketing system before the end of this year.

According to Deputy Akim (Mayor) of Almaty Yuri Ilyin, the introduction of the transport card

system will allow the system to track its buses.

“The system has been already put into operation, as well as a special traffic control service. Those companies that don't comply with the prescribed schedule will be penalised. The administration of motor pools has to control the process; however, if they are

not aware of the new ticketing system.

“We have realised sales of 1,300 transport cards in 500 different news-stands in one day. With time, we plan to increase the number to 2,000 cards,” said General Director of Transport Holding of Almaty City Serik Zhumabekov.

One ticket costs 400 tenge (US\$1.50). The price includes a trip fee – 80 tenge (29 cents), as well as the caution money – 320 tenge (US\$1.20), which can be then returned in case a passenger wants to return the card and can show a voucher. Replenishment is possible in the places cards can be

purchased, as well as online and with the help of special QIWI terminals.

There are two types of cards: for those who have no exemptions and for socially vulnerable citizens. The second type of cards are planned to be distributed for free at schools, universities and colleges starting from Oct. 5. In order to get such a card, pensioners have to request them in special departments for social protection in their district.

It was also decided by the Almaty city akimat (city administration) that veterans and people over 75 years of age don't have to pay for the transport ticket.



## Afghan Scholarship Student Emerges as Hero in Almaty Tram Accident

Continued from Page B1

The university will send a letter to his parents, thanking them, he said. One of the university's missions is to instill a sense of empathy in their students, and a desire to help people. “[Yousefi] acted like a true future doctor,” Akanov said.

Khiuz Sazanbayeva, one of the passengers, spoke to Tengrinews about what happened. “We were shocked and confused [afterward], and we did not even ask his last name. I found him and came to the university to say how thankful I am for saving our lives. Allah helped us, and he saved us. We could be dead. He tried so hard to open driver's cabin, he risked his life. I am amazed by his bravery,” she said. It appears to be other passengers who have reported the story of the student's heroism, not Yousefi himself.

Of the university's newest hero, Akanov told Tengrinews, “He is actively involved in the public life of the university, and he has great command of Kazakh and Rus-



Basharat Khan Yousefi, the Afghan student who became a hero for stopping a runaway tram in Almaty.

sian languages. I am proud that he overstepped his personal fears and showed sympathy for the old men and women and children who remained in the runaway tram. He could have jumped, but instead he did everything for other people. I believe that he will make a great doctor and a very good man.”

One woman was seriously injured in the accident and remains in hospital.

## Experts Discuss Challenges of Trilingual Education System

Continued from Page B1

Educational policy and effective methodology must be based on scientific data and not personal experience.”

The idea of trilingual education also garnered positive feedback, however. Senior educator of the National Institute of Qualification Upgrades for the managing and scientific staff of the Kazakh education sector Kulpash Sariyeva used the Daryn scientific-practical centre as an example of the system.

“Children in these schools speak Kazakh, Russian and English well,” she said.

“I think the policy of trilingualism will open up new opportunities. I would like to note that the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science are introducing this methodology not because it was someone's ambition, but because it has been tested and tried scientifically,” said Sariyeva.

CIPD is an organisation with a mission to foster open and effec-

tive cooperation among the government, society, business, scientific and expert communities. The group promotes the values of civil society and cultural political dialogue, according to its website.

**SARIYEVA: “I think the policy of trilingualism will open up new opportunities.”**

In August, Minister of Science and Education Aslan Sarinzhipov announced the Kazakh education system will undergo major changes until 2020, with subjects like Kazakh literature, history and geography to be taught in Kazakh. High school informational technology, physics, chemistry and biology will be taught in English, while elementary school students will learn Kazakh and Russian from first grade.

# TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## EXPO 2017 Logo to Mark Air Astana Aircraft Fleet

By Julia Rutz

Astana EXPO 2017 company Chairman Akhmetzhan Yessimov (L) and Air Astana President Peter Foster.

The first EXPO 2017 logo has been emblazoned on the fuselage of an Embraer 190, the result of a memorandum of cooperation between Astana EXPO 2017 and Air Astana, the largest national carrier in Kazakhstan. The signing ceremony was held Aug. 17 with the participation of company president Peter Foster and Astana EXPO 2017 company Chairman Akhmetzhan Yessimov.

All 30 aircraft in the fleet are expected to be marked. The aviation company is the official carrier of the coming exhibition and is also an official partner of the event.

Starting next year, the partners will begin implementing a joint



campaign to promote the exhibition in international markets. The Air Astana business network currently includes more than 40,000 agents and passengers traveling with the airline during the exhibition period will be able to visit EXPO 2017 for free.

The exposition will be dedicated to green energy, including energy consumption issues as well as the use of energy-efficient technologies. According to Foster, one of Air Astana's main goals continues to be the question of reduced emissions into the atmosphere. During the Paris-Le Bourget Air Show in June, Air Astana announced it will purchase an A320neo airbus to reduce emissions by 15 percent.

The aircraft branding is an important step to further develop the expo project and also marks the beginning of the practical means

of partnership with Air Astana, said Astana EXPO 2017 public relations department head Sergei Kuyanov.

"EXPO 2017 has several ultimate goals, one of which is the development of tourism in Kazakhstan. We expect more than 2 million tourists to come and this is an achievable number. The Astana EXPO 2017 national company has already signed several agreements with the world's largest tour operators, which are ready to start sales of tours to Kazakhstan in 2017. They will offer package tours, such as visiting the exhibition and Burabai resort or Almaty city," he added.

Kuyanov also noted the company is waiting for other contracts with several national companies to be concluded soon and join the EXPO 2017 promotion project.

## BIE Secretary-General Inspects EXPO 2017 Preparations, Expresses Confidence in Project

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – International Expositions Bureau (BIE) Secretary-General Vicente Loscertales expressed satisfaction with preparations for EXPO 2017 in Astana and confidence in the ongoing work on the event during an inspection visit by the BIE to the Kazakh capital.

"Until now, the preparation has been conducted on two parallel directions: construction and promotion. Now, it is important to look at all this in general. We are no longer in the planning phase, we are going to the finish line – at the stage of finalisation of everything

that was discussed with the Kazakh authorities, the organisers of the exhibition," Loscertales said at the Central Communications Service briefing on Oct. 7.

He also stressed that the period of organising and holding the expo was coinciding with a time of economic difficulties around the world, and that the theme, Future Energy, would help with resolving the crisis.

"Now we are facing a crisis related to the price of oil, gas and other traditional fuels. This makes the theme of the expo even more important and relevant to current challenges, because it can offer new methods for overcoming the

crisis," the BIE secretary-general said.

According to Loscertales, the leadership of the Astana EXPO 2017 national company "has taken all measures for the realisation of the exhibition due to the optimised structure of the company and budgeting measures."

"I am confident that we will achieve all the targets, and that the expo will be a huge success. I will share my views with the 168 member states of the International Expositions Bureau," assured Loscertales.

He also highlighted the potential scientific impact of the project. EXPO 2017 is a good opportunity for young Kazakh specialists

to demonstrate their professional skills, he said. They will get access to advanced technologies that can be used for the development of Kazakhstan.

"Up to today, 48 countries and 10 international organisations have officially confirmed their participation. The schedule of attracting participants holds. It allows us to achieve a balance of mixed [both developed and developing] economies [that will be represented at the exhibition]," Expo Commissioner and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Rapol Zhoshybayev said at the same briefing.

The second meeting of international participants of EXPO 2017

will be held on Nov. 18 and 19, Zhoshybayev said. At that meeting, the technical issues of where to place national pavilions and the specific contracts signed by national expo commissioners will be discussed in detail. He also noted that an agreement between the government of Kazakhstan and the BIE describing privileges and preferences for foreign partners in EXPO 2017 is ready for signing and expected to be signed in the near future. Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov said he appreciated the support of the BIE in expo preparations and discussed the work Kazakhstan has done to attract partners and promote the expo's theme

at a meeting with Loscertales on Oct. 7.

"Kazakhstan is ready to contribute its efforts for the success of the exhibition," he said. Idrissov also familiarised Loscertales with the basic themes of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev's recent speech at the 70th UN General Assembly session, during which the Kazakh leader invited all the nations of the world to participate in EXPO 2017 and proposed establishing an international centre for the development of green technologies and investment projects in Astana under the auspices of the UN based on EXPO 2017 premises.

## Kazakh Ski Resorts among Most Popular Winter Destinations in CIS

By Julia Rutz

It will soon be time to hit the slopes and among Russian tourists, Shymbulak Ski Resort tops the list of most popular destinations in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and neighbouring countries, reported Tengrinews.kz.

Russians traveling in CIS countries view the Kazakh resort near Almaty as the perfect destination for winter holidays, according to the online hotel booking service Oktogo.ru. The rating is based on data collected and the early reservations for the upcoming New Years' holidays from Jan. 1-10.

Altai Alps, located in East Kazakhstan, is also included on the list of the one-time Soviet Union's most popular ski resorts. Former professional sports complexes included in the rating in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and

Uzbekistan now serve as public resorts for the winter recreational activities of Russian tourists.

Free communications, the absence of visa requirements, sufficient service, beautiful nature and affordable prices make Kazakh resorts attractive places for the average Russian tourist.

In addition to Shymbulak, the complete list of such resorts in the CIS countries includes Cahkadzor (Armenia), Logoyisk (Belarus), Karakol (Kyrgyzstan), Gudauri (Georgia), Bukovel (Ukraine), Bakuriani (Georgia), Altai Alps (Kazakhstan), Chimgan (Uzbekistan) and Silichi (Belarus).

Shymbulak, which according to Oktogo.ru has the best transport communication, is also recognised as the most expensive ski resort on the list. A one-day visit, with a modest hotel room, dinner and ski pass, will cost a visitor about \$95.

By contrast, the most affordable appeared to be Logoyisk and Silichi, where a guest will spend only \$47 dollars for a similar stay.

Shymbulak is located in the picturesque Medeo Valley, which is also known as the home of the highest outdoor skating rink in the world. The beautiful resort is surrounded by woods and is just a few kilometres outside the city. The area offers a wide variety of slopes, from simple, gentle hills suitable for beginners to those with a 45-degree angle for professionals and daredevils.

The ski lifts are unavailable until Oct. 30 because of the preparation work and technical inspection to be executed before the new season. This year will present two tracks: the blue one for beginners and black one for professionals. The measure is designed to ease the orientation and make skiing more enjoyable for all guests.



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## SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## Golovkin Continues KO Streak by Stopping Lemieux in Eighth Round

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Gennady “GGG” Golovkin stopped David Lemieux (34-3, 31 KOs) in the eighth round, Oct. 17, in front of a sold-out crowd at Madison Square Garden (MSG) in New York City. The win improved his record to 34-0-0 with 31 knockouts, 21 in a row.

If there are two words to describe Golovkin’s fights, they would be “unexpected surprise.” That was the reaction of Briton Matthew Macklin in June 2013 when he went down in the third round against GGG with one of the hardest hits ever to his liver, he admitted after the bout.

Golovkin was also an unexpected surprise for Curtis Stevens, who was floored five months later in round two of their encounter, and his appalled reaction became a viral hit on Twitter. Golovkin later admitted the American hit harder than Lemieux, as quoted by boxingnews24.com.

The list goes on, but most importantly he is unexpectedly becoming the most fearful, most thrilling and one of the biggest box-office draws in the ring. If only two years ago Golovkin’s fights gathered some two-three thousand specta-



tors, today he sells out the 20,548-seat MSG and makes the 17 million people in his home nation get up early on Sunday mornings to chant “Gena! Gena! Gena!”

The event was the first pay-per-view fight for the 33-year-old Ka-

zakh, who undoubtedly had the support of his fans in the arena. What caught the eye of millions around the world, however, was a good luck wish by U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump, who visited Golovkin in his locker

room before the bout. Yet the boxer didn’t need any luck, as everything he and coach Abel Sanchez planned prior to the match happened that night.

Before the fight, Lemieux, 26, claimed he had no fear facing

Golovkin, promising this time to show some hard punches resulting in a different outcome. The Canadian, however, found himself in a trap after the first round, as the Kazakh carefully, patiently but surely lured him into his snare.

What went wrong once the confident Lemieux stepped his foot in the ring? Why did his self-assurance disappear after the first two rounds?

The boxing event ‘mismatch’ rather than ‘match’ was preordained and the heavy favourite and his numbers at the end of the evening were a clear confirmation of the prediction. The Kazakh connected on 280 of his 549 punches, or 51 percent, according to Compu-Box, while Lemieux landed only 89 of 335 punches (27 percent).

Lemieux needed to find a way to get close to Golovkin, but his attempts looked like those of an amateur, and Golovkin was quick to take advantage of his opponent’s wide, exposing shots. As a result, the Canadian missed a number of Golovkin’s jabs that eventually added up to a nose bleed. Yet everybody knows Lemieux is a slugger, everybody including those in the GGG camp. This time, the team picked a different strategy instead

of the familiar “cat and mouse game.” The Kazakh showed some of his defensive skills, although he didn’t need them, and he stuck to his game plan.

In the fourth round, Golovkin landed two massive clear rights and Lemieux appeared shaken from that point forward. In the next round, the Canadian went down after a left-right-left combo that hit his liver. While on his knee, Golovkin landed another power punch and only then was stopped by the referee. He decided not to linger and went for “the punch,” but Lemieux was literally saved by the bell.

As anticipated, Lemieux tried to come back in the sixth round and connected a few punches, but his nose continued to bleed. In the seventh, he couldn’t breathe well and in the eighth the referee decided it was enough beating and waved it off for a technical knockout. As a result, Golovkin has now combined the World Boxing Association (WBA), World Boxing Council (WBC) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) middleweight titles.

After the match, Golovkin called out the winner of November’s Canelo Alvarez-Miguel Cotto fight.

## Mixed Fortunes for Barys under Koreshkov

By Iliyaz Omarov

ASTANA – Astana Barys have now played eleven matches since the resignation of the club’s first ever home-grown coach, Yerlan Sagymbayev. The team is now being led by acting head coach Yevgeny Koreshkov through its eighth

season in the Continental Hockey League (KHL).

In four of these matches, Barys won in regular time, including taking a victory in their most recent away game on Oct. 19 against HC Dynamo Moscow, 2:1. In three matches Barys either lost in overtime or in a shootout.

Barys are currently playing in the western region of the KHL. After meetings in Podolsk with HC Vityaz and in Moscow with Dynamo, the team travels to Slovakia and Croatia.

In 24 matches so far, Barys has earned 29 points and is still placed 12th in the Eastern Conference. The team is, as before, among the

league’s leaders in terms of goals scored, but they have also conceded most goals as well. Barys’ Canadian forward, Nigel Dawes, with 14 goals is ranked second among the KHL’s best scorers this season.

On Oct. 20 former Barys Head Coach Andrei Nazarov has been reappointed in hopes to improve the current situation.

## Astana Motorsports Claims World Cup

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Presidential Club Astana Motorsports won the recent Rally World Cup and the Oct. 3-9 Rally OiLibya of Morocco in the T2 category, the team’s press service reported.

A fifth place finish in the ninth stage in Morocco lifted team crew members Denis Berezovsky and Ignat Falkov to the top place in the standings.

“Considering we missed two days, it was important to cover the whole race from start to finish and that was exactly what we did. This allowed Astana Motorsports to

win the world championship,” said Berezovsky, who won the World Cup in 2008 along with his then teammate Artur Ardavichus in the same T2 category.

The Federation Internationale de l’Automobile (International Automobile Federation – FIA) Rally World Cup consisted of 10 stages in total. So far the races have taken place in Russia, the UAE, Qatar, Egypt, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Poland and Morocco. The last stage will be held in Portugal Oct. 22-24. The Astana team has won in Russia, Hungary and Poland so far this year.



## Kazakhstan Loses to Netherlands, Beats Latvia in Euro 2016 Qualifiers

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – After trailing 0:2 to the Dutch during their game on Astana Arena on Oct. 10, the Kazakhs managed to score in the last minute of added time to have a consolation goal.

The game started in an aggressive manner right from the first minute as Yuri Logvinenko was shown a yellow card in the first minute for a bad foul. Four minutes later, the Dutch struck back with a foul of their own as Daley Blind took out Bauyrzhan Islamkhan from his feet, who 10 minutes later had to leave the field with an injury.

In the 33th minute, Georginio Wijnaldum scored the first goal of the game when he left-footed from outside the box and nailed it to the bottom right corner past 22 year-old Kazakh goal keeper Stas Pokatilov.

In the second half, Wesley Sneijder doubled the score in the 50th minute to give the Netherlands a comfortable 2:0 lead and a well-controlled match against the hosts, and everything was according to the plan the Dutch arrived with and in their minds they were rooting for Turkey who played against the Czech Republic at the same time in Prague.

In the last minute of the match,

Islambek Kuat managed to score to make it 1:2 for his team, but it was too late. After 95 minutes of play, the Dutch dominated with 61 percent of ball possession and 15 attempts on goal.

For the Netherlands, the Oct. 10 game was important as the Dutch were on the verge of being ousted from the Euro 2016. With Iceland and the Czech Republic already in the tournament, the Dutch needed the Turks to lose to the Czechs and beat the Kazakhs to keep their hopes alive. And if the latter was checked on the agenda, the first task needed a miracle as that day Turks beat Czechs 2:0 in Prague. Yet the miracle didn’t happen as

on Oct. 13 the Dutch yielded to the Czechs 2:3, while Turkey beat Iceland 1:0.

The last time the Oranje failed to qualify for a major tournament was the 2002 World Cup in South Korea and Japan.

In the next fixture on Oct. 13 the Kazakh national team faced off against Latvia in Riga. The Kazakhs fought for their first win in Group A and to their satisfaction clawed it out with a goal in the 64th minute, produced by Kuat again. With five points and a win against Latvia, Kazakhstan avoided the last place in Group A and finished the qualifying games.

## Astana Women’s Hockey Team First Place Contender, Says Coach

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – In two years, Astana’s professional women’s hockey team, Tomiris, went from fourth place to second, and now, looking ahead to the beginning of their third national tournament, coach Alexander Tebenkov says his team is definitely a contender for first. In fact, he’d put them up against the women’s national team, he told The Astana Times during a recent interview.

“I’m really proud of this team. They work really hard, and definitely, they’re going to do well this season,” he said. Tebenkov declines to name any particular stars, saying “Hockey is a team game, and the whole team is a star.”

The coach expects the next national tournament to begin in November. Tomiris doesn’t play as part of an international league, as the men’s hockey team does, but in a nationwide tournament battled



out in three stages from November to May. The women of Tomiris, who come mostly from Astana but include players from across Kazakhstan and Russia, face off against other women’s teams from Almaty, Pavlodar, Rudny and Ust-Kamenogorsk.

The decision to create a women’s team in Astana came from on high, the coach said, part of the country’s wave of effort to improve its international athletic performance. With the 2017 Winter Universiade to be held in Almaty, the recent campaign to host the Winter Olympics, and major expenditures on the Astana football club and other high-profile teams, Kazakhstan is investing in its sports, and

the camaraderie of playing on the team – and love the opportunity it gives them to play “emotionally.”

“I have played sports since I was little,” said team captain Bulbul Kartanbayeva, a forward. “I tried different sports like football and other things, but I really liked hockey in the end. It’s impossible not to love it. I love hockey because it’s a team sport, and because it’s so emotional.” The highs and lows of a game are intense, and are expressed on the ice, she said. “You might get in a fight, but then you get a goal and the emotions are completely different.”

Defender Yulia Butorina was a figure skater when she was invited to join the hockey team. She says she likes the teamwork of both sports, but while figure skating was more feminine, she also likes how hockey allows her to be more “emotional,” too.

Aizhar Khamimuldinova said she was fascinated by hockey as soon as she learned how to hold

a stick, when she was 12. Kristina Shanshina’s mother got her into hockey when she was 13. Her mom likes hockey, she said.

Her mother may be unusual. “Women say it’s not a sport for women,” all the players sigh when asked how people react to their profession. Men are really interested and ask them lots of questions about the sport and their team, they say. But women in Kazakhstan? “How do you do it?” women always ask,” Khamimuldinova said. Even our friends support us, but they also say it’s something they wouldn’t do, she said.

Laura Millard, who teaches physical education at Astana’s Haileybury School, got involved with the team through the English Ice Hockey Association, she told The Astana Times on Sept. 30.

“It isn’t as difficult as you may think, training with a team with very little common language but hockey is hockey in any country. If the coach draws on the board, I understand what is happening. I’ve

been playing 17 years now so it’s much the same!”

Millard says there still seems to be some stigma around being a woman in a sport that calls for size and toughness. Tomiris trains on the ice every day, she said, but wonders if there’s some stigma to lifting weights and getting “big.”

“Being a strong western woman living in Astana, the local women at work are interested in my strength and power, the fact that I train often, eat protein and lift weights. But they certainly aren’t in a rush to join me!” Millard said.

There is something of a rush to be associated with hockey, and with Tomiris, however. “Astana is a hockey city,” said Butorina. This is both good and bad. “Young women come to join the feeder team, Tomiris 2, because it’s a trend, it’s fashion, because men think it’s cool.”

For the professional players, however, it’s something more. “For us, this is our second family. It’s our whole lives,” said Shanshina.

# CAPITAL

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2015

## Kazakh Capital Offers Array of Kid Friendly Venues

By Yerbolat Uatkhonov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's capital is home to approximately 866,000 residents and last year was visited by 642,100 tourists. Since each figure includes a fair number of children, the question becomes, "what entertainment programmes does the city offer for them?"

Stolichniy (Capital) Park is an ideal place to walk and relax with a child while simultaneously boosting his or her overall health. It is surrounded by beautiful architecture and has fascinating natural beauty. Have fun on amusements such as roller coasters, merry-go-rounds, little trains and other entertainments.

Roam Presidential Park, situated close to the Palace of Peace



Photo credit: Khan Shaary, Dinosaurs Park

and Harmony, which does not have rides but is perfect for walking and bike riding. Rent bikes for all members of your family and see the beautiful water canal with

its flowers, bushes and trees. Many paths are made of natural stone and can lead you to amazing places and views of the left bank of the Yessil River.

Mimioriya Family Art and Development Centre at the Saryarka Mall is a wonderful place to help your child develop while having fun. It is unique, as there are no similar projects in the city. The centre, designed specially to develop children, is divided into three parts according to age. Amusements Tree is for youngsters of three to six and has huge low branches with natural fruits which they can easily reach. The area is also filled with a variety of toys. Parents can either join their kids or relax, because professional and experienced babysitters are on hand. Sea Adventure, designated for those 6-12, has a huge sailing ship and octopus. Craftsmen's Village is excellent for tapping into creative skills. Children can choose among seven houses to sculpt, bend, cook and draw.

Saryarka Mall and Khan Shatyr Mall are famous for their entertainment. Visit the scary Ghost Busting Panic Room; enjoy Dinosaur Park, travelling millions of years to the Jurassic period; watch movies in an up-to-date cinema or relax in a real tropical water world with sand from the Maldives Islands. After enjoying the sights, have a lunch in the special children's café and fun in the amusement park.

Maxim Gorky State Russian Academic Drama Theatre has excellent plays for the younger set. Kids shouldn't miss them: children's plays are part of the culture in Kazakhstan.

Capital Circus has gained a fine reputation for its fascinating and entertaining shows. Clowns, trapeze artists, tumblers – the circus has it all. Showtimes and dates are

posted on notices throughout the city.

Schoolchildren's Palace, a unique place in Central Asia, was specially designed for the development of children and young people. The beautiful building is equipped with the most up-to-date facilities offered not only by traditional clubs, but high-tech ones as well. In the Diplomatic Body Club, children can study six languages. In Craftsmen City, kids can choose any of 30 types of athletic training and 20 groups to play musical instruments, draw, engineer and construct, sculpt, dance, sing and try ballet, architecture and design, theatrical art, public speaking, programming, robotic science, model car construction and ship modelling, web design and carting.

## Seasonal Traditions Thrive in the City, as Urban Kazakhs Visit Sogym Markets

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Despite the gentle temperatures of this early October, winter isn't far from the minds of Astana residents. And despite the capital city's growing number of shops and restaurants stocked with food flown in from around the globe, many Kazakhs still follow traditional preparations for the season of scarcity. One of these is sogym: stocking away meat for winter.

It is dark and surprisingly warm at 6 a.m. Oct. 9, and though the capital's streets are empty, the grounds of the Alem market are jammed. Workers push trolleys stacked with carcasses, buyers mill and haggle, butchers in waterproof aprons jog through the crowds with massive slabs of ribs slung over their shoulders, hustling to weigh the meat on the industrial scales in the corners of the market before taking inside to be butchered more thoroughly.

The tradition is to buy a whole animal – a whole calf or a whole

young horse – fat from the summer and autumn, to keep to eat through the winter months. Sure, you can get meat from the markets all through the winter, but this fat fall meat is better, Kazakhs say, and by buying in bulk, they save money.

A colleague says he bought a 142-kilogramme calf for about 1,000 tenge (US\$3.62) per kilo. This is a third less than you would pay for smaller cuts of meat at the market, he says, and a savings of about 70,000 tenge (US\$253.81) over the season in exchange for one early morning and a few hours of driving, haggling and butchering. Sometimes, families who can't afford a whole, well-fed horse on their own (which can cost upwards of \$2,000) or who don't need that much meat, will pool their money to share an animal.

Vendors outside the main market stood around a motley collection of vehicles containing more meat – one fancy refrigerated truck, a few other standard uninsulated models and an old hatchback with an improbable stack of lambs in the back. Vendors standing near two

trucks packed with hanging lambs told The Astana Times that though sogym purchases have started now, it is better to buy in November, when the first snow falls.

This is a profitable business, they say, and they get higher prices in Astana. They get up at 3 or 4 a.m. to drive from their village to Astana to sell their meat. Many of their customers will take the meat home and freeze it, but one woman vendor shakes her head at this. "I salt it and make sausages," she said. "Frozen meat isn't as tasty."

Almas Alibekov, 27, and his family will get their sogym meat delivered – his grandfather slaughters an animal for each of his three sons and one daughter every fall and sends the meat to them. The animals are raised especially for their meat, butchered on the family farm in Karaganda region and sent in bags by train or occasionally by bus, to family members a few hours away.

When the meat arrives, the second part of the sogym traditions start: sogym basy, or sharing the bounty with kin. "Of course we organise parties when we get the fresh meat," Alibekov said in an interview Oct. 14. "We usually invite our neighbours, and then our relatives, and then our friends." Meat will be set aside for these celebrations; the rest will be separated out and labelled according to part and purpose, Alibekov said. "There's a tradition, there's a whole different culture about [dividing the meat]. ... My father writes down the names for the meat, organises it, and [stores] it."

The meat will be stored in the family's two huge freezers, Alibekov said. He reckons most Kazakh families keep big freezers for exactly this reason – to hold precious meat through the winter months.



## City's First Heated Bus Stop under Construction

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Fifty-five of Astana's bus stops will be heated by the end of the year, according to the city akimat (administration).

The first heated bus stop will be located at the intersection of Kabanbai Batyr Avenue and Dostyk Street. "This is a place with a large flow of urban, suburban and express routes," according to a statement from the Astana Department of Passenger Transport and Automobile Roads, reports 7news.kz

The bus shelter is being panelled, electricity is being provided and tiles are being laid. Each of the

heated bus stops costs 10 million tenge (US\$36,400), says the same department.

According to the department, bus stops will be made of welded steel box profiles with anti-corrosion coating and will be lined with tapes made of galvanised steel. They are designed to be vandal-resistant. The windows will be made of aluminium frames with two layers of tempered glass.

The first heated bus stops will appear in the spots with the greatest number of passengers. There will be two types of bus stops with areas of 12 and 20 square metres. During the winter, the temperature inside the stops will be sup-

ported by infrared heaters with control sensors. According to the department, all of them will also be equipped with toilets. All bus stops will also have video surveillance cameras connected to the city's common system and other sensors and air exchange inside the bus shelters will be conducted by natural ventilation.

In addition, it is planned that they will be equipped with passenger information systems. This system involves the installation of information screens that will display the arrival time of the buses. The passenger information system will include the development of mobile applications for smartphones.

## French Digital WWI Exhibit Opens in Astana

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – A travelling digital exhibition on World War I, "14-18," organised by the French Institute, the Mission of a Century after WWI and the Agency on Teaching French Abroad (AEFE) opened at the National Academic Library of Kazakhstan in Astana on Oct. 15 with the participation of the French ambassador to Kazakhstan.

"This exhibition reflects the strong mobilisation of the French diplomatic network on the theme

of memory," said Ambassador of France to Kazakhstan Francis Etienne, opening the exhibit. "Memory works over the long term. It plays a strong and positive role in the construction and influence of nations. We are witnessing today a marked return of national memories, as evidenced from the numerous commemorations recalling the importance of the First World War."

The 14-18 exhibit uses digital technology to share music, photos and videos about WWI. Built chronologically, the exhibition follows a deliberately scattered

development intended to reflect the multiplicity of experiences of the war on different continents, a statement on the exhibit explained. Information is provided on fronts from northern France to the eastern front and perspectives from within France as well as colonies of embattled countries are presented, as are the accounts of companies at war, victims of occupation and others affected by the war. The exhibition, launched in November 2014 in partnership with Gaité Lyrique, the new Parisian institution responsible for promoting digital culture among the general public, has been shown in 100 countries. According to organisers, it will remain open in cities across Kazakhstan, including Karaganda and Almaty, through 2016. This is the first time the exhibit has been opened in Central Asia.

The 14-18 exhibition will support actions that will take place across the world to commemorate significant dates during the war, organisers said in the statement on the opening. France will work with veterans, schools and museums in Kazakhstan on other memorial events, they said.

Also attending the opening was Serge Barcellini, President of Souvenir Français (The French Remembrance), the association tasked with keeping the memories of fighters for freedom and the rule of law alive in France.



President of Souvenir Français Serge Barcellini (L) and Ambassador of France to Kazakhstan Francis Etienne in Astana at the opening of "14-18" in Astana.

Photo credit: Lise Barcellini.

