



Consolidation of Society around Common Values in Focus of Assembly of the People Session



President Nursultan Nazarbayev (bottom centre) addresses over 1,500 attendees of the 24th Annual Session of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan dedicated to the 25th anniversary of country's independence on April 26, in Astana.

By Kamila Zhumbabayeva

ASTANA – More than 1,500 people participated in the 24th annual session of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan dedicat-

ed to the 25th Anniversary of the country's independence.

Members and veterans of the assembly from all regions, chairs of national and regional ethno-cultural unions, deputies (members) of Par-

liament, heads of central executive bodies, political parties, religious associations, non-governmental organisations, university rectors, diplomatic missions of foreign states, scientific and art intelligentsia and

media were among the participants, according to APK's announcement. The event was held on March 26 at the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation in Astana.

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Spanish FM Visits Astana, Signs Green Bridge Partnership Charter

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov and Spanish acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil discussed trade, the environment and international issues during García-Margallo's April 24-25 first official visit to Kazakhstan.

"Spain is one of the most reliable strategic partners of Kazakhstan in Europe and in the world. Spanish companies demonstrate activeness on the Kazakh market increasing civil society contacts, tourist flows and cultural exchange. There are many prospects for cooperation in the fields of transport and logistics, agriculture, green economy, telecommunications," Idrissov said at a joint press briefing after the talks in Astana.

García-Margallo also took part in the Kazakh-Spanish Business Forum and visited Eurasian National University named after Lev Gumilyov.

Idrissov stressed that Spain plays a special role in the context of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the European Union. The two sides agreed on close cooperation on implementation of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) between Kazakhstan and the EU.

Following the talks at the Kazakh foreign ministry, García-Margallo and Kazakh Minister of Energy Kanat Bozumbayev signed a document on Spain's accession to the "Green Bridge" Partnership Charter which provides for the exchange of expertise and experience in developing green economies.

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EAMF Gathers Experts, Politicians to Discuss International Agenda

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova and Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – More than 400 delegates from more than 50 countries and approximately 30 authoritative speakers gathered here for the 13th Eurasian Media Forum (EAMF) on April 21-22. Issues related to the worldwide economic crisis and its global consequences were discussed in panel sessions by prominent international politicians, economists, journalists and public and political figures, as well as representatives of media, political and expert associations.

EAMF organising committee chair Dariga Nazarbayeva delivered a speech at the opening ceremony on behalf of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

"I believe that the Eurasian Media Forum has become one of the leading platforms for dialogue. The most topical issues of the modern world are discussed, as are a new paradigm of development and the future," she read in the speech.

Nazarbayev noted the Manifest

"The World. The 21st Century", which he presented during the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington at the end of March 2016, has an aim of eradicating the wars throughout the world.

"Today, humanity is entering an era of unprecedented trial. What the new world and our common future will be depends on each of us... Thanks to the common will, this century must become the era of the triumph of constructive dialogue. The open discussion of world problems at the EAMF for finding a balanced solution will be an invaluable contribution to the peace movement," she added.

In his welcome speech, former Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai praised Nazarbayev's peace-keeping efforts and expressed hope that this forum would be thought provocative but constructive.

"Above all, I am happy to be in Kazakhstan once again. The country has a common culture with us. This is the country that has helped us for the last 13 years and made a huge contribution to the development of the country. President

Nazarbayev has always been a friend of Afghanistan and a kind partner in the re-building of Afghanistan," he said.

Karzai added Nazarbayev and the Kazakh people gave 1,000 scholarships to Afghan students to study in Kazakhstan. He also noted the significance of the President's recent initiative on global nuclear disarmament and asked all to join in support of the manifest.

As she greeted the participants, Nazarbayeva noted the EAMF has a solid history and experience of mutually fruitful dialogue.

"Our city is preparing to hold the EXPO 2017 exhibition and the guests will have the opportunity to get acquainted with the impressive scale of the construction of the exhibition centre, which will become a new pearl of Astana... We are all very different and sometimes have opposing views, but nevertheless, almost every year we gather in the hospitable land of Kazakhstan. We learn how to hear and listen to each other," she said.

Russia's Federation Council Committee for economic policy

member Dmitry Mezentsev, former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and Astana International Financial Centre Governor Kairat Kelimbetov joined Karzai for the first panel discussion devoted to issues of world economy and achieving peace.

Mezentsev said the EAMF forum has become a major event of not only regional but also global importance. He stressed a world without war is better than a world with conflict and violence.

"A man does not change even though high technologies can make the world perfect. The current agenda of the first session demonstrates that we should not forget how the level of oil prices changes. We unfortunately saw how difficult it was to hold negotiations in Doha. We see that 30 billion barrels of oil per day are not even a limit to OPEC. Today, production has significantly increased and if there is no agreement, if the economic, selfish interest dominates in a number of countries, it is necessary to understand why this is happening," he said.

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Kazakhstan Supports Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in Eurasia, Senate Chair Says

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan supports initiatives promoting inter-parliamentary interaction among Eurasian countries, Chairman of Kazakhstan's Senate Kassym-Jomart Tokayev told the first meeting of speakers of Eurasian countries' parliaments "Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation for Joint Prosperity of Eurasian Countries in the 21st Century" on April 19 in Moscow.

The forum was initiated by Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Sergey Naryshkin and Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea Dr. Chung Ui-Hwa.

"Four officially recognised nuclear powers and a number of unofficial nuclear states are located in Eurasia, a place most prone to violent conflicts inflicting 200,000 human casualties every year. The bloodiest wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as millions of refugees fleeing these countries have been affecting the whole continent. Situated in the heart of Eurasia, Kazakhstan has been deeply concerned about these developments," noted Tokayev, focusing on the content of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's Manifest "The World. The 21st Century," which is presented as a roadmap for ridding the world of wars.

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President Nazarbayev Urges Islamic World to Come up with Global Competitive Development Projects

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev paid an official visit to Istanbul, Turkey April 13 to take part in the 13th session of the Islamic Summit Conference. As part of the trip, he addressed the summit, held bilateral meetings with King Salman of Saudi Arabia and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary General Iyad bin Amin Madani, and issued a joint declaration with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey on what they called Islamic rapprochement.

In his speech at the summit, Naz-

arbayev noted the 10-year action programme in response to the challenges of the Muslim Ummah in the 21st century comes to an end this year.

"The Muslim civilisation that gave the world a galaxy of brilliant thinkers, scholars and politicians must present new global competitive projects for development and develop the principles, directions and objectives of the comprehensive strategy 'Ummah moving towards the 16th century [of the Muslim calendar]," he said.

According to Nazarbayev, the main threats the Ummah currently faces come from internal strife and conflicts. Eleven OIC

member states are going through protracted conflicts and civil wars and many parts of recently prosperous countries such as Libya and Syria are in ruins, he said. Iraq, too, is facing the consequences of war. The Islamic world is approaching the dangerous threat of a Sunni-Shiite split. The creation of opposing military blocks of Muslim countries is being floated.

Nazarbayev stressed that today, at least 15 OIC countries are experiencing the full onslaught of international terrorists. These are the main reasons for the flow of millions of refugees and migrants

seeking a better life and protection around the world.

The world has many examples of Muslim countries where representatives of different religions and cultural traditions live in peace and harmony, Nazarbayev reminded pointing to the example of Kazakhstan where representatives of 17 religions and more than 100 ethnic groups make up a single peaceful and stable nation. He noted the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK) serves as a successfully developed national model of shared responsibility and support.

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NATION

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

President Briefed on Textile, Pharmaceutical Industries during Visit to Shymkent

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev was briefed on the work and products of a new factory of Chimpharm and textile company during a recent working visit to South Kazakhstan.

During his visit to Azala textile, the head of state was informed about implementation of industrial development programmes in the region, such as the investment programme “South” (free economic zone) and the key indicators of the functioning of light industry. Nazarbayev noted that the development of the country’s production and substitution of imported goods are among the most important tasks of Kazakhstan’s economic policy.

Azala textile began in 2012-2014 under the State Programme of Industrial and Innovative Development. The factory implements a



closed cycle of production from growing cotton to the finished product, fabric, providing about 600 jobs.

At the factory of Chimpharm, President Nazarbayev spoke with employees and congratulated them on the opening of the plant, wishing successful development and high

competitiveness. He stressed that the market for drugs is promising and creates great opportunities for the company as the flagship of the domestic pharmaceutical industry and the whole city.

In turn, the workers thanked Nazarbayev for the attention paid to development of this sphere.

The project of Chimpharm consists of four stages with a total value of 14 billion tenge (\$41.7 million), the first of which, worth 5.8 billion tenge (\$17.2 million), has already been implemented. The project as a whole will produce 350 million vials of injectable solutions, four million packages of infusion solutions, 40 million bottles of antibiotics and one billion tablets.

The enterprise covers more than 5 percent of the total pharmaceutical market of the country and provides more than 50 percent of the domestic production of medicines. Chimpharm produces over a third of the drugs used in the framework of guaranteed drug support of the population. The plant produces more than two hundred kinds of medicines with a total cost of production exceeding 16.5 billion tenge (\$49.2 million) per year. The company’s products are exported to Russia, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. It is

planned to increase the volume of public procurement.

Using high-tech equipment and a strict monitoring system at all stages of production in accordance with international standards helps produce high-quality products. Moreover, implementation of this investment project has created 500 jobs.

Chimpharm with 125 years of its history has recently been operating in the market under the Santo brand name following the arrival at the plant of Polpharma from Poland as an investor. Moreover, Kazakhstan has become a centre of management in the region of Central Asia of the largest Polish manufacturer of pharmaceuticals, Polpharma Group, due to integration of Himpharma and Polpharma in 2011.

Polpharma Group is among the top 20 generic drug manufacturers in the world with annual sales of approximately \$1 billion. Polpharma Group’s portfolio includes about 600 products with another 200 in the pipeline.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan’s library stock will be fully digitised by 2020, said Minister of Culture and Sports Arystanbek Mukhamediuly at a Senate committee meeting, reported primeminister.kz. He noted the project is being developed under the Digital Kazakhstan 2020 programme. A network of virtual museums and museum collections, concert recordings and tangible and intangible historic and cultural heritage elements will be converted into electronic format by 2025. Mukhamediuly indicated the key objective is to preserve and popularise cultural heritage and create a competitive and recognisable cultural product. The Ministry aims for museums to become centres of interaction and cooperation among research institutions, universities and archives. As such, libraries will serve to popularise and interpret historic and cultural heritage in a modern format.

Kazakh schoolchildren are being taught 3D printing technology, reported Kazakh TV. A 3D printer was installed in one of the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools, where students are able to print any object in three dimensions with the help of different programmes. Teachers are sure such new technology will help students not only better understand the subjects, but also develop engineering skills. Student Sanzhar Asybyayev said the printer provides great opportunities, such as the ability to print spare parts for robots.

Famous French sportsman and extreme sports lover Alain Robert, also known as “Spiderman,” conquered the tallest building in Almaty on April 23. Robert has already scaled numerous structures, such as the Burj Khalifa in Dubai and Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur. The Essential Tower looks small compared to the giants, but prior to the ascent Robert was sure it won’t be easy. The 168-metre residential building is composed entirely of glass and metal and offers practically no way to cling onto its smooth surface. The sportsman climbed to the top using only suction cups on his palms and special shoes with rubber soles.

Kazakh tourist routes are becoming more and more popular, with visitors from neighbouring countries tending to choose Alakol and Balkhash lakes and Borovoye Resort, reported Kazakh TV. A travel and tourism exhibition held in Almaty gathered more than 300 companies from 35 countries to discuss tourism prospects. In 2015, more than 200,000 foreign guests vacationed in Kazakhstan. Experts predict the number of tourists will increase this year by at least 20 percent. Russian tour operators have already booked the largest share of rooms in Kazakh resorts. Almaty tourism and foreign relations department head Timur Dyusengaliyev said the Russian market is essential, noting many tourists prefer the region to enjoy eco-tourism, mountain climbing and various kinds of rafting.

Borovoye entered the top five most popular resorts in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, according to Kazakh TV. The tourist service Travel.ru conducted a rating based on the number of hotel and apartment bookings for this summer. The rating shows Russian tourists, especially from the South Urals and East Siberia, come to the resort for healing water, clean air and Oriental cuisine. Issyk-Kul in Kyrgyzstan is the leading destination in the CIS states, followed by Lake Narach in Belarus. The list also includes the Azerbaijani waters of the Caspian Sea and Lake Sevan in Armenia.

Kazakh banks will continue to expand their ATM networks. The number of operating ATMs increased 6 percent last year, reaching 8,500 units, according to Ranking.kz. By the end of February, there were 9,246 ATMs in the state. The number has increased every year by an average of 6 percent. Almost half of the network is concentrated in four regions: Almaty (19 percent), Astana (10 percent), Karaganda (9 percent) and East Kazakhstan (8 percent).

Consolidation of Society around Common Values in Focus of Assembly of the People Session

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President Nursultan Nazarbayev greeted everyone at the session and noted that unity among citizens coming from more than 130 ethnic backgrounds is one of the greatest values of the country’s independence.

“Kazakhstan managed to preserve friendship - the main heritage (asset) of all generations of Kazakhstan’s people. By the will of the nation, a unique path of equal rights, unity and accord of all ethnic groups in Kazakhstan was elected. The Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan is the fruit of our independence and always

stayed at a high level in any challenges and at every period of the independence. Its history is reflected by all stages and concrete results of the nation’s ascent,” he said.

Nazarbayev outlined adopting Mangilik El (Eternal Nation) act as an important objective of the session.

“An important step – to adopt Mangilik El Patriotic Act as the main document of this session will have to be done at this session. Our nationwide idea Mangilik El is a new matrix of patriotic conscious of the Kazakh people ... Mangilik El Patriotic Act is a capacious unique programme of identity of

the Kazakh people,” the President said.

Basic spiritual values of Kazakhstan people is reflected in the document. According to him, it bounds together economy, politics, morality, belief, the country’s vision in the global world and will bind many generations of Kazakh people.

Nazarbayev also talked about changes in the country’s education system. According to him, initiatives in the field of education, including transition to a five-day week, trilingual education caused big debates in the country. However, poorly thought experiments are unacceptable, President stated.

“School issues concern every family. Therefore, all positions must be heard. Unreasonable experiments are not permitted here, nobody can be customised, we decide ourselves what we need,” said the head of state.

Nazarbayev also noted the Patriotic Act strengthened national values such as common responsibility of the authorities, society, and individual citizens over the homeland’s security, development, and prosperity.

“By adopting the Patriotic Act, we build a strong bridge between what we really have in our lives and what is valuable to all of us, with what will be important and

precious at all stages of Kazakhstan’s future development,” he emphasised.

Among other speakers at the forum were delegates from the regions, cosmonaut, athletes, representatives of working professions and youth organisations, civil society. All of them highlighted issues having effect on the country’s peace and stability, urging in many cases to cherish them as the main value of the contemporary Kazakhstan.

The session concluded with the formal adoption of the Mangilik El Patriotic Act that will be available on Wednesday morning in Kazakhstan’s nationwide media outlets.

Broadband Internet to Reach 90 Percent of Kazakh Students within Four Years

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – In the next three-four years, access to broadband internet will reach 90 percent of students in Kazakhstan, Minister of Education and Science Yerlan Sagadiyev said recently at a Central Communications Service briefing on the State Programme for Development of Education and Science in 2016-2019 years.

“Never before has knowledge

of such scope been transferred to remote access. Over the past five years, there has been a massive informatisation trend in the world... Hundreds of respected colleges and universities now offer online courses, and we would be wise to take advantage of it. High-speed internet will become the main educational backbone of our infrastructure system,” Sagadiyev emphasised.

The minister stressed that this will ensure massive and wide-

spread implementation of new knowledge and practices as well as alignment of all levels of students and teachers.

“It is important to implement it massively throughout the country. We are able to increase the rate of modernisation of educational processes. We will provide possibilities to our students and universities to integrate quickly into the educational space, as do all OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.

Distance learning and development of e-content will solve basic issues of small schools,” he highlighted.

Sagadiyev also spoke about the main directions of development of education and science system in the framework of the state programme.

During his current position as a minister of education, there were accepted several important documents, such as the State Programme for the Development of Education and Science in for 2016-2019 approved by decree of the Kazakh

President and an action plan for its implementation, a current standard of education, has been updated.

More than 250 meetings and discussions were conducted, including sessions with high officials from Israel, Great Britain, Latvia, Hungary, Italy, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, as well as local NGOs, journalists and public figures.

Secretary of State: Bukeikhanov Substantiated Idea of National Statehood Revival

By Kamila Zhumbabayeva

ASTANA – Prominent public figure and statesman, scholar, journalist and ethnographer Alikhan Bukeikhanov devoted his vivid and versatile life to liberating and developing the Kazakh nation, said Kazakh Secretary of State Gulshara Abdykalikova. Her comments were made at a scientific conference dedicated to Bukeikhanov’s 150th anniversary held April 15 at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU) in Almaty.

“Alikhan Bukeikhanov substantiated the need to revive the idea of national statehood and outlined ways and methods to achieve this goal by heading the Alash Kazakh national liberation movement. He was the leader and founder of Alash that aimed to establish the Kazakh independent state,” she said.

“Bukeikhanov’s anniversary is a



Alikhan Bukeikhanov

celebration of literature, language arts and publicism. There is a saying that the works of scholars and great people never die; the name of our great scientist and social activist will forever remain in the memory of the nation,” Almaty Akim (Mayor) Bauyrzhan Baibek

said at the event, reported Kazinform.

Senate Deputy and Writer’s Union of Kazakhstan Chairman Nurlan Orazalin, academician and National Academy of Science President Murat Zhurinov, KazNU Rector Galimkair Mutanov, science, education and culture activists and the general public participated in the conference. A documentary about the Alash movement was screened, a book exhibition about Bukeikhanov’s life and work was conducted and a new issue of prominent publicist Mukhamedzhan Seralin’s magazine, “Aikap,” was presented.

Born in the Semipalatinsk province of the Russian Empire in March 1866, Bukeikhanov was the great grandson of Barak Sultan, the former khan of Bukei Horde, an autonomous khanate of Kazakhs that existed from 1801-1845. He graduated from Omsk Technical Institute

and Saint Petersburg Forestry Institute in 1894, faculty of economics.

Bukeikhanov was engaged in statistics, collaborating with “Semipalatinskies Oblastnie Vedomosti” and writing for other newspapers like “Orenburgskii Listok”, “Semipalatinskii Listok”, “Turkestanskies Vedomosti” (Tashkent), “Stepnoi Pioner” (Omsk) and “Sary-Arqa” (Semipalatinsk).

He was also a contributor to “Sibirskie Voprosy” and “Aikap,” the Kazakh socio-economic and literature magazine published in Troitsk (a town in Chelyabinsk region) from 1911-1915. Bukeikhanov founded “Qazaq,” a Kazakh language newspaper, with prominent Kazakh poets and writers Akhmet Baitursinuly (editor in chief) and Mirzhakyp Dulatuly.

He was the first biographer of Abai Kunanbayev and his obituary of the Kazakh poet, composer and philosopher was printed in “Semi-

palatinsky Listok” in 1905. Four years later, he published a collection of Kunanbayev’s works.

“Kigizy,” the 1910 book about the forms of national movement in modern states, was his major political publication.

From 1917-1920, Bukeikhanov served as the Prime Minister of the Alash Autonomy (a Kazakh state that existed during that time period). In the national political scene, Bukeikhanov sided with “westernisers,” a group of 19th century intellectuals promoting the idea of Western culture into the Kazakh steppe.

Bukeikhanov married Yelena Sevostyanova, the daughter of old populist Yakov Sevostyanov, whom he knew from his work at “Stepnoi Krai” newspaper. They had a daughter Yelizaveta (Zeinep) Sadvokasova and son Sergei (Oktai) Bukeikhanov whose descendants reside in Moscow, according to Industrialnaya Karaganda regional newspaper.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakh Ambassador to Malaysia Daniyar Sarekenov met with Prosecutor General of Malaysia Mohamed Apandi in Putrajaya, the press service of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports. The parties discussed cooperation in law enforcement and in fighting cross-border criminality, drug trafficking, trafficking of humans and arms as well as terrorism. An agreement on the visit of the Malaysian Prosecutor General to Kazakhstan on May 23-26 was reached. Sarekenov highlighted the efforts of Kazakhstan's government to ensure inter-ethnic and inter-religious accord in the state.

The Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) will start work with the first session of its founding General Assembly in Astana on April 28, according to inform.kz. Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov will open the Assembly. IOFS was initiated by Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Astana in 2011. The President proposed a system for the exchange of food assistance, which is similar to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). It includes a joint food reserve by interested member states.

Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dossayev and Minister of Economy of Lithuania Evaldas Gustas met April 21 and signed Memorandum of Mutual Understanding and Cooperation between their ministries, according to the press service of the Ministry of National Economy.

Senate Speaker of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Minister of Culture and Sport Arystanbek Mukhamediuly met with the head of the Orthodox Church and Metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan Metropolitan Alexander, according to the chamber's press service. The parties discussed the highlights of "The Manifesto: The World. The 21st Century" presented by President Nursultan Nazarbayev during the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC. Tokayev said the manifesto urges politicians and the world community to take steps to stop conflicts that endanger humankind. Mukhamediuly emphasised the contribution made by the Russian Orthodox Church to preserving and strengthening inter-faith harmony and accord in Kazakhstan. Alexander said the Orthodox Church plans to organise events dedicated to celebration of the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence. The parties summed up the results of humanitarian and spiritual cooperation over 25 years of development of the Orthodox Church in sovereign Kazakhstan and focused on the objectives and prospects for the Orthodox Church's development.

Minister for Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ghaith bin Mubarak Al Kuwari confirmed Qatar will participate in the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana during a meeting with Kazakh Ambassador to Qatar Askar Shokybayev, Kazinform reports. Al Kuwari expressed a desire to visit Kazakhstan in autumn to establish full-fledged ties with Kazakhstan governmental structures and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan. Al Kuwari also plans to discuss cooperation, including participation of the Qatari side in construction of mosques in the state.

A regular round of consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and Kazakhstan on consular issues was held in Minsk April 20, BelTA reports. The sides discussed the visa policies, measures against illegal migration and cooperation between consular services to protect the rights and legal interests of legal entities and individuals. The Belarusian delegation was led by head of the Consular Department of Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Igor Fisenko. The Kazakh delegation was led by Director of Consular Service Department Ardak Madiyev. Heads of migration services of Interior Ministries of Belarus and Kazakhstan also took part in the meeting.

Nazarbayev Urges Islamic World to Come up with Global Competitive Development Projects

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Nazarbayev called on the participants to always equate Islam with progress and made a number of framework proposals. He noted it is essential to begin work to implement the general agreement for trade, economic and technical cooperation among all OIC member states. In the future, a free trade zone must be created for all members, he stressed. In this regard, holding an OIC summit on science and technology in Astana next year was proposed.

In connection with the recent, frequent terrorist attacks in the world, the Kazakh leader said Islamic countries and the OIC should make an effort to ensure the international community realises that Islam is against terrorism. This is the most effective tool against Islamophobia, he added.

A number of Kazakhstan's initiatives were supported and included in the summit's final communique. The document called on all member states to continue work to finalise and adopt a comprehensive convention against terrorism, as well as take into account the country's proposal to establish a global coalition against terrorism under the auspices of the UN.

The summit urged the OIC member states to support Kazakhstan's



bid for non-permanent membership on the UN Security Council for 2017-2018.

The session also welcomed the creation of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) as a new specialised body of the OIC. The new institution's inaugural General Assembly session is scheduled to take place in Astana on April 28, it was earlier reported.

The Kazakh president also held a number of bilateral meetings with fellow leaders on the margins of Istanbul Summit.

With King Salman, Nazarbayev exchanged views on the current state and prospects of Kazakh-Saudi cooperation in trade, investment, scientific, technological, and cul-

tural spheres. They also reviewed the most pressing issues on the international agenda and key measures to counteract terrorism and extremism globally, as well as ways to increase efficiency of the implementation of OIC summit's decisions.

With Erdogan, Nazarbayev discussed issues of strengthening Kazakh-Turkish cooperation in the trade and economic, investment, agricultural, cultural and humanitarian spheres. The sides noted the presence of promising joint projects in these directions and stressed that their implementation may include representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises from both countries.

The two heads of state also exchanged views on topical issues on

the international agenda, as well as efforts in the fight against terrorism and extremism. Nazarbayev once again expressed sympathies to Erdogan in connection with the March terrorist attack in Ankara.

Following the talks, the Presidents adopted a joint declaration on Islamic rapprochement, which reiterated their commitment to the principles of international peace, security and developing friendly relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey. Moreover, Nazarbayev and Erdogan called on the OIC member countries to devise a new paradigm of relations in the Islamic world by demonstrating goodwill and a constructive approach to the issues of interstate relations and settling conflicts and disputes.

The document proposed giving the OIC a role in advancing the process of Islamic rapprochement and requested the organisation's General Secretariat to complete a thorough analysis of the situation and advance proposals to achieve the initiative's objectives.

Nazarbayev and OIC Secretary General Madani discussed the major issues of the international agenda and the possibility of the OIC member states' participation in eradicating Islamophobia and opposition to manifestations of terrorism around the world.

"Kazakhstan joins all the decisions which are planned to be adopted in the framework of the Islamic Summit Conference. In our joint appeal with Erdogan, we called on the Islamic world to unite. I express my appreciation for the inclusion of its provisions in the outcome documents of the summit," said Nazarbayev in his speech at the summit.

Madani noted Nazarbayev's participation in the event enhanced its significance.

"Your initiatives are important for the rapprochement of the Islamic world. They create opportunities for further progress. We need to work on its subsequent implementation," he said.

EAMF Gathers Experts, Politicians...

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Mezentsev noted the unity of 100 nationalities living in Kazakhstan is a successful model of political and economic means which will be stable for decades.

Kelimbetov said Kazakhstan currently has a good opportunity to move from the commodity-driven model to economic diversification. "President Nazarbayev started this reform many years ago. In 2001, we created a sovereign fund, which we call the National Fund, and we already have \$64 billion, which is kind of a reserve for the future generation. We follow many countries who joined for more flexible exchanges or an inflation-targeting regime following the Russian example..."

The most important thing is the reforms started by President Nazarbayev, we call them the Plan of the Nation – 100 Concrete Steps, which sets the reforms on how to improve the investment climate and how to improve the always-[available] opportunity to do business in Kazakhstan. Part of this is creating financial clusters in two years... New financial centres will be based here," he added.

"Globalisation through business, digital technologies development and modern media affects and changes not only the material world, it changes the culture, the traditional values, and it makes adjustments to the spiritual world of people," said Nazarbayeva

"No country is able to survive in

isolation, especially when digital communication and the internet encourage people to see a better life and it makes the government look for new revenues and create new jobs. Everything can be digitised, but I believe it is impossible to digitise our conscience, soul, our mind, which are in con-

ditions, Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister Roman Vassilenko appeared on the panel wearing Kazakh national dress – shapan (long dressing gown) – and welcomed everyone in Kazakh, thus stressing the need to include culture and traditions as part of any nation branding. In his remarks, he talked about

sibility of the media in promoting terrorism and extremism were discussed.

Secretary of the Security Council of Kazakhstan Nurlan Yermekbayev said that sometimes journalists are playing for the terrorists' team without even knowing it.

"One of the objectives of terrorists is a manifestation, a statement and an intimidation. And journalists often tell everything in detail, reveal the methods of law enforcement," said Yermekbaev. According to him, when journalists talk about the terrorists – who they are, where they come from, how they lived, – it pushes people to do the same terrorist actions. Yermekbaev said that if journalists engaged in discrediting extremist groups, there would be much fewer followers of the terrorists.

The discussion also touched on recent terrorist attacks in France and Belgium, as well as the role of social media in today's world and whether it can be a real media. The session was moderated by Mikhail Gusman, first deputy general director of Russia's TASS. Along with Yermekbayev, speakers such as Todd Baer, executive producer at Bloomberg Media, Pearl, Vice-President of Skolkovo Foundation Aleksandra Barshevskaya and Sinan Kürün, head of the Information Department and Directorate General of Press and Information of Turkey shared their opinions on the issue.

The forum's last day opened with session number five, The Fu-



Dariga Nazarbayeva

stant search for answers to internal questions – why it happens, who is to blame and what to do. Such discussion platforms will always be in demand. Thank you very much for this interesting discussion and the opportunity to see the problems from different angles."

Participants of the third session, moderated by Lei Cheng, anchor on China's CCTV, focused on the new image of oil countries and the effectiveness of branding in the modern world. One of the speak-

er once famous character Borat, portrayed by actor Sacha Baron Cohen and his effect on the country's image.

"We tried to benefit from that situation 10 years ago and used the misconception that famous British actor was presenting to promote real Kazakhstan. In a sense, we were trying to make lemonade out of the lemons that he gave us," he said.

Later issues of information wars in the 21st century and the respon-

Photo credit: Jiyas Onarova

Spanish Foreign Minister Visits Astana...

Continued from Page A1

Around fifteen countries, ranging from Germany to Mongolia, have now joined the partnership.

At the press briefing with Idrissov, García-Margallo pointed out that Kazakhstan is an important strategic partner for Spain in Central Asia and that the two countries have a significant potential for the development of economic cooperation and business ties. He expressed support for Kazakhstan's candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for 2017-2018.

The parties also discussed Spain's participation in EXPO 2017, the work of the intergovernmental commission on cooperation in economy and industry, the Kazakh-Spanish Business Council, inter-parliamentary cooperation, the expansion of a legal base, tourism, as well as the



Spanish acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil (L) and his Kazakh counterpart Erlan Idrissov greet each other prior to the official meeting.

possibility of opening a branch of the Cervantes Institute in Astana.

Later on April 25, García-Margallo was received by President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the Akorda presidential residence for

talks on the bilateral ties and their future.

García-Margallo was accompanied on this visit by a large business delegation, which included representatives of major Spanish com-

panies, such as INDRA, MAXAM, INECO, TECNICAS REUNIDAS, EUROFINSA and others. The delegation took part in the Kazakh-Spanish Business Forum at the Rixos President Hotel Astana.

More than 90 Kazakh companies working in agriculture, construction, architecture, oil and gas, energy, aviation, military and transport participated in the forum.

García-Margallo and Kazakh Minister of Investment and Development Asset Issekeshiev opened the event.

The forum was meant to support Spanish companies already operating in Kazakhstan and promote activities by other businesses that have shown interest in that market.

During the forum, an agreement between the Chamber of International Commerce of Kazakhstan and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce on the establishment of the Kazakh-Spanish Business Council

was signed. "I am glad that powerful international companies, such as Airbus and Talgo took part in the forum. For us, cooperation with these brands is not only the flow of investment, but also a technology transfer, which motivates our manufactures to improve," Chairman of the Chamber of International Commerce of Kazakhstan Ruslan Sultanov said.

García-Margallo also visited a joint venture of Kazakhstan and Spain, the Talgo manufacturing facilities (Tulpar-Talgo factory) on the outskirts of Astana, as well as attended a graduation ceremony at Eurasian National University, where the Centre of Spanish Language named after Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo was established in March 2015. The initiative to open the centre belonged to the Spanish Embassy in Kazakhstan. It was the first such initiative undertaken by Spain in Central Asia.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

World Bank Marks Progress on Salamatty Kazakhstan Programme

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – All eight target indicators have been achieved during the implementation of the Salamatty Kazakhstan initiative.

Vice Minister of Health and Social Development Alexei Tsoi announced that the World Bank gave a positive assessment of the implementation of all areas of the state programme on health for 2011-2015.

According to the vice minister, measures to strengthen the preventive orientation of medicine, improve sanitary-epidemiological service and organisation as well as manage and finance health care were highly evaluated by international experts.

“The maternal and infant mortality rate decreased 1.8 times. The tuberculosis rate reduced by 1.6 times. The level of circulatory system diseases decreased by two times. The rate of mortality from cancer decreased by 15 percent

and injury and poisoning rates by 21 percent. An overall reduction of total mortality has also been achieved. The plan was to reach 7.62 deaths per 1,000 people, the actual result is 7.52,” Tsoi said.

The launch of the seven cross-cutting programmes of joint and several liability and the national screening programme, including surveys on nine nosologies are the main results of the state initiative.

The epidemiological situation with the majority of infectious diseases has been stabilised due to the immunisation of the population against 21 vaccine-preventable diseases.

The instant testing studies for the determination of microbiological indicators and chemical studies of genetically modified objects to ensure the safety of food products that meet the requirements of the World Health Organisation have been also implemented.

The basic principles of the Unified National Health System at the hospital level, including an oppor-

tunity for the patients to choose a hospital, the formation of a competitive environment for medical services, the transparent process of providing medical services, the funding of medical institutions according to the final result depending on the volume, quality and outcome of medical services rendered have been introduced.

The projects of the master plans for the restructuring of the hospital organisations’ network to 2025 have been developed.

The international indicators to measure the results of study in the field of health research have been implemented as well as a national centre of independent assessment of knowledge and skills of graduates and practitioners was established.

The state programme of healthcare development Densaulyk (Health) was approved by President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Jan. 21. It became a logical continuation of the state programme Salamatty Kazakhstan.

Kazakh Residents’ Currency Preferences are Changing



Staff Report

ASTANA – Raising rates on deposits in tenge has affected Kazakh residents’ currency preferences, according to analysts at Ranking.kz. Deposits in the national currency showed record growth in February, with the volume increasing by 8 percent to 1.53 trillion tenge (US\$4.54 billion) compared to the previous month.

At the same time, currency deposits decreased by 5 percent to 5.44 trillion tenge (US\$16.1 billion). As a result, the share of tenge deposits at market increased to 22 percent against 20 percent a month earlier.

In general, the volume of retail deposit portfolios decreased by 2.8 percent to 6.99 trillion tenge (US\$20.7 billion) due to the reduced currency component, according to experts.

“The sharp rise of the tenge deposits portfolio is due to two primary factors. First, the strengthening of the national currency in February. Second, the change in maximal (nominal) deposit rates recommended by Kazakhstan’s Deposit Insurance Fund: they were increased from 10 percent to 14 percent in tenge and reduced from 3 percent to 2 percent in the currency,” as confirmed in the review.

Eight of 35 banks managed to increase their retail portfolio in February. Zaman-Bank, the leader in terms of growth, began from a low start and boosted the volume of

deposits by nearly 1.5 times over the month. At the end of February, however, its portfolio amounted to only 440 million tenge (US\$1.3 million), 57.5 percent lower than a year earlier, and the rates on annual deposits from 6.2 percent to 7.5 percent, the lowest level in the market. Analysts assume the bank’s policy is not aimed towards mass involvement of depositors.

At the same time, two other participants in February’s top three deployed a serious fight for customers. Home Credit Bank added 10.3 percent (1 billion tenge, US\$2.97 million) to its retail portfolio. Together with Halyk Savings Bank, it was one of the two banks which offered the highest (efficient) rates in the market – up to 15.2 percent per annum. It presented four products, the biggest advantage of which is daily capitalisation or interest payment upfront.

In addition, the bank offers extra bonuses in the form of lottery apartments and life insurance for the entire family, as well as a payment card for a deposit with coupon accrual for the remaining three percent.

Bank of Astana added 6.7 percent (2 billion tenge, US\$5.94 million) over the month. Its product line includes two multi-currency deposits with monthly capitalisation and the ability for partial withdrawal and replenishment. The annual effective rate on both is 14.9 percent.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Head of Astana International Financial Centre Kairat Kelimbetov named the countries, including Kazakhstan, which are ready for oil price volatility. Speaking at the 13th Eurasian Media Forum in Astana on April 21, he stated that Kazakhstan has joined the club of the states that made a shift to the regime of inflation targeting. Kelimbetov said Kazakhstan made a shift to a floating exchange rate, which allows absorbing external shocks. Countries such as Columbia, Mexico, Russia and Kazakhstan are more prepared for oil price volatility in comparison with those with fixed exchange rate policy. He also emphasised that falling oil prices are ‘the wakeup call’ for the world and it is high time to develop technologies non-dependent on the production of oil and petroleum products. Kelimbetov said this situation is a good opportunity to diversify Kazakhstan’s economy.

The World Bank has invested over \$6.8 billion in Kazakhstan since 1992, according to Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dossayev, Kazinform reports. He stated that it helped Kazakhstan develop road and social infrastructure, enhance SME competitiveness, modernise education and healthcare systems, optimise customs and tax administration as well as restore its environment. The minister also highlighted that President Nursultan Nazarbayev initiated the signing of a framework agreement in May 2014 to improve cooperation between the state and the World Bank. The World Bank and Kazakhstan are expected to implement joint projects worth \$4.9 billion in 2016-2021 as part of the agreement.

In 2015, manufacturing industry’s small enterprises produced products and furnished services worth 213 billion tenge (US\$626.6 million). The second consecutive year’s output growth made up 23 percent after the collapse by 21 percent in 2013. Revenues increased by 20 percent to the amount of 246.3 billion tenge (US\$724.6 million). At the same time, the cost of production showed a growth by only 12 percent. As a result, gross profit increased by a half – 49 percent.

In March, tenge deposits increased by 5.6 percent to 5.2 trillion tenge (US\$15.3 billion) compared to February. The volume of deposits in foreign currency decreased by 5.3 percent to 10.9 trillion tenge (US\$32.1 billion). The total deposit base decreased by 2 percent to 16.19 trillion tenge (US\$47.6 billion), according to the press service of the National Bank. The decrease of the volume of deposits is the result of strengthening of the exchange rate of the Kazakh national currency in February. The volume of deposits of private entities decreased by 2.5 percent to 6.92 billion tenge (US\$20.4 million). Deposits of legal entities totalled 9.26 trillion tenge (US\$27.2 billion).

External debt of Kazakhstan at the end of 2015 amounted to \$153.5 billion, down by almost \$4 billion, according to the press service of the National Bank of Kazakhstan. At that, 7.9 percent accounts for the public sector, banking sector accounts to 5.2 percent of the external debt, 33.5 percent is not related to direct investment debt and 53.3 percent is made of inter-company debts of other sectors in the structure of Kazakhstan’s external debt.

Two trends that emerged last year are continuing in 2016 in Kazakhstan’s payment cards market, Kazakh TV reports. First, the number of active cards has significantly increased. Second, the total number of cards in circulation has declined. About 16.5 million payment cards were used at the end of February last year, which is 2 percent lower than a year before. The number of active cards increased by 20 percent to 8 million, which indicates the qualitative growth of the market. At that, 48 percent of all available cards were used in February this year.

150 Renewable Energy Professionals Gather for Astana Conference

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Approximately 150 renewable energy projects developers and representatives of engineering, consulting and advisory companies in the energy sector gathered in Astana April 20-21 for the Kazakhstan Power and Renewable Energy conference.

“Kazakhstan is expected to become the biggest renewable energy player in the region and is taking further steps towards exploitation of its substantial alternative energy potential,” according to a statement by conference organisers Euroconvention Global.

“Kazakhstan is one of the most attractive markets for renewable energy and is actively developing its legislation in this field. It was the first country in Central Asia, where the feed-in tariffs

for renewable energy facilities were adopted. Due to this legislative support, the first solar power plant in Kazakhstan is already in operation, and the country is now attracting international market players. About 28 solar energy projects are planned to be put into operation until the end of 2020,” the event’s synopsis said.

Euroconvention Global believes the wind power market in Kazakhstan “is also expected to grow fast in the period 2016-2025. A number of fully permitted and ready to build projects will increase in 2016 and in the coming years.”

They also noted that hydroelectric plant development “is part of the government effort to increase significantly its overall renewable power generation before 2020. The construction of small hydro-

power plants in Kazakhstan is expedient as the country’s rivers enjoy significant hydropower capacity. Geothermal power sources and biomass potential will be further developed in the new energy mix as well,” according to the Euroconvention Global statement.

The Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, according to organisers, features important plans and actions to be implemented to keep modernising and diversifying the country’s carbon-reliant economy.

“Renewable and alternative energy sources will provide 50 percent of all electricity produced in Kazakhstan by 2050. The country plans to spend an average \$3.2 billion a year – along with investors – to achieve its green goals by 2050 and to cut significantly carbon emissions,” according to the statement.

OPEC, Other Oil Producers Fail to Reach Agreement on Freezing Output

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Seventeen oil producing countries ended six hours of negotiations in Doha, Qatar on April 19 without an agreement over a proposal to freeze output at January 2016 levels to stabilise oil prices by reducing excess fuel on the market.

The negotiations involved members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as well as Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and others. The participants decided OPEC member states need to agree on the issue before including other oil producers in such an agreement, reported Tengrinews.kz.

“The meeting ended with the fact that we need more time to consult among ourselves in OPEC and non-OPEC producers. The discussions will resume next June during the extraordinary meeting of OPEC,” said Qatari Minister of Energy and Industry Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Sada, according to RIA Novosti.

OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Venezuela, as well as Russia agreed in February to freeze

oil production at January levels, but only if other major producers joined the agreement, among which the main role was given to Iran.

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh supported the idea, but has not confirmed Iran’s readiness to join the initiative. He announced

Iran would join discussions after oil production levels reach four million barrels per day.

Kazakh Minister of Energy

Kanat Bozumbayev participated in the event at the invitation of the Qatari Minister of Energy and Industry.



BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan car producing company Azia Avto is studying the possibility of entering the Azerbaijan market, according to Trend.az. The company's delegation recently visited Baku and held talks with Azerbaijani colleagues on the issue. The company considers the Azerbaijan market one of the most promising markets in Commonwealth of Independent States. The company recalled that the volume of car imports to Azerbaijan exceeded 100,000 cars in 2012-2013. Azia Avto is the largest car producing company in Kazakhstan and distributor of Lada, KIA, Skoda, Chevrolet, UAZ and Renault.

Samruk Kazyna National Welfare Fund plans to complete the modernisation of Kazakhstan's Shymkent oil refinery by late 2017, according to the fund's head Umirzak Shukheyev, Kazinform reports. The modernisation will significantly improve the quality of production, increase environmental friendliness of the products and ensure production of high-octane gasoline meeting the K5 standard (analogue of Euro 5 standard in the countries of the Customs Union). It will also enable Kazakhstan to increase the volume of oil refining from its current five million tonnes to six million tonnes per year. As of today, three major refineries in Atyrau, Shymkent and Pavlodar operate in the state. Currently, all of them are under modernisation.

Food Corporation has received more than 800 applications worth 6 billion tenge (\$17.9 million). The applications for funding under the Programme of Advance Procurement of Grain were received from farmers through spring and summer financing under the guarantees of social-entrepreneurial corporations, according to the press-service of the company. This year, 14 billion tenge (\$41.8 million) were allocated from the national budget to implement the programme, which will provide financing for approximately 2.3 million hectares of sowing land.

Kazakhstan made a decision to join efforts for large-scale projects in the Atyrau region, Kazakh TV reports. Additional capacities will be needed for the development of the Kashagan offshore field and the upcoming plant construction at the Tengiz onshore field. The projects will require thousands of tonnes of steel as well as different equipment. Moreover it is expected that such business alliances will help compete with foreign producers. Proportion of local content will grow in oil projects and new jobs will be created. Entrepreneurs also succeeded in establishing new contacts in the North-Caspian Construction Exhibition, which gathered more than a hundred companies from 11 countries. Deputy Governor of the Karaganda Region Anuar Akhmetzhanov said the prospects of such major projects as Tengizchevroil, Karachaganak, NCOK Kashagan are great, but they require joint efforts by several local companies.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines plans to launch a new service to Astana and Almaty on May 3, according to inform.kz. KLM will operate flights en-route Amsterdam-Almaty-Astana-Amsterdam or Amsterdam-Astana-Almaty-Amsterdam four times a week.

Vice Minister of Agriculture Yermeek Kosherbayev, Deputy Governor of Pavlodar region Nikolai Dychko and representatives of 35 Kazakhstan companies visited Russia, Kazinform reports. The visit was organised by the Kazakhstan Embassy in Russia, Kazakhstan's Foreign Trade Chamber and Kaznex Invest. Governor of Novosibirsk region Vladimir Gorodetsky highlighted that his region actively cooperates with Kazakhstan and expressed confidence that such partnerships will be enhanced. Construction of a full-cycle car producing plant was launched in Ust-Kamenogorsk. Its capacity is 120,000 cars per year. Both sides are sure that the construction requires cooperation between the states. Representatives of Russian and Kazakh companies discussed new opportunities in cooperation, logistics and organisation of distributorship networks. Also, Kaznex Invest opened its branch office in Novosibirsk, which will support Kazakh exporters in the Siberian Federal Region and will attract investments from Russia to priority sectors of the Kazakh economy.

First Kazakh-Made Rails Used As Construction of Parallel Road Near Almaty



Askar Mamin (sitting left) and Almaty Regional Governor Amandyk Batalov (sitting right) during the laying of the first link.

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – President of KTZ, national railway company, Askar Mamin and Almaty regional governor Amandyk Batalov took part in laying the first link of the track panels at the 110-kilometre railroad of the construction of Secondary Rail Road Almaty 1 – Shu on April 7.

"Today we witnessed the result of a successful implementation of the Nurdy Zhol programme," Mamin underscored in his speech, according to the KTZ press release.

"A rail production plant has been started. Production of the plant has a strategic importance for the economy of Kazakhstan and a huge export potential; now the tracks will be purchased from domestic producers."

The project, implemented as part of the state programme Nurly Zhol, seeks to use domestically produced materials. First of all, the rails used in the con-

struction, were manufactured and supplied by an Aktobe rail and beam plant (Aktyubinskii Relsobalochniy Zavod).

Alarms and communication systems are being installed as well as electricity supply works are being carried out on the site. It is planned to start the first complex objects this year.

"The project will create more than 1,500 jobs. This project is of strategic importance for our region," stressed Batalov.

The Almaty – Shu section is busiest in the country as two lines from North and West (via South) Kazakhstan join in Shu and now trains need at times to wait for their turn to ride the gauge to Kazakhstan's largest metropolis. The second part of the section will double the capacity, increase the speed and intensity of the movement of trains between Almaty and the rest of the country and will increase the transit potential of the country.

Kazakhstan, Russia Use New Method for Uranium Exploration

By Kseniya Voronina

The Rosatom press service recently announced that two joint ventures Karatau and Akbastau together with Kazatomprom and Uranium One are working on a unique technique to extract uranium by in-situ recovery method (ISR) in alkaline soil. This method is going to help extract more uranium, which was technologically unreachable.

"For the first time in world practice, we have successfully performed a test drilling of the well in alkaline soil. We also developed production schedules for roads and working areas. The construction of mining landfills on alkaline soils was previously considered technically impossible because of its instability," said Chief Geologist of Karatau Alex Matunov.

In 2015, experts conducted geo-technical investigations to determine the possibility of uranium mining in the Budennovsk deposit (Kazakhstan), which includes the Karatau and Akbastau mines. Up to 15 percent of its fossils lay in the alkaline soil, including salt lakes and marshes.

After several researches, an effective way to seal the unstable soil was found – mechanical stabilisation with the help of reinforcing mesh. This method of sealing was implemented on the base of the Karatau mine with the use of environmentally friendly materials. Successful results of the experimental work showed the possibility of uranium mining in these areas. The experimental work continues in 2016 to determine the technical and economic parameters for construction of working areas there.

"This positive experience will not only involve part of the resources located out of the mines, but also reevaluate the prospects of the vast surrounding areas with significant resource potential," said Director of the Uranium One Raw Materials Development Programme, Alexander Boitsov.

The Karatau and Akbastau uranium mines are located in the Suzak district of South Kazakhstan and are part of the Budennovsk deposit. This field is one of the world's three largest uranium deposits where mining is carried out by underground leaching at depths greater than 700 metres. The development of the field is fulfilled in the framework of the comprehensive programme of Kazakh-Russian cooperation for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Ontustik Invest 2016 Seeks Investment in S. Kazakhstan

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The Ontustik Invest 2016 forum is expected to attract 500 people, including representatives of foreign companies, diplomatic missions, international organisations, local businesses, central government and local authorities, national companies and development institutes in an effort to attract foreign investment to South Kazakhstan, said Governor of South Kazakhstan Beibut Atankulov.

"Creating a favourable business environment is one of the crucial aspects of Kazakhstan's State Programme of Accelerated Innovative and Industrial Development (SPAID). Our region is open to mutually beneficial cooperation. Ontustik Invest 2016 traditional

international forum is key for building bridges with investors," said Atankulov announcing the event on April 28-29 in the regional capital city of Shymkent.

Forum participants will discuss the development challenges facing Kazakhstan and South Kazakhstan in particular and receive information about reforms intended to improve the investment climate in the state and the region's new investment capabilities.

The administration of South Kazakhstan also plans to organise a dialogue between international investors, local businesses and governmental authorities in agriculture, food production and pharmaceuticals.

Kazakh officials, leading businesspersons and investors will speak at the forum, which will also

include representatives from China, Iran and Russia.

More than 2.8 million people live in the South Kazakhstan region, which is a major Kazakh agricultural and industrial hub, offering a substantial workforce, research potential and developed infrastructure. According to local officials, South Kazakhstan is a leader in the attraction of foreign investments and has ongoing investment projects and trade ties with more than 100 countries.

South Kazakhstan is considered attractive due to low-prices for raw materials, strong governmental support, a moderate climate, low labour costs and its favourable geographic location.

More detailed information can be found at www.ontustikinvest.kz.

Nation to Host Cutting Edge Mining Industry Competence Centre in Almaty

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – McKinsey & Company in collaboration with the Almaty Tech Garden autonomous cluster fund has launched a Mining Industry Competence Centre in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Being a part of the 100 Concrete Steps Plan of the Nation, this initiative is supported by the country's government. The official signing ceremony took place on April 20 at the MINEX Central Asia mining and exploration forum, according to the company's press release.

"The world is currently undergoing digital transformation: the internet of things, big data, and advanced analytics are the hottest topics on the agenda in most technological and other companies, and these are gaining more and more widespread acceptance," said Jukka Maksimainen, managing partner of McKinsey & Company in Kazakhstan, the press release wrote. "Big data advanced analytics is viewed as the biggest enabler of the next step-change in productivity improvement throughout industries. At the same time, the mining industry needs to have a way to learn the existing Lean tools to improve productivity."

Maksimainen stressed that catering to mining industry professionals, the Mining Industry Competence Centre will introduce and disseminate innovations and practices and will contribute to Kazakhstan's economic development.

The Mining Industry Competence Centre is the product of an equal cooperation agreement between the Almaty Tech Garden autonomous cluster fund and McKinsey & Company. The centre is



scheduled to open in the second half of this year.

Almaty Tech Garden will provide organisational and legal support and raise operating funds, while McKinsey & Company will contribute in addition to funds expert advice, develop modules, train the centre's employees and launch its operations.

"The Mining Industry Competence Centre is unique and unlike anything else seen globally before," stated a press release.

The centre will perform two major functions – "an experiential training facility" to provide training for help in "capturing productivity improvements using innovative international learning techniques" and an innovation cluster as a second function that aims to "develop new knowledge with advanced tools in the metals and mining sector with big data advanced analytics laboratory."

"The new centre will consist of two value chain components – mining, including full-scale drilling rig for experiential learning, big data capturing and advanced analytics; mining beneficiation with state-of-the-art pilot-scale plant that can be used for experiential learning, technical training and pilot scale technical testing of different type of ores; big data capturing and advanced analytics," according to a press release.

Potential to add geology and life-of-mine planning to the centre's offering are examples of the opportunities to further develop the centre's facilities.

"Experiential training will deploy an innovative approach devised by McKinsey & Company demonstrating the impact of Lean tools in mining industry environment. This approach is already producing results in 15 other cen-

tres in sectors other than the mining industry around the world," explained the press release.

These projects are run in partnership with global business leaders, such as ABN AMRO, Bosch Rexroth and Petrofac, as well as respected organisations and universities like Technical University of Munich.

"During the five-day courses, participants will learn the basics of Lean tools that help to enhance productivity. Statistics show that lean production techniques can improve product quality by up to 60 percent, while generating productivity gains as high as 80 percent and slashing 25 percent off production costs and time," the message said.

Participants will be equipped to conduct performance improvements in their companies by gaining practical experience in productivity optimisation and thereby

contribute significantly to Kazakhstan's economic future.

The centre's use of the latest research and data collection methods with the Kazakh mines is its unique feature, having access to "a comprehensive set of industry data across the value chain in Kazakhstan" turns into "a genuine 'big data' laboratory."

"With the help of advanced analysis tools, it will produce focused recommendations to boost the efficiency of individual mining and metals processes and of operations as a whole (by increasing extraction ratios, cutting energy consumption et cetera.) The comprehensiveness of data availability is expected to be unique in global scale thus enabling new kinds of innovations to take place in open environment," as noted in the press release.

McKinsey & Company is a world leader in management consulting. From implementing transformations designed to secure long-term dynamic development to optimising business processes for rapid gains in performance and profitability, it assists major global market players in addressing a wide range of strategic challenges.

McKinsey, in existence for more than 80 countries, has a vast network of consultants specialising in strategic, operational, organisational and technical aspects of business in more than 60 countries around the world.

The Almaty Tech Garden autonomous cluster fund was established under the initiative of Kazakhstan's President to attract new technologies and advanced international experience to implement the 2015-2019 State Programme for Industrial and Innovative Development.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

First Islamic Organisation for Food Security Summit Is Progress toward a Better World

In many ways, the fight against global hunger has been one of the great successes of recent decades. According to the UN's latest Food Insecurity report, the number of malnourished people in the world has fallen by more than 200 million since 1990, despite an increase in the global population of nearly two billion. Growing prosperity matched by an increase in agricultural productivity and better transport links has seen the proportion of under-nourished people fall from 18.6 percent to 10.9 percent.

But the world can't afford to congratulate itself too loudly. The pace of reduction in hunger has declined in recent years as have increases in global crop yields. And even this undoubted improvement still means approximately 800 million people – one in nine of the world's population – won't get the nourishment today they need to enjoy a healthy and active life.

Daily hunger has a terrible impact on individuals and communities. It increases susceptibility to disease and cuts economic productivity. Poor nutrition is the cause of nearly half of all deaths of children under five and damages the physical and mental development of those who survive.

Underweight infants, for example, are more likely to have health problems in later life. Children who don't get enough to eat do worse at school. It is hard to concentrate on learning when you are hungry even if you feel well enough to attend.

And our collective efforts to overcome global

hunger are going to be made more difficult in future decades by the impact of climate change and the loss of fertile land and the lower yields it will cause. Many of the countries where the least progress has been made in tackling lack of food and poor nutrition are those which will be hit hardest by rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns and more frequent floods, droughts and storms.

It is against this challenging background that the first General Assembly of the new Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) will take place on April 28 in Astana. It's the culmination of five years of hard work since Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev called on the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to step up cooperation to tackle hunger.

Launching the initiative during Kazakhstan's successful OIC chairmanship, he urged the creation of a new body which could couple the sharing of knowledge on improving agricultural productivity with the mandate and resources to respond to food crises within member countries. Twenty-four member countries have already taken all the steps needed to be part of the IOFS.

It makes sense for Kazakhstan to host the new organisation as Kazakhstan is not only a major producer of wheat but also one of the world's largest exporters, including to fellow OIC members. New storage facilities and improved transport links will strengthen this role.

The development of port facilities on the Caspian Sea along with the opening of the rail

link to Iran will enable grain to be exported much more easily and quickly from Kazakhstan across the Middle East and Africa. Large new grain stores, including in Afghanistan and Djibouti on the Red Sea, will not only help these exports but could also house large emergency reserves in case of a humanitarian crisis.

Enabling the OIC and its members to respond swiftly and effectively to famines caused by crop failures or natural disasters will be an important part of the work of the new organisation. This is more than just building up emergency reserves but also having the regional and national systems in place to give early warnings of crises and the know-how and resources to move food supplies to where they are needed.

But perhaps as important is the goal of the IOFS to help provide the expertise and research countries need to improve their long-term food security and resilience. This means undertaking research and exchanging information on the modernisation and sustainable development of agriculture. This includes finding solutions to challenges, such as desertification and soil erosion and promoting the innovative use of irrigation and better crops and seeds to grow food at a time of decreasing rainfall.

The fight against global hunger is at the heart of our ambitions for a more prosperous, fair and stable world. The first assembly of the IOFS is an important step towards this goal, which is why we all have good reasons to wish those taking part every success in their efforts.

The Real Cause of the 21st Century

By Erlan Idrissov

Kazakhstan is among those countries that had more reason than most to celebrate the end of the Cold War. The improvement in global relations and the end of Soviet control gave our nation the chance to chart our own future. It is an opportunity we have seized with both hands.

It was also a time of hope that the mistrust which had divided our world would give way to a new era of peace, stability and co-operation. But the danger now, a generation later, is that this historic opportunity is being squandered.

Wherever we look, there is growing instability, conflict and fear. International terrorism has grown, as Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said in Washington last month, from isolated acts to large-scale and coordinated aggression which threatens not just lives but the territorial survival of countries.

Our world has failed to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, material and knowledge. The lead shown by Kazakhstan and a small group of other countries in the early 1990s in giving up our nuclear arsenals has not been followed. We now have the terrifying prospect of nuclear devices falling into the hands of violent extremists who would not hesitate to use them.

International attempts to tackle these grave challenges have been thwarted by the re-awakening of tensions between the main powers. Instead of increased co-operation, we are seeing an increase again in proxy conflicts and trade agreements replaced by economic sanctions.

It was against this background that Kazakhstan's leader, in a strongly worded Manifesto, "The World. The 21st Century," challenged his global counterparts last month to commit to peace and dialogue. Without such action, the president said the world was facing a real risk of plunging again into global conflict.

He warned this would be a war with "no winners" as it would inevitably lead to the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The result, he said, was that the planet would end "as a graveyard of radioactive materials."

Setting out a comprehensive program of action, Nazarbayev urged a series of inter-linked steps which must be taken to put the world back on track to a peaceful future. It was, he said, a Manifesto for a World without Wars.

The president called for real progress towards arms reduction and the elimination of nuclear weapons which must be the final goal. These steps should include a global agreement to prohibit the deployment of lethal weapons in space, on the seabed and in international waters.

This should be coupled, the Manifesto urged, with an outright ban on the development of new

WMD. It is time to call a halt to the use of science for military purposes.

He made clear that an important building bloc towards arms reduction would be to strengthen and extend existing peace and nuclear weapons-free zones. In particular, he said there was an urgent need for a new zone to cover the Middle East.

Nazarbayev appealed, too, for the elimination of military blocs branding them as "relics of the Cold War." Not only do they lead inevitably to the creation of a countering group, he said, but their protection can be abused by individual members to threaten neighbors and increase instability.

Instead of reverting to old divisions, the president called for an intensification of efforts to defuse tensions and end regional conflicts. Disputes in the Middle East, Afghanistan, eastern Ukraine, the Korean peninsula and South China Sea all threatened global peace and security and needed urgent attention.

These steps must be matched, at an international level, to reverse the "short-sighted dismantlement" of arms treaties. The removal of limitations on anti-missile systems and conventional arms has led to militarization across Eurasia which only increased "the risk of a new global war."

But the Kazakh president made clear that these efforts, important as they all were, would not succeed without tackling the root causes of war and tensions. This needed "equal and fair access to infrastructure, resources and markets for all nations."

Delivering such an agreement would be the best way to mark the UN's 100th anniversary in 2045, the Manifesto suggested. President Nazarbayev promised that, to help achieve this goal, Kazakhstan was ready to host an international conference this year where countries could re-affirm their support for international law as a way of preventing war and conflict.

The Manifesto was a direct call for action to fellow world leaders who, he said, had an enormous duty to future generations. But he added it was the responsibility of all of us – "governments, politicians, scientists, entrepreneurs, artists, and millions of people to prevent a repetition of the tragic mistakes of past centuries."

It is an ambitious agenda. But as President Nazarbayev said, there can be no more important or urgent goal than permanently freeing "humanity from the threat of deadly wars." He was right to call it "the cause of the century." It is the only sane response to the challenges we face and to place our world again firmly on the path to progress and peace.

Erlan Idrissov is Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan.

The article was first published online by TheDiplomat.com

Why Kazakhstan's Model of Maintaining Ethnic Diversity Deserves Attention

Our world is getting smaller as modern transport and technology allows people, goods, ideas and conversations to flow faster and more easily. But it is also, sadly, becoming more divided. Everywhere we look, we see people moving apart rather than closer together.

These dividing lines, based on nationality, race or religion, are found within societies as well as between countries. No part of the world – not even the most mature and developed societies – escapes the distrust, prejudice, violence and conflict these rifts can fuel.

It is against this background that the role of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, which celebrated its 21st anniversary on April 26, needs to be assessed. The assembly, along with the good sense of the Kazakh people, has helped our country's more than 100 ethnic groups and the followers of 17 faiths live together in harmony and mutual respect.

Our diverse population is a result of Kazakhstan's geography and history. Located between Europe and Asia, our position on the old Silk Road meant we have long been a meeting place for peoples and cultures.

But there has also been a tragic element to our history. Many of the ethnic groups in Kazakh-

stan are the result of the forced relocations of the Stalin era. Whole populations were uprooted – often on the flimsiest of excuses – from their lands to Kazakhstan. Over 150,000 Koreans, for example, living in the Far East of Russia were exiled here in the 1930s over unfounded fears that they could be Japanese spies.

Other ethnic groups, including those of German and Polish extraction living in the Soviet Union, along with hundreds of thousands of individuals were sent to Kazakhstan because of suspicion and paranoia. They were forced to work in the harshest of conditions while the practice of their culture was suppressed.

It is a sign of their strength and determination – and to the openness of the Kazakhs – that those who survived were able to build new lives for themselves. The result was that when our nation became independent in 1991, Kazakhstan's population was made up of citizens of a remarkable number of different backgrounds.

This could be a strength but also a matter of concern. You don't have to look far from Kazakhstan to see examples where such diversity has proven a source of conflict and division. But there was a determination in Kazakhstan that our country would not suffer the same fate.

The creation in 1995 of the assembly was a

powerful signal of this commitment. Drawn from all the ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan and mirrored at a regional and city level, our role is to promote both diversity and social cohesion.

At a national level, the assembly assesses new laws to ensure they fully meet constitutional guarantees on the rights of ethnic groups and do nothing to damage respect and tolerance. But we also have been given the responsibility positively to promote diversity and preserve languages and cultures across the country.

To achieve these important goals, we run cultural centres, language schools and help fund specialist newspapers and broadcasts. We support, for example, nearly 200 centres where children and adults can study 30 different languages. The important part we play in our country and our achievements explains why 2015 was celebrated as the Year of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan.

The new freedoms to travel that independence brought saw some people decide to return to the countries of their ancestors. But the overwhelming majority chose to remain and bring up their families here. It is a strong symbol of how Kazakhstan is seen to offer people of all backgrounds a chance to be part of a stable and prosperous future.

Lessons of the 13th Eurasian Media Forum

There is no denying that our planet faces many sizeable challenges. The current economic situation is setting new tests for every country. The turmoil in the Middle East is having a ripple effect globally, including the spread of international terrorism, extremism and the global migration crisis. The world is also facing many uncertainties and questions. Will the United Kingdom vote to leave the European Union this year? What will happen to the price of oil? How will the crisis in the Middle East develop? It is during unstable and insecure periods, such as the one facing us today, that getting together government officials, experts and other prominent and influential figures to discuss these challenges becomes more important than ever.

The Eurasian Media Forum (EAMF) that took place in Astana last week provided this opportunity. More than 400 international politicians, pundits and journalists were in the capital of Kazakhstan to discuss the main issues on the international agenda. Understandably, the main topics of discussion revolved around three main issues – the global economy, the crisis in the Middle East and the changing geopolitical landscape.

Throughout the sessions that took place over three days, common themes developed on why our world is facing so many problems. These included a lack of trust and lack of understand-

ing between states and political blocs. Hamid Karzai, the former President of Afghanistan, pointed out during the session on the Middle East that the only way to achieve peace is to foster trust between the global powers, among whom he named the United States, China, Russia, and India. Many of the experts agreed that it is political struggle that has caused many of the challenges facing the world today, including terrorism and extremism.

Despite the difficult period the world finds itself in, we must continue to believe that every problem should have a solution. While it was always going to be a difficult task to provide concrete answers to every challenge facing our planet, some constructive proposals were voiced during the forum. Just as with a common theme for why the world is facing instability, common solutions were put forward by many of the speakers – closer cooperation between states, constructive dialogue between players in the international arena and tighter integration. The latter of the solutions was especially prominent during the discussions on Brexit, with Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov noting that "Kazakhstan is strongly pro-integration. The world has not produced any better integration model than the European Union."

If dialogue and closer cooperation is indeed the answer to many of today's problems, then

Kazakhstan has an important role to play. Situated between Asia and Europe, our nation can act as a bridge between East and West. The country has already been playing its part in facilitating resolutions to the Syrian crisis, the Ukrainian conflict and the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme. Kazakhstan has also been a prominent supporter of closer economic integration through the Eurasian Economic Union and China's New Silk Road initiative. As a nation that has good relations with all its neighbours, as well as with the European Union and the United States, Kazakhstan can and should play a pivotal role in facilitating cooperation and dialogue between different states and political blocs.

So what did we learn from the discussions that took place during this three-day forum? During challenging and uncertain periods, it is absolutely essential to come together and cooperate on resolving global issues. As Dariga Nazarbayeva, the Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, who is also the chair of the EAMF Organising Committee, said during the closing ceremony of the EAMF: "No country is able to survive in isolation." It is only through open and honest discussions that we can start moving towards finding common solutions.

The Eurasian Media Forum played its part in this endeavour this year and will surely continue to do so in the future.

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The Astana Times

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OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

Challenges Pressure Kazakhstan Economy, but Reforms Will Continue, Former Official Says

By Aigerim Rushanova

Having forged a successful career in both the public and private sectors, Rakhim Oshakbayev possesses an intimate and unique understanding of the Kazakhstan economy. Before becoming Vice Minister for Investment and Development, he was a Project Manager for the International Finance Corporation, Director General of the Analytical Centre of Economic Policy under the Ministry of Agriculture, Managing Director of Kazakhstan's Samruk Kazyna National Welfare Fund and, most recently, Deputy Chairman of Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs. He has spent this spring in Washington, DC on the Rumsfeld Fellowship programme – a six-week professional exchange at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advance Studies.

Oshakbayev's time as Vice Minister from August 2015 to March 2016 coincided with the downturn in crude oil prices. When asked what were the three most important implications of this dramatic fall, he notes "the high volatility of the exchange rate; the weak state of the financial sector, including the limited availability of credit; and the rising non-oil deficit in the state budget." He adds that, unfortunately, "these developments are felt most strongly



Rakhim Oshakbayev

by small and medium enterprises (SMEs)."

With respect to the exchange rate, Kazakhstan's National Bank at first tried to maintain a fixed exchange rate, but developments in Russia and around the world exerted pressures on Kazakhstan's economy that ultimately forced the bank to readjust its monetary model in August 2015. The Central Bank of Kazakhstan moved the tenge from a managed float to a free-float. Consequently, the average monthly exchange rate swung from 187 tenge per dollar in July 2015 to 345 tenge per dollar in March 2016.

During the summer of 2015, the ruble continued to depreciate under pressure from falling oil prices. While the average ruble/dollar exchange rate in June 2014 was 34.39, by June 2015 it was 54.59. In the same period, the average Kazakh tenge/dollar exchange rate rose only slightly, from 181.48 to 183.61. This created a disparity that

discouraged SMEs in Kazakhstan from using locally manufactured products, as cheaper Russian equivalents were favoured. More importantly, as Oshakbayev emphasises, "It became harder for Kazakh SMEs to continue normal business with their Russian partners."

Meanwhile, the Chinese economy began to show signs of stagnated growth. Beyond financial indicators, the weaker tenge reduced government budget revenues, forcing it to rebalance the 2016 budget based on an average oil price of \$30 per barrel, down from the original \$90. The collapse in world oil prices also prompted the government to tap into the National Fund. "According to March 2016 statistics published by the National Bank of Kazakhstan, the total value of the National Fund amounted to \$64.3 billion, which is 17 percent less than its August 2014 level of \$77.2 billion," Oshakbayev points out, adding that, even in 2016, "Fifty-seven percent of state budget will be covered by oil-related revenues."

These factors – the fall in global oil prices, and economic recessions with Kazakhstan's primary trading partners Russia and China – created monetary, structural and financial volatility and ultimately prompted the move to free-float the tenge in August 2015. However, Oshakbayev stresses that, in spite of the short-term volatility, this move was

necessary for the long-term development of Kazakhstan's financial system.

The Long-Term Picture

Notwithstanding the developments in 2014-2015, Oshakbayev notes that Kazakhstan's financial sector still faces serious, long-term challenges. First, while the state has successfully reduced the amount of non-performing loans (NPLs) on banks' balance sheets from 35 percent in 2013 to around 8 percent in the last quarter of 2015, additional measures must be taken to ensure long-term financial stability, as many of the underlying assets are of poor quality. The NPL cleaning process has also pressured banks' capital ratios.

"The growth of money supply actually stopped in mid-2013, and since mid-2014 has decreased by 1.5 trillion tenge or almost 20 percent," says Oshakbayev. "Lending in the economy has fallen by 357 billion tenge since January 2015 while interest rates, denominated in tenge, have sharply increased from 10 percent to 19.1 percent, in line with monetary pressures in order to cover risk premiums."

The recent uncertainty has provided an impetus for diversification and new economic development policy. As Vice Minister, Oshakbayev helped to conceive several

state programmes and roadmaps, emphasising the importance of development based on trade liberalisation, a reduction in state participation in the economy, and recognition of the need to foster SMEs and human capital development. In one industry-focused programme, Oshakbayev set out to improve the investment climate and change the state from an active participant to a more supportive role that interferes minimally with natural market processes. His approach to policymaking was driven by his experience in business. "As a former representative of Kazakhstan's business community, I know the importance of financial and structural conditions," says Oshakbayev. "Arguably, these factors are more important than state programmes themselves."

Oshakbayev also sought to eliminate barriers and bottlenecks for the manufacturing industry, particularly with respect to market access and achieving a regional competitive advantage with respect to costs. He opposed programmes that use taxpayer funds to support a particular business entity and therefore distort free market by eliminating competition.

"While it is important for the government to support business, it is also important for the government to allow free market forces to work. Supporting weak and failing enterprises with low investment returns that have substantial market share

not only impedes macroeconomic growth, but presents a barrier to entry for smaller, independent and potentially more efficient actors to gain market entry."

Significant Reforms

Oshakbayev is optimistic regarding the future stabilisation and development of Kazakhstan's economy. The country's ranking on the World Bank's Doing Business Index has consistently improved over the past few years, reaching the 41st spot in 2015, and there is a genuine willingness and desire by government officials to implement significant reforms. President Nursultan Nazarbayev last year adopted the so-called Plan of the Nation, '100 Concrete Steps to Implement Five Institutional Reforms' which prioritises the creation of a modern and professional civil service, upholds the rule of law, advances industrialisation and economic growth, and advocates measures to ensure the state's transparency and accountability.

"Overall, Kazakhstan's economy has achieved enormous success since 1991," Oshakbayev says confidently. No country experiences a perfect growth trajectory, and Kazakhstan certainly has significant challenges ahead. But, according to Oshakbayev, these problems are normal for an upper-middle income developing economy, and can be solved as long as the country remains willing, open and eager to realise the necessary reforms. "We still have work to do," he says.

This article is a featured preview for the upcoming "Invest in Kazakhstan 2016" publication.

Kazatomprom's Transformation to Increase Company's Efficiency, Chair of Board Says

By Aida Khafizova

Last year, Kazatomprom confirmed its status of a major mining company and earned more than 35 billion tenge (US\$103.9 million) in net profit. Although considering that Kazatomprom has been the mining leader for many years, in principle the news was expected for the market. An arrangement with Chinese partners on the joint construction of a fuel assemblies production factory was an unexpected development. Experts have already called this step historic; for the first time in its 19 years of existence Kazatomprom will not only sell raw materials, but will launch the production of ready-made fuel for nuclear plants. Chairman of the Board of Directors of the national nuclear company Askar Zhumagaliyev provided the details in this interview.

What stage has been reached in construction of the factory?

Last December, we signed an agreement with our Chinese partners and thus began to implement a task of the President on the diversification of production. The joint venture Ulba-TBC has already been established. Currently, the design and estimate documentation is being developed. We plan to complete this work by the end of the year and start construction next year. We plan to receive the first products in 2019. The expected plant capacity is at the level of 200 tonnes per year.

Is there an understanding who will be buying the products from this plant? Could it be possible that it will be constructed and produce fuel, but no one will buy it?

When choosing a partner, we primarily pay attention to issues of sale and during the signing of the commercial agreement all these matters were taken into account. In fact at the present moment, before the start of the factory's construction, all its products were contracted for and will be sold to China. It is also envisaged that the production will be expanded for third-country markets. Many European countries which use this type of fuel for reactors can also become potential buyers.

Nevertheless, production of fuel for nuclear plants is a science-based production. Being the world mining leader, why has Kazatom-



Askar Zhumagaliyev

prom decided to try its hand in this new sphere?

We will not simply try. Now it is our strategic goal: in prospect we must not only keep the leading position in uranium mining, but be a producer of fuel for nuclear power plants. We will diversify production using the experience of international companies. Kazatomprom has enough resources for this end, including human resources. We will attract new knowledge and technologies to the country and create jobs. And of course, we will increase our profit via added value, being present at different stages of the nuclear-fuel cycle.

You said that one of the strategic goals is to remain the mining leader. Does it mean that you intend to increase production of uranium concentrate?

The current market situation tells us that there is no need to significantly boost production in the near future. As of today, the share of Kazakh uranium is more than 40 percent of global production.

While many uranium mining companies have frozen their production until better days because of low profitability, you continue to receive profit. What is the reason for such low costs of your products?

We use unique, effective methods of uranium mining with low costs. We can extract 80 percent of our uranium reserves using the most environmentally-friendly and efficient in-situ leaching method. This is our principal advantage. We are not digging pits, constructing mines; we extract uranium by the closed method without radioactive dust. That is why our mines have the same level of radiation as other populated areas without uranium production.

Returning to the issue of production costs, I may say that this is an ongoing process and we are continuously working to decrease them. In

particular, at the end of 2015, we have cut them by 16 billion tenge (US\$47.5 million). We are constantly working to improve mining technologies, raise productivity, introduce conservation systems, optimise expenditures and increase the qualifications of our specialists. For example, in the last year we gave up stainless steel and moved to polyethylene – it is more corrosion-proof, more plastic, easily mounted and cheaper. We have applied the technology of heat recovery; in other words, we receive heat during the process of mining and then use it to heat the premises and we are moving on peroxide sedimentation. Finally, all these influence production cost.

What is the cost of uranium production at Kazatomprom?

The system includes 14 enterprises; each has its own mining costs, some higher, some lower. It depends on the depth of uranium deposits, as well as other factors. But, in general, the current production cost allows us to extract, sell and gain good profits. In the last year we earned more than 35 billion tenge (US\$103.9 million) in net profit.

During the recent meeting on transformation of Samruk Kazyna, you spoke about plans to create a trading company. Why would you need it, because Kazatomprom sells its own mining products?

It is one of the instruments which will be implemented during the transformation in order to increase marketing efficiency. You know that Kazatomprom not only produces uranium; we have beryllium, tantalum... We want to create a company which will successfully and comprehensively represent Kazatomprom on the international market and will be closer to the consumer. Yes, today we sell all uranium; for instance, in the last year we have concluded agreements on supplying uranium to France and India, the other part is on the spot (retail) market.

We can sell spot market uranium at a higher price. This will be the major objective for the trading company, but not the only one. The trading company will be an active player in the market, using various mechanisms targeted to increase Kazatomprom's sales efficiency. Being a full-fledged trader, the company will seek opportunities to attract profits not only from Kazakh ura-

nium sales, but also through the consideration of different offers on the world market. At the same time, we are closing three of our representations in China, Russia and the USA. The trading company itself will be in Switzerland.

You also apparently plan to attract a foreign specialist as a marketing adviser. Do we not have our own strong marketing experts?

If we would be selling sugar or cookies, I would agree with you; although, the uranium products market is very specific and narrow. Much depends upon personalities and relations are based on trust. We have been working with many of our partners for many years; they know that Kazatomprom is, first of all, reliable and stable, because over the life of the company we have never violated contract terms and failed supplies. We want to explore new markets. Thus we need help from those who worked on these markets and gained confidence and respect. New knowledge is a plus. You must learn always, otherwise you will lose your competitiveness.

Despite the big profit, the economic value added (EVA) indicator is very low – minus 27 billion tenge (US\$80.3 million).

The company had such an indicator in late 2014, having started the transformation of the programme, we managed to improve this indicator to 16.9 billion tenge (US\$50.3 million) in one year, and now it is minus 10.4 billion tenge (US\$31 million). To that end, we have taken a set of measures to cut expenses, production costs, to transfer non-core assets... According to the 2025 Strategy, we must raise EVA to plus 32 billion tenge (US\$95.2 million). To that end, we still need to do a lot, and it is, obviously the aim of the transformation. Further transfer of non-core assets, restructuring, lower administrative costs, reengineering of business-processes, automation, higher efficiency of production – all these measures, in the end, will help raise the profits of the company and increase EVA.

Do you think that a company of your scale needs transformation; could it be overestimated and can everything you just said be implemented without excessive flush, without making it a different programme?

The idea is that the programme

provides an integrated approach; it helps to look at yourself from the outside, to identify weaknesses, to change the perception of the current situation. The world is rapidly changing, and competitors are also moving forward. When I explain to my colleagues the idea of transformation, I always take Nokia phones as an example. If you remember, 10 years ago it was the most popular brand, almost everyone had such a phone. It was a world bestseller; managers of the company might have thought that it would last forever. But then, new players came who focused on the development of technologies and substituted Nokia. The idea is that you need to develop continuously.

President Nazarbayev instructed you to ensure implementation of all obligations taken by the partners of Kazatomprom during the launch of JVs or to consider returning the assets. Could you tell us about it in more detail?

At that time, when we created joint ventures with our partners, they took certain obligations, including on the development of hi-tech industries. At present, not all obligations are fully complied with or their implementation is protracted. Now, we started to analyse relations with all our partners, consequently, we will propose concrete solutions.

Last year, having started the implementation of the transformation programme, you moved all your daughter enterprises from Almaty to Shymkent and Kyzylorda. What is the idea of this relocation?

Instructed by the President, we relocated the offices of daughter companies, i.e. administrative and managerial personnel. Initially, we had all production employees in these regions. Yes, I cannot say that it was an easy process. But we consider this decision as a right one. The head of a mining enterprise must be in the production area, not in the comfortable office hundreds miles away. When I was engaged in the modernisation of the public service centres [as a head of government agency for telecommunications and information in 2010-12], we removed the offices of operation hall managers, for them to monitor the service delivery process, to communicate with clients, to promptly solve emerging issues. This experience was taken from Japanese – heads of workshops and fac-

tories were not granted offices. They must be present in the territory of the workshop and continuously monitor the industrial process. Besides, the relocation helped us to save almost 300 million tenge (US\$892,647) of administrative costs.

Presumably, process automation is a key aspect of the transformation. Taking into account your broad experience in this area, how will the activities of the Kazatomprom will be changed?

We have already launched a pilot project – Situation Centre, which will be connected to all our enterprises by the end of the year. It is an information system, which collects all financial and production indicators of our "daughters." It can analyse them and make forecasts. After the implementation of the Situation Centre we won't need to compare dozens of Excel documents, it will show us online, in graphic form, the situation on all our indicators that will lead to prompt managerial decision-making.

By the end of the year, we also plan to introduce a solution called "Digital Mine" at one of our enterprises. It is also a system, which will show us the situation at our production facilities, production rates, agents use and deviation from regulations and plans. We also plan to start the development of a corporate system of procurement analysis, which will help us effectively use existing materials and plan new procurement. By the way, having implemented these projects, we will save 4.7 billion tenge (US\$ 14 million) over five years. In fact, all these measures are the initial elements of the fourth industrial revolution.

I'd certainly like to ask about the Low-Enriched Uranium Bank, which will be located at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant. It's a sensitive public issue. Many people still think that nuclear waste will be placed there.

No, uranium-235 hexafluoride enriched to 4.95 percent, which is used for peaceful purposes will be placed there. The idea of this bank is that any country in need of such material could get it from the bank without enriching it on their own. In other words, it is a product ready to be used for the production of nuclear power plant fuel; it is the same material we make fuel pellets from. Therefore, it is an absolutely wrong assumption that the bank will store nuclear waste. The UMP has been working with such material for 40 years and there were times when more than 1,000 tonnes of uranium hexafluoride were kept in stock, whereas now we are talking about more than 100 tonnes.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

Israeli Ambassador: Our Relations Are Based on Respect

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – April 10 marked the 24th year of bilateral relations between Israel and Kazakhstan. Israel was among the first nations to recognise Central Asia's newly-emerged independent countries, including Kazakhstan.

"It is truly remarkable what has been achieved during this short period of time," said new Israeli Ambassador in Kazakhstan Michael Brodsky. "Relations between Kazakhstan and Israel are based not only on mutual interests, but they are also based on deep mutual respect and deep mutual sympathy between our people. In the next year, we will mark the 25th anniversary of our diplomatic relations. From the very beginning of our relationship it was very important for us to create a strong and meaningful bond with Kazakhstan for many reasons, such as appreciation for your country as a big regional power and as a moderate Muslim country."

Brodsky added Kazakhstan served as a way for Israel to provide diversity for its energy sources.

"We have been buying oil from



Michael Brodsky

Kazakhstan for many years, worth more than \$1 billion per year. Of course, now this number went down, because of prices for oil," he explained.

"Today we have meaningful relationships in many different fields: political, economic and cultural and we managed to make these connections very strong," he said.

Agriculture, health, industry, education, science and high technology are the most important fields of Kazakh-Israeli cooperation. Hundreds of companies in Kazakhstan operate with Israel's participation. The fields of cooperation are diverse, as Israel has a presence in many areas of Kazakhstan's economy, not just agriculture and security.

"Speaking about bilateral trade, of course, the numbers went down, but this is not a unique situation. It is correct for many countries. Israel's economy is also facing difficulties because of the overall economic crisis. I believe that the economic crisis will create new opportunities," said Brodsky.

The ambassador noted Israel plans to help develop the Kazakh agricultural field, with several Israeli companies starting work in the South Kazakhstan region. They aim to produce products not only to sell in local markets, but also export to Russia, China and other countries.

"We have established an experimental drip irrigation farm in Ushkonyr, close to Almaty. The idea is to represent Israel's capabilities in the field of drip irrigation and to bring farmers to learn, to share our experience. I know that in Kazakhstan there is much appreciation of Israel's achievements in agriculture.

Last year, President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted the quality of Israeli strawberries and he said that such strawberries should be grown in Kazakhstan. We are happy to assist using high technologies and Israel's experience," he said.

Brodsky added that despite being a free market economy, Israel is still an idealistic country, a characteristic that has deep roots in the nation's values.

"We have a centre of international cooperation (MASHAV) where we share our technologies and knowledge free of charge with as many countries as possible. Over the last decade, we brought a few hundred experts from Kazakhstan to the centre. I am happy to say that more than 1,000 doctors did internships in Israel and all of them came back and all of them are working in different hospitals of Kazakhstan. I am sure that they benefit from the experience they got in Israel," he said.

The ambassador has three priorities during his term: reaching out to the younger generation, creating trilateral relations among Kazakhstan, Israel and China, and promoting cooperation in agriculture and water management.

"The Israeli Embassy works with Bolashak graduates, because it considers that it is very important to reach out to this group of young people by different means. Israel aims to establish good relations with young people today, then

to establish the relations with them in the future. The Embassy invites young people to explore Israel; the so-called 'Startup Nation' plans to organise different courses and cultural activities in public diplomacy. For example, [I can point to the] participation in the Almaty Jazz Festival, where a prominent Israeli pianist participated. Young people liked him very much," he said.

Brodsky also stressed the importance of the new Silk Road, a corridor connecting China with Europe.

"Israel is sure Chinese involvement in Kazakhstan's economy will become more and more significant and obviously the new Silk Road initiative will require great investments, which China is planning to make in Kazakhstan. So we truly want to be part of it. Israel's technologies can be required," he said.

He also noted the importance of exchanging ideas in the financial field.

"One of the major events in our relations is the second round of negotiations concerning double taxation, which took place in Astana. A group of Israeli experts visited the Kazakh capital recently and soon Kazakhstan experts will visit Israel," he said.

Although official relations between the two nations began in 1992, Brodsky noted they in fact started much earlier.

"I should mention one episode which is very important in the relationships of the Kazakh and Jewish nations. Thousands and thousands of Jewish people were evacuated from Europe and different regions of the Soviet Union to the Central Asian region. Thanks to the hospitality of local people they not only survived, but they found a new home here. Many of them stayed here, Israel will always remember this," he said.

The Embassy used the new March 1 holiday, the Day of Gratitude, as an excellent opportunity to again thank the Kazakh population for its hospitality and warm attitude towards the Jewish people.

"I have lived here for four months and I really feel the atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance of everyone. This is very important. We have a Jewish community in Kazakhstan. I meet them regularly and all of them say that they feel comfortable and secure here. That is the spirit of Kazakhstan," said Brodsky.

Indonesia to Mark 23rd Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations

By Galiya Nurzhan

Kazakhstan and Indonesia. What can be the common ground between these countries? Island and equatorial Indonesia, with a population more than 14 times greater than that of continental Kazakhstan, would seem to have nothing in common with its Central Asian counterpart. For the last 23 years, however, these two states have found points of contact to develop a fruitful bilateral relationship.

To learn more about these points of contact, The Astana Times recently interviewed Foster Gultom, a career diplomat who was appointed by the Indonesian President as the nation's Ambassador to Kazakhstan.

What is your perception of Kazakhstan, its capital and people now?

Prior to my arrival in October 2012 I learned about Kazakhstan a little bit more intensively in order to familiarise myself with a new policy of the established state and was deeply impressed by the fast pace of its development. The country is growing so fast in terms of GDP, foreign trade and global competitiveness. Kazakhstan has made a significant leap forward in terms of its global competitiveness rating, having reached the top 50 economies and now striving to enter the club of the 30 most developed countries in the world. I also learned that one of the significant dates in the country's history was the capital's move from Almaty to Astana in 1997-1998 and its further becoming the fastest growing modern metropolitan city in the Central Asian region, being a hub in its essence and connecting all regions of the republic. Due to its favourable geographic location, Kazakhstan serves as a bridge, connecting Asian and European parts of the world and for this reason it's called a Eurasian state that has an important role to play in the international arena. Today Kazakhstan is in transition mode, moving from an energy-driven economy to an innovation-driven one and I noticed a great untapped potential for bilateral cooperation and a lot of opportunities to complement each other in various sectors of the economy, such as the non-oil and gas commodities sectors like grain, meat, cotton and some other agricultural products. Meanwhile, there are a lot of similarities between Kazakhstan and Indonesia. The two countries have much in common in terms of abundance of natural resources such as mining, oil and gas and agricultural products. The majority of both countries' population is Muslim. The countries are both multicultural in terms of diversity of ethnic groups, being united by the proximity of the spirit, combination of interests and diversity of the nature.

How well is Kazakhstan known in Indonesia?

Kazakhstan is widely known for its achievements in sports. Indeed,



Foster Gultom

Kazakh athletes showed very good results in the Olympic Games and tournaments in boxing, weightlifting and Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling, winning gold and silver medals, and every now and then we hear the anthem of the Republic of Kazakhstan and see your flag rising on the world sports pedestals, again signaling the victory of Kazakhstan.

Secondly, Kazakhstan is also known for its global initiatives, among them G-Global, The ATOM Project and being the organiser of the multilateral forums, such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, the Astana Economic Forum, Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia and many others, as a platform for discussion of the most relevant issues on the international agenda. In the international arena Kazakhstan has gained a reputation as a leader in the global nuclear non-proliferation process, exerting every effort towards a nuclear weapons-free world, promoting UN efforts in the fight against terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, contributing to mitigating global threats and promoting sustainable development, thus implementing efforts which have been put forward in the UN Millennium Development Goals. Indonesia has a no less important role to play in the South East Asia region in terms of advancing the democratisation process and promoting human rights protection.

In what kind of businesses are Indonesians mainly involved?

Regarding trade and economic cooperation, up to now we still witness a very low bilateral trade turnover. This issue has regularly been touched on by the two countries' leaders and governments. Today import commodities from Kazakhstan to Indonesia mainly include salt, cement and articles of iron and steel, technical and medical equipment, as well as electrical and electronic equipment. Indonesian export commodities to Kazakhstan include household appliances, apparel, musical instruments, rubber, wood, furniture, perfumes, soap, etc. Apart from increasing cooperation between the two business circles, regular exchange of visits and a solid legal framework, now our target is to unify our efforts to raise bilateral trade and economic relations to a new level of strategic partnership and increase the level of trade turnover through intensifying cooperation between our business communities

and establishing new joint ventures in the energy sector and agriculture, manufacturing, medicine, food and tourism industries.

What are the main priorities of the Indonesian Embassy in Kazakhstan?

Since my appointment my mission is to raise bilateral relations to a new level, since we will celebrate the 23rd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year. An important milestone in bilateral relations was the successful exchange of visits by the two countries' heads of state, during which the two leaders underlined the readiness to develop the existing potential, and there are a lot of things that we can do in achieving this objective.

In the economic area, the interaction between the business circles is strengthening. The joint commission on economic cooperation is functioning. Bilateral consultations between the two countries' foreign ministries are held regularly. We can also witness mutual support within the frames of international forums, supporting our countries' candidacies in the international organisations.

In terms of social-cultural cooperation, universities of Indonesia and Kazakhstan have already established fruitful cooperation. We have six MoUs (memorandums of understanding) signed between our universities in regions of Indonesia and Kazakhstan, stipulating exchange of students and sharing best practices with due regard to the scientific and technological aspect in education from the Indonesian educational sector. There have been students and academics from Kazakhstan who participated in several Indonesian scholarship programmes. Last year, we received in Astana a number of students from the Jakarta-based international school; in turn, the students from the international school in Astana could also visit the sister school in Jakarta.

The Embassy has a programme to organise Indonesian cultural events and performances in Kazakhstan through organising and participating in both countries' exhibitions and tourism fairs like the Kazakhstan International Tourism Fair (KITF) and expose Indonesian potential to the public. We organise familiarisation trips' programmes annually, which bring together journalists and tour operators of Kazakhstan to explore points of interest in some regions in Indonesia. We have also set up the Indonesian Cultural Centre in Astana. But now we are expecting both countries' business communities to enhance cooperation in various sectors of the economy, and raise the bilateral relation to a new level of strategic partnership. This is a commitment of the Indonesian Embassy in Astana, sharing best experience in industrial development, R&D, science and technology, agriculture, investment, education, health, culture, tourism, sports and other fields for the mutual benefit of the two nations.

Kazakhstan Supports Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation in Eurasia, Senate Chair Says

Continued from Page A1

According to the press office of the Kazakh Senate, in his remarks the Chairman of the Senate emphasised that among the key issues of our time are a crisis of trust between states, disregard for international law, an aspiration to dominate in global affairs, disrespect for the history and culture of other people.

"The fight for peace is a political and moral duty of every state regardless of its size and power. World military expenditures have reached almost \$2 trillion. This figure proves that at governments' insistence, some parliaments pass budgets where military expenditures prevail over development allocations," Tokayev added, bringing up the subject that the signing of the Kazakh Presidential decree on closing down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site 25 years ago was the first and the last case in nuclear disarmament history.



Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

"Members of parliaments should clearly say no to nuclear weapons. We can demand complete disarmament from the world powers, advocate for the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty," Tokayev highlighted.

He also stated that the Eurasian states should support the central role of the United Nations in global affairs as well as oppose any restrictive measures and military actions violat-

ing the UN Charter. Tokayev also added that it is essential to promote economic interaction and trade to benefit the people, emphasising the key role of China's Silk Road Economic Belt as an important strategy.

Tokayev also informed his counterparts about the conference Religions against Terrorism that will bring together parliamentarians and representatives of religious leaders to Astana on May 31 this year.

Furthermore, on the sidelines of the forum, Tokayev met with Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani. The parties noted the particular importance of the recent official visit of President Nazarbayev to Iran, during which major agreements in trade and business were reached. The speakers also discussed regional security problems associated with intensification of the activities of terrorist organisations. They emphasised a necessity of joint efforts to fight against extremism.

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Nation&Capital

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

PEOPLE

Young Entrepreneur Finds Success in Handmade Note Pads

B2

CULTURE

Astana Opera Stages Puccini's Famous 'Madame Butterfly'

B3

SPORTS

Patrick Twumasi: Sometimes You Have to Overcome Many Difficulties to Get Where You Want

B7

Golovkin Tops Wade, Earns 35th Win, Extends KO Streak to 22



By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Kazakh boxer and EXPO 2017 ambassador Gennady ‘GGG’ Golovkin (35 wins, 0 losses, 0 draws, 32 knock outs) completely outperformed, out-powered and dominated U.S. opponent Dominic Wade (18 wins, 1 loss, 0 draws),

knocking him out in round two in front of his home crowd April 23 at the Forum Arena in Los Angeles. The Karaganda native defended his World Boxing Council (WBC), World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) middleweight titles for the 16th time.

In recent years, Golovkin has become more than a boxer – he has become a showman. Another sold-out crowd of 16,353 reconfirmed that when his name was called. The crowd went wild when he heard “Gennady Triple G Golovkiin...” from ring announcer Michael Buffer.

Wade lacked confidence even

before stepping into the ring; at least it seemed so to the naked eye. In the first round, he was already shaken and knocked to the canvas by Golovkin’s right power blow. Wade’s self-assurance seemed to vaporise and it appeared he didn’t want to continue the bout, but he got up.

Continued on Page B7

Survey Shows Youth Are Pleased with Country and Future

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung or FES) and Research Institute Public Opinion presented a publication called “Youth of Central Asia, Kazakhstan” on April 6-7 in Almaty. “Today’s youth of Kazakhstan is a generation that was born and grew up in a period of serious political, social and economic transformations. These are young people with their worldview, their position and their values. That is why the study of today’s youth, their familiarity with the world, is important,” said Tolganai Umbetaliyeva, head of the FES office in Almaty and one of the authors of the research during its presentation.

The publication was prepared on the basis of sociological research that was conducted in 2014, which covered 1,000 of the country’s young men aged 14 to 29 from all 14 regions of Kazakhstan, as well as the cities of Almaty and Astana. The methodology of the well-known Shell Youth Study was used for the research. It was adapted for the conditions and features of Kazakhstan.

The survey was focused on the main spheres of attention of Kazakh youth, their dreams and plans, values, views, as well questions and issues which they face within the socialisation process. Here are the highlights of the survey that can be downloaded online on the FES website.

Continued on Page B5

Journalist Paul Salopek Continues 21,000-Mile ‘Out of Eden Walk’

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist and National Geographic Fellow travel writer Paul Salopek set a goal to walk the global trail of first humans who migrated out of Africa in the Stone Age. He is now in Kazakhstan to continue his 21,000-mile foot journey, the “Out of Eden Walk” that started in Ethiopia in 2013 and will end at the tip of South America seven years later.

“I discovered before this project that walking is helpful for many things and one of them is thinking... The project has probably been evolving in my life long before I actually set out walking from Africa in 2013,” Salopek started his story while walking on the stage of Nazarbayev University.

Human species, he said, began to migrate and spread through the Middle East, to Europe, Asia Minor and Central Asia, along coastlines, the Caribbean coast, along beaches, to Siberia.

Continued on Page B2

Kazakh Citizens Hold Numerous Guinness World Records



KazGeo team

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – No doubt most people are familiar with Guinness

World Records, the annual reference edition that shows the achievements of people and ani-

mals, as well as natural phenomenon. Published since 1955, it has been named the best-selling copy-

righted book of all time. Kazakhstan has numerous entries among the listings.

Since so many references are now available digitally, it is not a challenge to find the records online and people don’t have to buy the actual volume. Some think there are ridiculous things in the Guinness Book, as often no one does the feat listed as a record except the record-setter. Certain records may seem a little mind-boggling, while others are truly amazing.

Kazakhstan or its citizens have been involved many times in the record-setting process.

Seven members of the Kazakh Geographic Society made the fastest automobile expedition to the South Pole in 2011. They prepared for the journey for about two years, managing to overcome 2,500 kilometres in four and a-half days.

Marat Zhylanbayev, one of the first Kazakhs to enter the book, set seven records. He has achieved different bests in marathons, including running through four of the world’s deserts.

Continued on Page B4

Kazakh Musicians to Introduce Listeners to Romantic Era

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The city’s Congress Hall will host a concert April 27 featuring outstanding Kazakh musicians and international contest winners Dina Mirmanova, Aikirim Yessimkhanova and Daniyar Yessimkhanov.

The Magical World of Romance [Romanticism] will be a wonderful event for classical music lovers

and those who wish for a respite of positive emotions in the middle of the busy work week, as well as a great opportunity to see and hear the talent of the gifted pianists performing Romantic-era masterpieces.

The programme consists of compositions by Johannes Brahms, Frédéric Chopin, Edvard Grieg, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

Continued on Page B3

Kazakh-Born Model, Entrepreneur Helps Country’s Models Develop Abroad

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – At 26, Kazakh-born, New York-based Alyona Subbotina is probably one of the hardest working, multifaceted and accomplished yet down-to-earth models and entrepreneurs the country has ever had. She is busy helping native models build their careers abroad, while developing her own and enjoying art projects as a hobby.

“I treat my work with high professionalism because it is primarily a big responsibility. All agents and clients who hire you for such important jobs always expect a big output first of all,” she said in a recent interview with The Astana Times.



Alyona Subbotina

Born in Almaty in 1990, Subbotina was a member of the Kazakh Olympic volleyball team. Her modelling career began in Singa-

pore when she was 16 and completing her degree in hotel management at the East Asia Institute of Management.

“When you come as a beginner, a new face, people see you are not very professional. You hesitate and don’t know how to pose. You need to come well dressed, confident in yourself and knowing what you do at work and that is what many clients pick models for,” she said.

She opened Givenchy Paris Fashion Week in 2011, where she was nicknamed “Kazakh Girl,” and earned international recognition. She subsequently moved to New York City.

“This started in 2011. Even though I don’t look like a typical Kazakh,

when people knew I was from Kazakhstan I was given this nickname up until today. This actually helps my career a lot, because it impresses people that I’m from this country but look different,” said Subbotina.

She was the face of Mac Cosmetics and Brunello Cucinelli in 2012, Thomas Wylde in 2013 and part of the Armani advertising campaign.

The model has worked with the world’s top fashion houses such as Acne Studios, Giorgio Armani, Givenchy and Helmut Lang and was featured in fashion shows for Jean Paul Gaultier, Mara Hoffman, Thierry Mugler, Rick Owens, Vivienne Westwood and other designers.

Continued on Page B2

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

NATIONWIDE

April 29 at 9 a.m. Day of Kazakh National Costumes. People are encouraged to wear Kazakh national clothes

ASTANA OPERA

April 29 at 7 p.m. Roden, Ballet

CONGRESS HALL

April 29 at 7 p.m. Symphonic Music, concert

BARYS ARENA

April 30 at 4 p.m. Battles of Nomads, Mixed Martial Arts

ARUZHAN MALL

May 7, 8 at 10 a.m. Handcraft Fair

PEOPLE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

Young Entrepreneur Finds Success in Handmade Note Pads

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Some businesses are prospering no matter the crises and circumstances. One such small business owner spoke about her handmade notepad workshop that makes a profit even during economic uncertainty. In an interview with The Astana Times 23-year old Saule Smailova, architect by occupation and founder of BLOCKmeNOT, mentioned some key points of successfully running a small business.

“BLOCKmeNOT, based out of Almaty, is a workshop that makes handmade notebooks and sketchbooks from eco-leather. The main principles of each BLOCKmeNOT pad are quality, practicality and style,” she said.

The personalised approach and a bit of her soul in each of her works make it hard to overlook.

“We make them from environmentally-friendly materials, exquisitely executed and personalised, and we put a piece of our souls in each strainer, because we believe that BLOCKmeNOT should please its master every day! We design individual pads together with our clients, taking into account all requests. You may order a personalised notebook with your name engraved on each page, or request an unusual lining inside, divide it into sections or columns. Our notebooks are versatile tools



Saule Smailova

for the creative people and the businessmen. You may combine sketch paper parts and drawing papers and that will give you one BLOCKmeNOT for both planning tasks, jotting down important ideas or creating masterpieces.”

How it all began

Smailova explained that the idea to open her own notepad business came to her while she was a student and her own preferences helped her identify clients' desires.

“In the last eight years of studying and working, I needed an ideal sketchbook and a notepad that

would be of high quality, practical and stylish. I needed a notepad which could become a part of my image and would be a convenient tool both at work and in my creativity sessions. So I designed and made my first sketchbooks and notepads myself,” she said.

To add to her success, she uses her inner world to influence things that she can change like her creations, instead of things that can't be changed.

“Designing is the process of expressing one's emotions and reactions to the surrounding reality. I want make this world beautiful, interesting and more convenient.

Designing gives me the opportunity to share this creativity with others.”

Timing is always a hard thing to predict in Smailova's line of work and it doubles the challenge, because each work is custom.

“The estimated time of finishing a pad mostly depends on the complexity of the order and its content. We once had an order we were making for one and a-half months. The client was in a different country and wanted to make a gift to his grandfather in Kazakhstan. We thought out every detail of the case and the notebook and picked up a special material and paper accessories. During the time that we were making it, we even became friends with the client. We cut the paper and patterns and sew the notebooks all by hand. The design is executed in electronic form, such as the page name and engraving on the cover, for instance. We have two assistants in our line of work: a printer and a guillotine paper cutter,” she said.

Her team currently has a workshop, but not an office, although Smailova is planning to open a small showroom for her creations in the future.

“Instagram is our virtual office and most sales are generated through social media,” she said.

With the rise of social media that helps promote small businesses for free, the legitimate question to ask

would be, is paid advertising still necessary?

“From our experience, I think that doing business is possible without paid advertising. To promote our business, we organised various competitions and sometimes offered interesting exchange options when we liked someone's product or service online; we tell our audiences about companies in social networks. Our customers tell their friends about our website or post photos of our notepads and tag us. I think that at the moment Instagram is the main source of orders, although I myself never ordered or bought anything via social media. I need to see things, touch them and feel them. So when customers want to see our products we meet them to show our product and discuss the design and other details,” she said.

For now, their notepads can be found at the concept store Experimentarium in Dostyk Plaza in Almaty and in Seven Life Store in the capital.

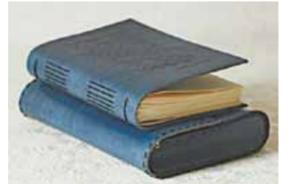
Handling the pressure of economic challenges

Smailova noted the universal nature of her product.

“Our notepads are good gifts for such occasions like March 8 (International Women's Day, widely celebrated in Kazakhstan), Feb. 14

(Valentine's Day), the New Year and birthdays, so the crisis didn't affect us too much, as all these holidays are celebrated no matter the circumstances and even during crises. Also people prefer useful, personalised and interesting gifts to knickknacks that would not be used. Because we don't use local material to make our notepads and we buy the supply in foreign currency, the cost of our notebooks increased almost by 25 percent. However we try not to raise prices too much, so that our notebooks will be easily available.

“Though we live in the world of gadgets, there are still many people who prefer to write notes on paper. By the way, I am one of them. Since our pads can be a diary and notebook, a sketchbook, a book of recipes, a photo album, a collection of poems, a book of ideas, a travelling magazine or just an album for drawing, this is why people of various professions or really anyone could be our client as long as they can write or draw,” said Smailova.



The note pad that took 1.5 months to create.

Kazakh-Born Model, Entrepreneur Helps Country's Models Develop Abroad

Continued from Page B1

Subbotina has also been on the cover of Elle Mexico, Harper's Bazaar Kazakhstan and Marie Claire Malaysia and the pages of Dazed & Confused, Marie Claire UK, V Magazine and Vogue Italia.

She always tries to work extremely hard so clients will pick her for the next job.

“This world is so small, actually, that everybody knows each other. You are selected based on the end result. I'm never lazy. Regardless of a client being a 'cool' one or not, I work equally, try to never let them down and not be late for work,” said Subbotina.

She is currently signed with New York-based Trump Model Management, founded and owned by billionaire Donald Trump, and was recently shot for a Sephora ad. The French chain of cosmetics stores features beauty products such as makeup, skincare, body, fragrance, nail colour and haircare.

With nearly ten years of modelling experience, an accomplished past and future-minded thinking, Subbotina is launching SubManagement, a platform that explores, discovers and develops future top talent throughout Kazakhstan. The company will serve as a scouting agency.

“I find it very strange that a big country like Kazakhstan doesn't have good agents for sending models abroad. I faced this problem myself before; finding such an agent in the country is indeed unrealistic,” she said. “All modelling agencies there are unable to do this; they only work locally. They can surely be professionals in their business in Kazakhstan, but there are no solutions for working overseas.”

With her vast experience abroad, Subbotina was constantly asked for help, advice or contacts from many Kazakh models who wanted to go abroad.

“The models who were contacting me seemed very good and promising and I thought why not occupy myself with this and try to send them abroad. I have contacts, know how it works. I can always give advice, help with a portfolio and show them to the 'right' people,” she said.

Subbotina had already started as an independent agent and is current-



Photo credit: kashagan.today

ly working with six or seven models. Four are already working outside Kazakhstan and three are being prepared to make the same move.

“One can always establish an agency; I am only developing a network now. I want my agency to be small, more exclusive so that models could get proper attention and career growth,” she said.

Subbotina plans to establish a modelling agency in Almaty. It will not have a physical office, because scouting and modelling career development are done online.

In the future, she wants to establish free courses for promising models and those who do not necessarily want to go abroad, but simply become familiar with how the business works.

“Everything is in the stage of development; I myself have to work a lot as well. I also have to stay in touch 24 hours a day with four of my models. I am happy for their success; the models are already being shot for numerous magazines and are expected in Paris,” said Subbotina.

She quickly added she does not want to give promises to any of the models and believes her business should be built on trust and honesty.

“A person's destiny is in my hands and I am responsible for it,” she said.

Two of her models are from Almaty, two from Kostanai and one from the capital. She is finding it difficult to obtain visas for them.

“We really have to fight for it. I want to stand up for the rights of our models and want to work with Kazakhstan's models first of all,” she added.

When Subbotina began working in Kazakhstan, the country's fash-

ion and modelling industry was not as developed. People seemed to be afraid of judgment and self-expression, while now they are braver and willing to show themselves, she said.

“When I come to Kazakhstan now, [I see] new faces, fashion magazines, modelling agencies. A lot of work is going on. It's very impressive and cool. I would like to be and work there more,” she said. “Many magazines, editors and stylists who I work with tell about cool magazines or shootings in Kazakhstan that they heard about and I am very glad people have started to talk about us.”

Being part of overseas shootings with foreign photographers and Kazakh designers exhibiting their work abroad is a big plus for the country, she added. Last year she did an independent non-commercial photo project about the country and is interested in inviting photographers to collaborate with her.

“The book that we made will be issued in May in Dazed & Confused magazine and a photo exhibition will be in London and New York. I have a lot of ideas, but this surely requires financing,” added Subbotina. “I also have ideas in sports projects and other fields if someone wants to help later and do something interesting.”

Even though she is busy helping other models, doing her own job and involved in art projects, she tries not to miss events in New York that involve Kazakhstan and is glad to offer her help.

“Recently, I was invited to an evening at Kazakhstan's consulate that will take place April 19. It might be interesting to help them somehow and do something interesting,” said Subbotina.

Journalist Paul Salopek Continues 21,000-Mile 'Out of Eden Walk'

Continued from Page B1

“They crossed what was back then a land bridge between the old world and the new world – now divided by a sea between Alaska and Siberia and then all the way down to the very tip of South America, Chile – probably one of the last corners, horizons in the original discovery of the earth by our ancestors,” he explained.

Salopek believes this journey is highly important in the history of human species, even more important than space travel because, as he explains, humans had technology and intellect to begin to “innovate their way across habitats, climates, deserts, mountain ranges, glaciers and bodies of water” when they left Africa.

“The revolution of the human mind happened, that allowed us to basically take possession of the planet, we became planetary species. That is why I call this journey a walk into becoming a human. We became the people we are today... This journey took about 2,500 generations. The ‘Out of Eden Walk’ is going to try to replicate this journey in a much shorter time span, seven to nine to ten years,” he shared.

Starting from Ethiopia, the writer explained step by step how he was crossing borders through Saudi Arabia's Jeddah into Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Syria, Cyprus, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, northern India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Siberia, Alaska to the “western shores of the new world.”

“When people say that what I am doing is crazy, I say no... I am doing what we are built to do, what evolution built this amazing body to do over the course of 200,000 years,” Salopek stressed.

He is combining the most ancient form of transportation with the highest technology that he can master along with the help of National Geographic, laptops, satellite phones and by interacting via social media when he is able to.

In his journalism career, Salopek worked as a foreign correspondent in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, Balkan Peninsula and Latin American countries often covering conflicts. He explained why he walks and not flies, takes a cab or public transport.

“What are all the stories that I am missing between myself, airplane, stories between A and B? I would

argue that the stories nobody sees because we are flying to them are as important and sometimes more important than the story at the destination. That connectivity along with the act of slowing down immerses, submerges me into daily life,” the journalist said.

Along the route of his walk, he hopes it gives a deeper insight and more meaning in the stories he writes and shares.

“Climate change, economic upheaval, globalisation, mass migration, environment, culture, politics, war – I don't just skim through, but live and inhabit the events and major headlines of the day with people who live them and who rarely get written about,” Salopek noted.

In the fall of 2012, these were the reasons of his decision to “set aside his conventional journalism career” to do the “biggest story that he could think of.”

Salopek uses GPS and GIS mapping technology and takes a city walk in every major city he walks into. He spends one to three days walking around the town and turns on a GPS device, which locates him to a satellite after about every two metres.

“I stop, see somebody, I say ‘hello, can I take your picture, what's your life like.’ That photograph is GPS connected to the satellite and GEO located. So I'm drawing GPS maps of every city that I walk through,” he added.

The journalist listed some people he walked with and who are also the characters of the story.

“I've walked with African nomads, Saudi generals, Israeli poets, Turkish photographers, Georgian high school drop outs, ‘Mr Azerbaijan Sportsman of the Year 2012,’ which was a mistake because he walked me into the ground,” he said, causing a light cheer among the university's auditorium.

Salopek noted that he was born in and loves the desert and that a country like Kazakhstan opens up

his heart. He explained how he finds his walking partners.

“There is no system... I have a network of journalist friends around the world and journalists are great hubs of information. Other 60 percent of the time it is random,” the traveller said.

“In a very empty and desolate landscape you have to plan, there is no walking out of Aktau and hoping for the best you know... Water is a bigger problem; I don't know where I'm going to sleep every night, that is an honest truth.

I might have a desired destination but I don't know whether I'll make it or no,” the speaker continued.

Salopek said he has to plan his journey for the sake of safety, but he cannot get upset if plans do not work because according to him, 90 percent of the time they do not.

“Slowing down allows me to move in a way that calms you down. You don't get upset about small things, you get upset about big things. You are able to differentiate,” he noted.

The journalist also shared about what brought him to his journey.

“Accumulation of years of experience as a travelling writer... I had a great honour and privilege. I have been lucky to be allowed to witness history unfold during my life time by covering, sadly, conflict but also countries building themselves up and pulling themselves together,” Salopek says.

However, he always thought he was “doing it quickly, flying story to story” and that there had to be a better way to “globalise” storytelling in today's globalised technological age and “put fast short micro headlines into a human context.”

“I thought what is the journey that ties us all together? And it was this journey for me anyway, the journey of our ancestors to basically become planetary species. So it is combination of emotional and intellectual reasons,” he concluded.



CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

Kazakh Musicians to Introduce Listeners to Romantic Era

Continued from Page B1

"As you can see from the name, in this concert we will perform compositions of the Romantic era. The romantic-era music in our opinion comes from the soul; it shows the most subtle sentiments, the most subtle changes of people's feelings. That is why we thought it would be very interesting for the listeners. Romantic music is always perceived with more enthusiasm," said Yessimkhanov in an interview with The Astana Times.

He added the musicians will not only perform solo, but will demonstrate piano play with four hands, a technique rarely seen in the city. The team will present the programme in the capital and other

Kazakh cities, and maybe in other countries.

"We want to introduce the audience to amazingly beautiful music and masterpieces of the Romantic Era," he said.

Yessimkhanov was born in Almaty in 1981 and began developing his talent from an early age. In 1995, he debuted with the State Symphony Orchestra of Kazakhstan. He has won many national and international contests, including the Bösendorfer International Piano Competition in 2009.

He began his studies in 1999 at Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media in Germany and two years later started performing solo concerts with orchestra in various cities in France, Germany, Greece, Kazakhstan, Morocco,

Portugal, Spain and the United States.

Yessimkhanov has also participated in international festivals, such as Amici della Pianoforte in Italy, Animato in France and Kasseler Musikfest in Germany. In addition to his performances worldwide and in his native land, Yessimkhanov also teaches at the Kazakh National University of Arts.

Born in 1988, Yessimkhanov has also been following her passion since an early age. The young piano musician has participated in international festivals and competitions. She won a scholarship to Hannover University of Music, Drama and Media in 2007 and earned her Master of Music degree from Germany's Musikhochschule

Münster in 2013. She also teaches at Kazakh National University of Arts.

Her duet with Mirmanova was recognised as one of the best during the 2014 International Chopin Piano Competition in Rome, where they received third place.

Mirmanova, born in 1981, is a graduate of Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory. Like her fellow musicians, she holds awards from many national and international contests and has been the guest at numerous festivals. She is a talented concertmaster and her skill has been rewarded at different events.

Tickets for the concert are 1,000 tenge (US\$3) and can be purchased at Congress Hall and online at Kazticket or Ticketon.

Italian Violinist Massimo Quarto Performs Around Kazakhstan



By Erzat Sergazin

ASTANA – Famous Italian maestro Massimo Quarto performed in Astana on April 19, Almaty on April 20 and Aktau on April 23 with a series of concerts dedicated to the Year of Italy in Kazakhstan.

Ambassador of Italy to Kazakhstan Stefano Ravagnan said more events with Italian artists in Kazakhstan will be presented this year, including an Italian folk music concert, a photo exhibition and a festival of Italian cinema.

"The relations between our countries become stronger every year and acquire a completely new character. The cultural ties play very important roles in this. This year will be full of different events between the two countries. A number of concerts and various exhibitions with the masters of Italian art will be held in Kazakhstan throughout the year. Today, I

would like to introduce to the audience well-known violinist Quarto who visits your country for the first time," said Ravagnan presenting the artist prior to the concerts.

Quarto noted that he likes Kazakhstan.

"I had previously visited the Soviet Union, particularly, Moscow and other cities of the USSR. However, Kazakhstan is rather specific because the people and mentality is completely different. I will be happy to come to your country again in the future, if possible," Quarto said.

Ravagnan also noted that the Italian Embassy plans to organise a concert of the folk group Historic Bearers of Corey District on the Day of Astana.

"It is a kind of parade with a historic group of 14 flag-bearers that will proceed on one of the main city's streets. It is a spectacular performance," the Italian ambassador said.

Astana Opera Stages Puccini's Famous 'Madame Butterfly'

By Zhaniya Urankayeva

ASTANA – One of Giacomo Puccini's greatest operas, "Madame Butterfly," was staged at the Astana Opera April 15-16 within the framework of the Year of Italian Culture in Kazakhstan.

The opera tells the story of young Japanese geisha Cio-Cio-San, also known as Madame Butterfly, who decided to change her traditions and beliefs in order to marry American Navy officer B.F. Pinkerton.

Kazakh honoured artists Zhanat Baktai and Aigul Niyazova played the female lead. The part of the lieutenant was performed by Italian opera star and tenor Fabio Armiliato and Kazakh honoured artist Medet Chotabayev.

Dina Hamzina and Gulzhanat Sapakova played the role of Madame Butterfly's faithful servant, Suzuki. Kazakh honoured artist and Astana Opera main conductor Alan Buribayev served as maestro

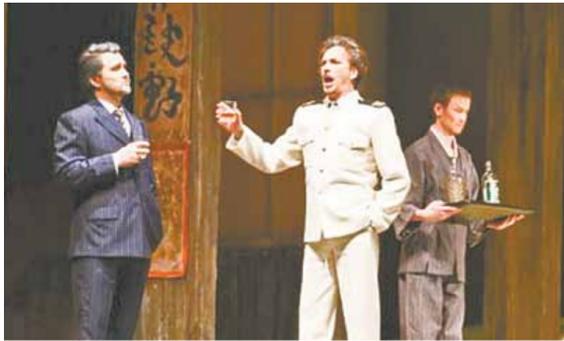
and the performance was directed by Lorenzo Amato.

"The story of 'Madame Butterfly' crowns Puccini's creativity period. The composer wrote three successful operas one after another, which made his name. They are 'La Boheme', 'Tosca' and 'Madame Butterfly.' I am very proud to announce that all three were performed by the Astana Opera," said Buribayev.

The stage decorations, such as the 18-metre artificial lake, were created to astonish the audience, noted theatre director Toleubek Alpiyev. In comparison to other opera theatres, which have partly recreated the main character's house, lake and landscape, the Astana-based opera house decided to present full-scale decorations, made by Italians Ezio Frigerio and Oscar winner Franca Squarciapino.

"More than 100 unique costumes were made for the performance. Some of them represent true works of art," said Alpiyev.

The opera is based on the play



"Geisha" by American playwright David Belasco, which deeply touched the Italian composer, noted Amato.

"This is the third production of 'Madame Butterfly' in my career and I was waiting for the premier. This is an honour and big responsibility to work with Alan Buribayev and our Italian colleagues, who are great professionals. The performance is difficult, both physically and psychologically. The ending of the opera is very powerful, as the main character is a daughter of a samurai and she had to die in or-

der to ensure a better future for her child," added Baktai.

"Madame Butterfly" was first staged at La Scala in Milan, Italy in 1904 and has become one of the most beloved productions for opera houses throughout the world.

Sand Art Centres Find an Audience in Astana

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – A huge number of courses in art, design and music are offered to urban residents. But there are also classes that people can attend with their child or spouse and dive into the world of sand art.

Being a great activity for children and adults, sand drawing, as art therapy, is useful for all ages and contributes to a better self-understanding and personal growth. This rich and dynamic graphic tradition is recognised by the UNESCO as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity.

The art studio Azhar offers painting and sand drawing classes for children ages three and up and adults. Sand art with animated scene transitions under the camera is provided for ten year olds. Fairy tale therapy is offered for small kids.

"Youngsters learn not just to draw some pictures from the stories but they can use their fantasy and draw on a certain theme. After a three-month programme, they receive a certificate and show a final presentation. We also shoot music video to demonstrate students' skills. Video is provided for both adults and children," said director of the studio Aizhan Zharkeshova.

Besides, the studio provides a creative dating idea for singles.

"A man can invite his beloved one for an art rendezvous. I explain the technique for 20 minutes. Then young people are left alone with the information about the

technology, and try to draw thus spending time together in a romantic atmosphere. As a rule, people prefer to paint the history of their acquaintance. Their work is then photographed and a photo collage is given for a sweet memory," she said.

Classes for adults include sand animation, acquiring the basic knowledge of techniques and nuances. The elementary skills can be taught in one lesson. And it is necessary to attend classes for at least three months for profound study.

Courses cost 10,000 tenge (US\$30) for children and 15,000 tenge (US\$45) for adults. A course consist of eight lessons. An art rendezvous costs 5,000 tenge (US\$15).

The art studio Azhar is located at 5 G Sauran Street. The contact numbers are +77015247670 and +71712285589.

The creative studio Happy Art offers classes in painting, sand animation, scrapbooking and art modeling only for children. Sand animation teacher Akmaral Orazgaliyeva is a professional artist. She has two years experience working with children on sand animation.

"We accept children starting from three years old. Sand drawing is conducted in a dark room and only sensor tables illuminate a soft warm light. An image from the main table with the projector is broadcasted on the big screen. This allows using all the receptors and has beneficial effects on emotional state. Children aged three to five are allowed to draw with parents,"

said head of the studio Dinara Molobekova.

Courses costs 8,000 tenge (US\$24) per month and classes are held two times a week.

"Some children are keen on sand drawing and buy their own tables and continue learning. Drawing has a good effect on child's development. Recently, we got a request to teach a child who suffer from autism. We are ready to develop a programme for children with special needs. We receive a lot of parents' reviews. Sand art especially calms hyperactive children who need to throw out their energy," she added.

The Happy Art club is located at 1/1 Satpayev Street. The contact number is +77082616961. A website is www.happy-astana.com.

The Benefit development centre offers classes for children starting from four. Sand drawing is included in a programme for future schoolchildren as a compulsory course. Teachers consider that training is extremely important for the emotional development of children. Courses cost 10,000 tenge (US\$30) for 12 classes (three times a week). Lesson duration is 45 minutes.

The art centre Benefit is located at 17 Momysuly Street, Office 4. The contact numbers are +77172776248 and +77071445588.

There are also local entertainment agencies that offer a live sand animation performance at events such as wedding and birthday parties and masterclasses for groups of people. The average price starts from approximately 40,000 tenge (US\$120).

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

More than 3,000 Cyclists Celebrate Start of Cycling Season in Almaty

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – A massive bicycle race dedicated to the opening of the 2016 cycling season took place April 10 in Almaty. More than 3,000 city residents, guests, professional athletes and cycling lovers participated in the annual event.

The race started at the intersection of Al-Farabi and Tattimbet streets. Cyclists had to pass through an overlapped Al-Farabi Street and finish at the First President's Park, reported Kapital.kz.

The organisation of cycling events is visibly growing each year; 13 were held in Almaty in 2015. Planners note about 300 people gathered at the city's first cycling march in 2009 and the number steadily increased the following years reaching a record number of 6,000, according to the news website.



An organised, safe start and a similar finish awaited participants this year. Security service and an ambulance accompanied the column. Cyclists occasionally had problems with equipment which were resolved on the spot at roadside, said Kapital.kz.

The front section of the park entrance turned into a festive area on race day and Almaty Akim (Mayor) Bauyrzhan Baibek greeted the participants. He congratulated citizens on the beginning of the cycling season, recommended everyone travel around the city by

bicycle more often and wished for great spring days.

When the many cyclists gathered by the stage, Kazakhstan's well-known voyager and biker Dmitry Petrukhin and Miss Kazakhstan 2014 and Miss Universe 2015 medallist Regina Vandsheva presented prizes to the winners in various categories such as most grown-up cyclist, most creative cyclist and youngest cyclist, reported Kapital.kz.

A lottery was then held using the numbers participants were given at the start and end of the race. One of the amateur cyclists riding for the first time received a new bicycle from the mayor. The celebration ended with a concert.

Six bicycle races will be held in the megapolis this year as part of Sportyk Almaty (Kazakh for Sportive Almaty), a programme to develop mass sports announced by the city's physical education and culture management.

Kazakh Citizens Hold Numerous Guinness World Records

Continued from Page B1

A number of records are connected with food. The largest serving of beshbarmak (meat and pasta in broth) was prepared July 6, 2015, when the Kazakh Geographic Society made 736.5 kilograms of the national dish. The record was set to celebrate Capital Day. Channel 7 fried the largest serving of doughnuts (boursaks), 856 kilograms, in 2014. The Kazakh Geographic Society also entered the book in May 2015 by making a 687-kilogramme serving of lagman soup. The record, achieved to mark the society's

fifth anniversary, was cooked by 30 chefs, according to Guinness World Record website.

The book also has a section based on countries' geographic features. Kazakhstan is the record holder as the largest landlocked country in the world.

The nation also has records connected with sports achievements. The heaviest total weight lift in the men's 105-kilogramme category was set by Olympic champion Ilya Ilyin in December 2015 when he lifted 437 kilogrammes. He held the previous record in the category from the 2012 London Olympics, where he also set the record in the

clean and jerk by lifting 233 kilogrammes.

Kazakhstan holds the record for the largest exercise demonstration/class in different venues, set September 3, 2003 when more than 4.8 million people across the country were simultaneously involved in aerobics. The event, organised to promote a healthy lifestyle, was led by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to music broadcast on the radio.

It's impossible to skip Khan Shatyr Entertainment Centre, which was recognised as the tallest tensile structure. It soars 150 metres from its elliptical base.

Not all the records are positive; some have a very sad history. Kazakhstan is listed for the largest lake created by nuclear explosion, referring to the time when the Soviet Union detonated a 140-kilotonne nuclear device under the dry bed of Chagan River, forming the lake. It is also named Chagan and has a volume of around 100,000 cubic metres. The same spot holds the record for the largest crater from an underground explosion.

Kazakhstan has set more records, some of which have already been broken and others which never will be, but definitely more, hopefully all positive, are coming.



Largest serving of beshbarmak.



Marat Zhylanbayev

Kazpost Introduces Project to Give Buildings Their Own Websites



By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Kazpost, Kazakhstan's postal service, and BI Group, one of the nation's largest investment and construction companies, have announced a joint pilot project to design a website for each building, according to an April 10 Kazpost press statement. The project is part of the introduction of new postal codes.

"Another small, but promising innovation from Kazpost! Do you think Kazpost is just a delivery [service] for letters and pensions? ...Our idea is that these sites will become places for interaction between tenants and cooperative apartment owners (KSK). Thanks, BI Group, for the provision of pilot sites. Opportunities will be increased! [Kazpost] We change! And this is only the beginning!" said Kazpost head Bagdat Musin on his Facebook page.

According to the statement, the website addresses will be

created based on <http://newzip-code.post.kz>. Residents will be able to find all the necessary information on its pages, such as contact details for service providers, to discuss issues with neighbours, pay utility bills and place ads. They will also have the opportunity to send online messages to the city administration and cooperatives of apartment owners.

To use the service, residents should visit www.post.kz. By clicking "new postal codes" and searching for the address, the button "open building's website" will appear on the map. The individual will follow the link and complete a free registration. The last step is authorisation and clicking "receive resident's status."

Social network users are discussing the innovation. Most say the idea is a great one, but hope the information on the websites will always be up to date. Some think it is almost impossible to create such a page for every building in the city, let alone the country.

UNESCO Department to Honour 80th Birthday of Kazakh Poet and Anti-Nuclear Activist

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The 80th anniversary of great Kazakh poet, writer and anti-nuclear activist Olzhas Suleimenov will be commemorated May 12 with an event at Lev Gumilyov Eurasian National University (ENU). The Man of the World forum is being organised by ENU's United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) department of ethnic and religious tolerance, with participation by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, Azerbaijani and Georgian Embassies and National Writers' Union.

The conference is one of the major events arranged by the UNESCO department. The Astana Times had an opportunity to interview its head, Gadilbek Shalakhmetov, to learn how the department was created and the projects it promotes.

A well-known public figure and author of more than 300 scientific publications and books, Shalakhmetov started his career as a reporter. He served as a minister and the first press secretary for



Gadilbek Shalakhmetov

President Nursultan Nazarbayev, headed the Kazinform news agency and was a deputy in the Mazhilis.

"I had an idea to open the UNESCO department in 1992 when I got acquainted with Martin Hadlow, former UNESCO head of office and representative to Kazakhstan in Almaty," he recalled. "Then we organised the opening of the first UNESCO department at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University to involve our population, particularly students of world cul-



Olzhas Suleimenov

tural heritage, to understand that our Kazakh culture is a part of the world's culture. It was necessary for our culture to enter the world's treasury and people who study it will understand how Kazakh culture is related to world culture."

Shalakhmetov later moved to Moscow when he was invited to launch the intergovernmental Mir television channel. He lived there for 10 years.

"When I returned to Kazakhstan and became a university professor, I made every effort to launch the

UNESCO department. I am very grateful to Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, for the support and belief in us. Olzhas Suleimenov has served as an ambassador to UNESCO in Paris for 15 years and now he is a professor of our department," he said.

The ENU management and UNESCO signed a memorandum Aug. 23, 2013 to open a UNESCO department at the university.

"Let me refer to Suleimenov's thought that the department's main task is the interaction and mutual understanding of cultures. Of course, being in the political and economic space, people must possess some inherent quality and we have identified this quality as tolerance because tolerance is understanding," he said.

He elaborated on the department's activities further.

"This year, we arranged an international bridge with our professor Akbota Zholdasbekova and colleagues all around the world dedicated to the discussion of the pressing issues, specifically inter-ethnic problems and the current situation in Syria. Kazakhstan is a country that is primarily engaged

in the Kazakh culture and history and, at the same time, the entire multi-ethnic people of our country respect each other's culture. In this direction we collaborate closely with the department of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan, as together we carry out similar tasks," added Shalakhmetov.

The department is working on projects including Mangi El, the Pyramid Principle, History of Music and Ya eto ty (I am you).

"I would like to highlight the Silk Road Talk project launched by famous cultural scientist Murat Auezov. He has led this project for many years. Our centuries-old history and relations with China, Mongolia and Russia allow us to hold talks about culture and through culture we have to bolster ties. The Silk Road Talk is Auezov's very important contribution. First of all these conversations are aimed at uniting the peoples of Central Asia, which have essentially the same culture. A course is expected to be developed based on this project, when students will learn and study all these issues," he said.

The international conference "UNESCO and the UN: 70 years

of Creation," dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the intergovernmental organisation and its specialised agency, was held at the university last year. Foreign ambassadors, members of Parliament, state and public figures, scientists and representatives of the media and student community were involved in the event.

The participants discussed new ways and means of organising the transfer of the cultural and historic experience, overall improvement and human development.

Among the reporters Shalakhmetov is called a world-class thinker, but for the students, he is a true living legend of Kazakh television who shares his valuable experience with them.

"I think all the events taking place around the world prove that it is important to understand that no matter how different cultures are, all people have common roots. Understanding would save the world. The reasons for the military situation in the world are that we pay a lot of attention to money and not to words. Nations do not see the basic things that would save the world," he said.

SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

Best for Kids Fund Prepares Orphans for Post-Orphan Life

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The fourth children's handmade fair held March 12 featured about 220 items crafted from beads, wool, wood, textiles, as well as paintings and books by more than 80 children from orphanages in Akkol, Sandyktau and Uryupinsk. Wicker goods created by individuals with physical challenges at the Green TAL social workshop were also exhibited.

The fair is one of the events organised by the Best for Kids (BFK) public fund and its team. BFK President Saya Kakim shared why she left her prestigious banking career and spoke about volunteers in action in an interview for this story.

Kakim recalled the pleasant memories of her first visit to the Akkol orphanage in 2011 where she gave a presentation on setting goals.

"The children were so open and fragile. I had an inner sense that regular trips and communication with children could be very useful. Further, we organised the trips to two orphanages and the first children's handmade fair. I found new friends and like-minded people who were ready to share their knowledge and skills for the benefit of others," she said.

Born in Atyrau, Kakim received a degree in economics from Moscow State University and has financial consulting experience with leading Russian and Kazakh com-



panies. She was motivated, however, to change her course.

"The life of a volunteer who is closely involved in the activities of the fund changes and the picture of the world changes, too. Volunteer experience gave me the impetus to come out of my comfort zone. I quit my job and decided to go on a trip to Asia," she recounted.

"I feel my desire to contribute to the development of the country and society and help others through involvement in social projects. Much of my time I devote to the coordination of activities at

BFK. The president has the same duties as other volunteers and, of course, you should be more responsible and persistent," she said.

BFK has its origins in young peoples' visits to the Akkol and Zholymbet orphanages in 2010-2011. Kakim became the fund's first leader in 2012 and active volunteers Kopzhan Musrepov and Nikita Shabayev led the organisation until 2015.

The fund's mission is to create conditions for the children to adapt to post-orphanage life. The members have been working in eight

directions, including organising visits to orphanages in Akkola region, professional orientation, charity events and social entrepreneurship.

"In April, the graduates of the Sandyktau orphanage were invited to the BI Group construction company to get acquainted with such professions as builder, mechanic, welder, bricklayer and electrician. At the same time, the girls participated in a cooking master class at a café. The special visit was organised with the support of the Akknet fund and partners," she said.

Training for volunteers and human resource management for recruiting and motivating them, cooperating with orphanage graduates to organise seminars, meetings and trainings for graduates and replicating the BFK experience in the regions are also of great importance.

"We are collaborating with four orphanages in the Akkola region. We provide free consultations on alternative forms of children's adoption. The effective model of working with volunteers, principles of project management and a broad base of partners in Astana contribute to the fund's stability. There are eleven coordinators in all eight directions, 30 active members and more than 100 volunteers," she added.

Searching for social projects, Kakim was introduced to the idea of social entrepreneurship while travelling in Malaysia. At the same time, fund vice president Emin Askerov decided to implement a unique project on social enterprise.

"The Green TAL social workshop of wicker furniture was opened thanks to the personal efforts and support of the trustees of the fund. The socially vulnerable strata of the population such as the graduates of children's homes, people with disabilities and single mothers can enroll in a basket weaving course and find a job. We also have plans to implement a series of events for the development of social entrepreneurship and the initiation of social projects in Kazakhstan," she said.

The meetings with volunteers and children are a source of inspiration, positive energy and strength, she added.

"I believe everyone deserves a better life, especially children left without parental care. Being in different means to think about the common future in a world where everyone has the opportunity to grow and become a better, stronger and kinder person. Children in orphanages are very talented, kind and curious. They wait for our arrival and are happy to communicate with volunteers. Every person can visit our website, fill out a form and receive an invitation to participate in charity events," she said.

Positive emotions and tonnes of smiles are the best rewards for the volunteers.

"The opportunity to create things with their own hands and receive money for this is a true happiness for children. Once, a girl from the Zholymbet orphanage, being inspired by the results of the exhibition, decided to learn knitting. She was able to buy a smartphone with the money raised at the event. This is a good example of increased self-esteem in children and how they can achieve their goals through work. Our main principle is 'Give a fishing rod instead of fish.' Our activities contribute to the children's development through their participation in creative workshops, sports activities, career guidance workshops and communication with trainers and volunteers," said Kakim.

Survey Shows Kazakh Youth Are Pleased with Their Country and Future

Continued from Page B1

Healthy lifestyle

According to the research, major portions of the youth population are advocating for a healthy lifestyle which was shown in the form of cessation of alcohol drinking and smoking (56 and 61.5 percent respectively). They are choosing low alcohol drinks and hookah over them. They also, however, don't choose sports as their regular activity. Just more than 59 percent exercise, while 14 percent never do physical activities.

Free time

Majority chose communication and entertainment as their main free-time activities. Self-education, work and other activities which are aimed at personal development do not take as much time, according to the authors of the research. Passive forms of recreation were chosen more. Most respondents spend around 2-3 hours online daily using social networks and watching movies online, but not for education. Reading books, unfortunately, is not interesting leisure for Kazakh youth. According to the survey, 78.6 percent rarely read or never read books.

Sexual culture and relations

Sexual culture is being formed in Kazakh society, says survey. There are conflicting assessments in the answers of youth representatives. For example, 36 percent said they use contraceptives on the regular basis, while 30.6 percent use birth control time from time. At the same time most of them said they are against abortions (64.8 percent), adding they need to be forbidden by law. The research says pre-marriage sexual relations are becoming a norm. Slightly more than 43 percent value the girl's virginity as dignity. Negative attitudes toward sexual minorities is also being observed within the youth. Only 3.4 percent answered positively. And 25.4 percent of female respondents and 19.4 of males do not have any sexual relationships. But at the same time, the sex topic is taboo for many of the respondents; it is the topic that should not be discussed. Nearly half feel discomfort talking about it.

According to Umbetalieva, the formation of sexual culture in Ka-

zakhstan is spontaneous, which reflects the strong conservative tendencies in society faced with the realities of modern life and the urban environment.

Moral values and life benchmarks Self-esteem is the most important for modern youth, says the survey. It's the most valued for 61.3 percent and 83.2 percent who put it among the top three. The second most important thing is material well-being and social prestige. They are second most important for 22.1 percent and top three among 37.2 percent. Wealth and honesty follow the previous two. Approximately 18.5 percent marked loyalty as a value, which puts it in seventh place on the rating. Among top qualities, there are responsibility, independence, higher education and marriage. Volunteering is common among the youth. Only 93 out of 1,000 people were volunteering in the last 12 months. The least important thing for the youth is involvement in politics.

Religion and religious values

According to the research, the religious view of Kazakh youth is complicated. They assess religion positively but claim they don't comply with many parts of religions. A quarter of the respondents say they have not decided their religion; 29.1 percent say they doubt if there is heaven and hell and 21 percent are not sure about the statement that "the God has created the world." Mainly most of the respondents call themselves believers, while 19.4 percent say they are non-religious or atheists.

Family and marriage

The research showed that 75.9 percent of youth think marriage and creation of the family is paramount, while 1.5 percent imagine their lives without a partner and obligations. Among life priorities, being married is more important than getting a high education or making a career. The average age for the creation of family is 22 years for women and 25 for men. On average, Kazakh youth want to have three children.

The role of older generation and family

A major part of the respondents positively assess their relations

with parents (94.6 percent) and siblings (90 percent). About 37 percent said their fathers play an important role in making decisions, while 31.3 percent said their mothers. But at the same time, 86.7 percent think they are not under heavy pressure while making decisions. Approximately 54.4 percent said they make decisions jointly with their parents. Only 10.6 percent said their parents make decisions for them.

Education

Education itself is losing its attractiveness to youth, the survey says. 72.3 percent said they need a diploma mostly for the fact that it increases the chances of getting a job, while 30.5 percent said they need higher education to meet the expectations of their parents. Almost 48 percent would prefer to study abroad and 17.7 percent would like to study in Kazakhstan. The most popular destinations are Russia, the United States, countries of the European Union and South Korea.

Trust and identity

Young men trust their parents, relatives, friends and neighbours. They do not trust political and religious leaders. About 57.8 percent answered that they would feel negatively about being neighbours with people of non-traditional sexual orientation, 25.7 percent would feel that way about alcoholics and 17.8 percent about drug addicts. Mostly the youth showed high levels of trust to representatives of other ethnic groups. The youth identify themselves through their attachment to youth companies, such as being a person highly evaluating friendship.

The role of women in Kazakh society

The research shows that 84.8 of the youth think women in Kazakhstan have enough rights. When it comes to family, 36.5 percent think men and women are equal in a relationship. Just more than 32 percent said men are the heads of families, 9.1 percent believe women more and more are leading families. About 19 percent think women are independent. According to the authors, the large part of the youth does

not support the idea of polygyny. When it comes to bride kidnapping, the opinions were divided half and half. Most of the people who were pro said that it is just a tradition and usually happens with the agreement of both sides and can save money for the bride's side.

Ensuring the rights of the citizens

The research showed that 77.7 percent of respondents are satisfied with the level of democracy in the country. Economical position, level of education, origin (city or village) and age were called among the reasons for discrimination more than gender, religion and language.

Evaluation of the development of the country

The level of development of the country was assessed as good by 76.4 percent of the respondents, while 8 percent called it excellent. Unemployment, growing poverty and ecological problems were among the main issues for Kazakhstan, as well as corruption. About 56 percent responded that they connect the success of Kazakhstan with the President and 25.9 percent with the government.

Migration

A major part of the participated youth connect their future with Kazakhstan (87.5 percent). About 10.5 percent intend to migrate to Russia, countries of the European Union, the U.S., Canada and China, but one third of them plan to come back in 10 years.

Geopolitical priorities

The Eurasian Economic Union was positively assessed by 90.9 percent of respondents. Young Kazakh men and women call Russia, the European Union, the Kyrgyz Republic, China and Uzbekistan among priority directions. In their opinion, more reserved relations should be with the U.S., NATO, Iran and Afghanistan. Main sources of information about politics and world events are TV (60.5 percent), internet (89.2 percent), family discussions (33.1 percent), talks with friends and relatives (16 percent) and social networks (10 percent).

New Centre for Children with Disabilities Opens in Taraz

Staff Report

The new modern Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Correction for Children with Disabilities was opened in Taraz on April 20, reported the press service of Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund. This is the fifth centre to be opened in Kazakhstan as part of the Dara Charitable Fund programme supported by Samruk Kazyna.

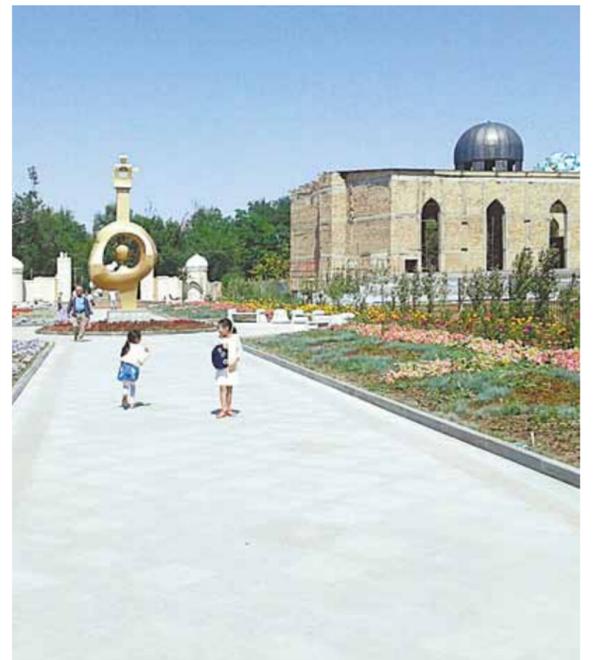
Specialists will work with every child in the centre to support his or her development, including an educational psychologist who helps cope with problems in the emotional and intellectual development, a teacher-therapist, whose area of responsibility is problems in the cognitive field, a speech therapist, a visual impairment specialist, a deaf educator, a physical therapist, a music and dance teacher, as well as a masseur. The centre

also offers psychological support for parents.

The centre is based on barrier-free conditions, which means the building of the centre has wide doors, no thresholds, and it also has colour signals and handrails. All the cabinets are equipped with modern rehabilitation equipment, teaching materials, developing literature and Montessori materials.

To date, about 3,000 children with disabilities live in Taraz and the city hasn't enough correctional and rehabilitation facilities, which can provide free professional assistance to special children and their families. Usually, such families are forced to either use private specialists or leave their child without corrective support and rehabilitation.

It is planned that the centre will help more than 100 children with developmental disabilities and provide free qualified and comprehensive care assistance.



TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

Beautiful South Particularly Attractive in Spring: Why It's Worth Visiting Shymkent and Turkestan

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

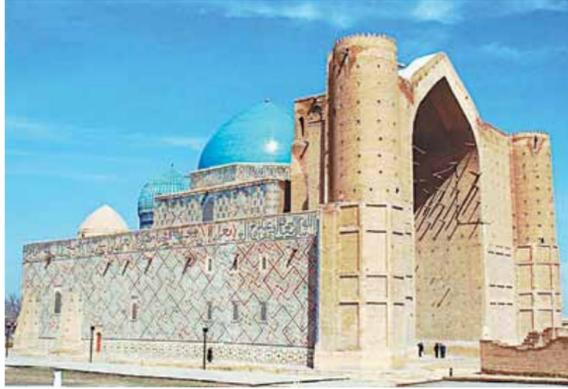
ASTANA – South Kazakhstan is full of ancient towns, historic monuments and sacred places. Thousands of tourists flock to the region located among vast steppes and mountain masses. Shymkent is a city of authentic Kazakh culture, people and landscape, while Turkestan is a historic, architectural and religious town.

Shymkent is the capital city of South Kazakhstan province, one of the nation's largest industrial, trade and cultural centres situated 690 kilometres west of Almaty and 120 km north of Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It is the second most populated city in the country, with 885,799 people (as of Jan. 1, 2016).

What to see in Shymkent

Tourists in Shymkent can see memorials, tanks, a Ferris wheel and statue of Abai in his namesake park. If visitors wish to have summer fun at a water park, Delfin Aquapark is not far.

Ken-Baba Park, where Kazybek-Bi Street crosses Tauke Khan Avenue, is one of the oldest in the city. It has miniatures of famous architecture, a little pond and walking area with swings and rides.



Hodja Ahmed Yasavi Mausoleum

Mega Mall on Tauke Khan Avenue has an indoor skating rink, movie theatre, Western-style chain grocery store and upstairs food court. It is the most popular hangout in town for youth. Spartak, located across the street, is a great outdoor swimming pool, soccer field and basketball court.

The memorial at Ordabasy Square is the site of the city's founding. A massive monument on a bridge, fountains, the Philharmonia, a nice park and yurt-like museum are all in one area.

Shared taxis to Sairan bus station are not expensive and leave from the square.

Except on public holidays, little happens at the hippodrome. It is worth a visit, however, for horse games such as kokpar (buzkashi). An ice skating rink, nearby old cinema and big tulip fountain on the corner of Tauke Khan Avenue are worth a look as well.

Guests can indulge themselves by wandering around streets and lively bazaars. Public transport regularly goes to Aina Bazaar a

little outside the town. The market is good for buying items such as food, clothes, Chinese electronics and Kazakh songs on CD. Fresh products and fruits can be found in Koktem Bazaar.

How to get there

A flight from Astana to Shymkent costs 31,039 tenge (about US\$92.60) as of April 25, according to tripadvisor.com. There are also several flights a day from Almaty with prices starting from 15,000 tenge (about US\$45).

Overnight buses to Shymkent leave from Almaty's Sairan bus station at roughly half-hour intervals, according to older information. The journey takes about 13 hours. Daytime buses are also available. Tickets cost about 1,300 tenge (about US\$3.87).

Buses arrive at Samal bus station, about five kilometres from the city centre, from which tourists can take a bus, marshrutka (mini bus) or a taxi. Marshrutkas travel nearly the same routes as busses. They can be very crowded during rush hour and riders might have to stand.

Gypsy cabs can be taken anywhere in the city, but tourists are advised to bargain if drivers try to overcharge. Buses go to and from the centre and micro districts.

The train to Shymkent from Almaty takes 12 hours and an overnight trip is ideal, according to caravanistan.com.

Shymkent train station on Kabanbai Batyr has regular trains that go to and from Aktau, Aktobe, Almaty-2, Aralsk, Astana, Kyzylorda, Taraz and Turkestan.

Turkestan

Founded more than two millennia ago, the ancient city of Yasy (Turkestan) was one of the important commercial centres on the Silk Road and the trade route between Europe and China, according to kazakhstanwonders.wordpress.com.

From the 16th to the 18th centuries, Turkestan was the capital of the Kazakh khanate. It is now the historic centre of Kazakhstan's culture, where one can discover the ruins of Otrar and admire its architectural heritage.

Turkestan's famous monument, Hodja Ahmed Yasavi Mausoleum attracts hordes of tourists every year, according to Advantour.com. The adjacent historic cultural

ethnographic centre is a three-storey building of regional and national folk culture and history.

The mausoleum is also a pilgrimage place for many Central

Asian Muslims. The monument was designated a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage site in 2003.

The entire city centre is a mix of historic buildings, including the tomb of Robia Sultan Begim, Timur's granddaughter, and the tombs of Kazakh khans and representatives of nobility, according to the website.

The railway station, also considered a landmark, was built in 1903 during construction of the southern branch of the Orenburg-Tashkent railroad.

How to get there

The best option for travelling to Turkestan from Astana is by air, because the distance between the cities is quite long (about 1700 km), according to visitkazakhstan.kz. The nearest airport is in Shymkent (about 180 km away), followed by a taxi, bus or train to Turkestan.

The train is a cheaper option and quite popular means of transport in Kazakhstan. A direct train from Astana to Turkestan takes about 27 hours. Tourists can also take a bus between the cities, although the trip might be a little uncomfortable due to the long distance, noted the website.

The best way to travel from Almaty to Turkestan is by plane via Shymkent. The distance between the two cities is about 900 km. Trains and buses to Turkestan are also available.

EXPO 2017 Delegation Visits APEC Member Countries

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – A Kazakh delegation headed by EXPO 2017 Commissioner Rapol Zhoshybayev travelled to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member countries Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore during the first half of April.

The most recent visit was a working trip to Indonesia, where Zhoshybayev met April 15-16 with the country's Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Sudirman Said, expo commissioner Rida Mulyana and Information and Public Diplomacy Director General Esti Andayani, as well as leading entrepreneurs.

The commissioner apprised them on the progress and practical preparations for the upcoming exhibition and highlighted a wide range of opportunities in the field of renewable and alternative energy. Said noted Indonesia has potential benefits in hydro, solar, biomass and geothermal power and the Indonesian government aims to increase renewable energy capacity up to 25 percent by 2025.

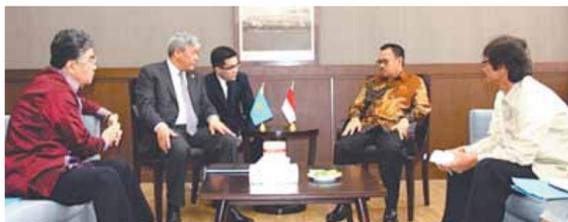
The sides acknowledged a good dynamic of bilateral cooperation. Within the visit, the governmental parties and business people participated in an EXPO 2017-themed roundtable where they considered in detail the organisational and technical aspects of the exhibition. Indonesia subsequently signed a participation agreement, becoming the 44th state to be involved in the event.

The relevance of the expo was also noted in Australia April 11-14, where Zhoshybayev held several meetings with the leadership of the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Environment, representatives of Parliament Legislative Council and Victoria Ministry of Trade Deputy Secretary Jay Meek, as well as representatives of the Canberra and Melbourne business and academic circles.

During talks with Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ric Wells, the sides discussed the current state and prospects of developing bilateral relations between the countries as well as issues related to simplifying the visa regime and opening an Australian Consulate General in Kazakhstan. Zhoshybayev expressed gratitude to the Australians for their support in the negotiating process for Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its bid to host next year's expo. The Australian diplomat expressed confidence that Kazakhstan would hold the event at the highest level.

During the meeting at the Department of the Environment, Deputy Secretary Helen Gizes noted Australia has been developing its alternative energy sources in accordance with Energy Efficiency Act 2006, adding the government aims to reach 23 percent of renewable energy capacity by 2020. Solar panels were placed on the roofs of more than one million Australian houses last year.

In Melbourne, Zhoshybayev met with Meek and Parliament Legislative Council Presidents Bruce Atkinson and Telmo Languiller-Tornesi to discuss issues regarding participation of Victoria's research centres and companies in the exhibition. The sides noted the involvement of



Australian companies would facilitate strengthening cooperation between the countries and transitioning that cooperation to a new level. Meek stressed Victoria's companies are ready to share their experience in green energy.

Zhoshybayev also visited Monash University, a leading institution in the region that unites scientific and research centres, colleges and learning communities involved in developing the region's green economy. University scientists emphasised the relevance of the future energy topic and importance of the initiative by Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev to establish a centre to develop green technologies and investment projects based on EXPO 2017 and under UN auspices.

Australian National University and Kazakh Honorary Consul in Melbourne Andrew Fernyhough organised a business conference on the theme "Kazakhstan and Australia: Opportunities for Cooperation within EXPO 2017." Zhoshybayev spoke about potential chances for foreign entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan and noted prospects for expanding the scope of bilateral cooperation through the globally-known exhibition.

Following the conference, he signed a memorandum of cooperation with Swagman Tours, one of Australia's leading travel agencies. The document will help promote

Kazakhstan as an attractive tourist destination for Australians.

In early April, the Kazakh delegation was informed Singapore has been actively developing its green energy sector with \$3.4 billion allocated from the country's budget. The industry currently provides 18,000 jobs. The parties agreed EXPO 2017 will be an excellent platform for showcasing the best of Singapore's development and green energy technologies.

Sharing tourism experiences, attracting the cooperation of Singapore tour operators and opening direct flights between the countries were discussed at the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS). Following the meeting,

the sides signed a memorandum of cooperation in tourism.

The Kazakh delegation's working tour to APEC member countries began April 4 in Malaysia, where Zhoshybayev and Chief Secretary Ali Hamsa discussed bilateral cooperation in trade and economic and scientific fields, including green technologies, and attracting Malaysian tourists to EXPO 2017, as well as active participation by local companies in the international specialised exhibition. Hamsa noted holding the exhibition in Kazakhstan the capital will stimulate attracting technologies and improve the scientific base and Kazakhstan's image in the international arena.

Aroundtable was held with representatives of organisations including GreenTech Malaysia, Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE), Malaysia Investment Development Agency (MIDA), Petronas (Malaysia's state oil and gas company) and Sustainable Energy Development Agency (SEDA).

The Malaysian side has strong experience in green technologies in implementing public-private partnership mechanisms and assessing project efficiency and their subsequent commercialisation.

Eighty-one countries and 14 international organisations have officially confirmed their participation in EXPO 2017.

ALZHIR Memorial Tells Stories of Soviet Union's Imprisoned Wives

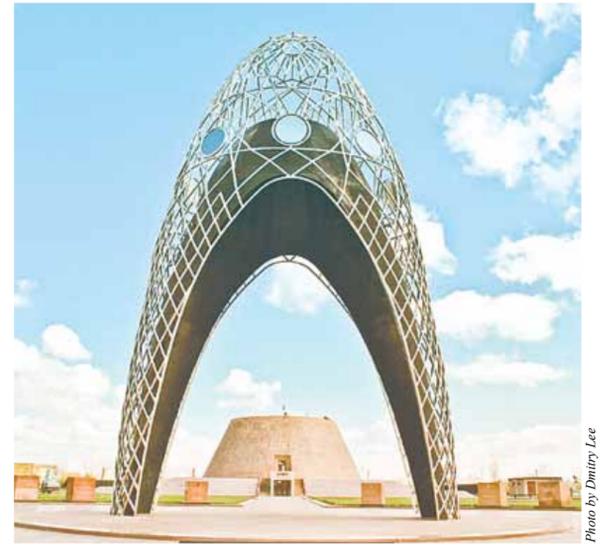
By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The Akmola's Camp for Wives of Traitors of the Motherland (known as ALZHIR for its Russian acronym) museum was founded in 2007 and offers a glimpse of the injustices and hardships faced by women sentenced to prison during the Soviet era.

The museum's archives contain official Soviet documents, personal messages and decrees. Some describe the ordeals of women who were sentenced and tried without proper proceedings; others tell stories of thousands of broken destinies and fates: children's messages to their mothers, mothers' letters to their loved ones, words expressing the utmost despair of people who had no idea where they were headed to and what was going to happen to them.

The lives of the imprisoned women are portrayed in ALZHIR through letters to loved ones, poems and other means.

The women were indicted for being the wives of political prisoners, in fact, of the "strong people and the authorities didn't want them to spread their ideas," said one of the survivors in the 20-minute video



"Cruel Cold of ALZHIR" – played at museum's theatre.

Entire families of Kazakh poets, diplomats and prominent figures of the time tried for treason, were labeled "enemy of the state." ALZHIR, covering an area of 30 hectares, had more than 18,000

prisoners of 62 nationalities, with five to eight-year sentences from 1938 to 1959.

The museum is located in the village of Akmol (former Malinovka), 30 minutes of driving along the Korgalzhyn Highway from Astana.

Switzerland to Demonstrate Solar Panels at EXPO 2017

By Kseniya Voronina

Switzerland is going to demonstrate its innovative solar panels for the first time at EXPO 2017 in Astana, announced representative of the Swiss national pavilion Philippe Roesle.

"We will start working and equipping our pavilion in November this year. Kazakhstan gives us more than enough time to realise all our ideas. As for content, it is a confidential information, but I can say that we will showcase prototypes of innovative solar panels," said Roesle.

Leading Swiss research institutions will also offer the results of their latest investigations.



Philippe Roesle

"We announced a tender among our developers, universities and startups and have already received their project ideas. Now we have to choose the best and the most interesting one," explained Roesle.

The state has also offered cooperation opportunities in green technologies for Kazakhstan in the frames of the coming exhibition.

"We want to organise a number of thematic activities on the base of the EXPO 2017 Swiss pavilion for local and international stakeholders on the topic dedicated to energy. This means that I am interested in meeting with people, who work in the field of research and education related to the future of energy in Kazakhstan, as well as those who are interested in establishing contacts with Swiss colleagues. It can include universities, researchers, research institutions, government agencies or NGOs. Together, we could start thinking about the format for the coming events, which will be useful for everyone to support mutual areas of research interests," concluded the Swiss official.

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Patrick Twumasi: Sometimes You Have to Overcome Many Difficulties to Get Where You Want

By Kamila Zhumbabayeva

ASTANA – Well-known among the capital's fans, 21-year-old Ghanaian striker Patrick Twumasi, who plays for the Kazakh Premier League club FC Astana, has more than 10 matches and scored goals behind him. He is persistent, determined and positive and has supportive family and colleagues, but stresses the need for good fan support that Kazakh football lacks.

"Coming to Astana to play football as a foreigner is a good experience and great exposure for me. I feel great about coming all the way from Africa to do this job. Everything is okay so far," said Twumasi in an interview for this story.

The player joined FC Astana in July 2013 on loan from the Latvian Higher League Club Spartaks Jūrmala, where he returned after scoring six goals in 11 matches, reported ghanasoccer.com. A year later, Twumasi rejoined FC Astana for the rest of the season. Scoring 10 goals in 11 matches made him the club's top scorer and helped Astana win the league, according to the website.

"Sometimes you face a lot of difficulties, but you have to overcome them to get where you want. It all depends on you as a player, a person and how determined you are to work. Give all your best, so that you are confident about your future and your abilities," he said. "Work is a must;



Patrick Twumasi

without it you cannot gain anything. Try to focus on your dreams, too, and do everything in your power both for yourself and your family."

Twumasi's performance drew the attention of other European clubs in late 2014. Wishing to participate in the UEFA Champions League and help Astana retain the league title, however, he decided to stay in Kazakhstan and has been a member of FC Astana since January 2015.

"It's not that I decided to leave my country; you don't have to stay in one place. Kazakhstan is not my first destination; I travelled to many European countries before and gained experience there as well," he said. "I decided to come to your country to see what football and culture is like here and saw many similarities, for example, good and kind people to live with. I was happy about it."

Twumasi believes his career as a football player in Kazakhstan is developing well. He stressed the need to work hard as there is still a lot ahead of him to accomplish, but is confident things will ultimately be successful.

"Kazakh football players are confident and know what they want to become at the end of their careers. They are friendly, kind and faithful and people you can trust. Working with such players gives me more motivation. We talk to each other and they help me in difficult times," he explained.

"Sometimes you find it difficult to cope with the climate conditions here when the weather changes every day, but your people here seem to adapt to it easily. Food and language are also challenging at times, but I do understand some phrases and every-

thing feels easier when it happens," he said.

The football player has a wife and two children who were staying in Kazakhstan with him, but because of the weather Twumasi decided they should take a break and return at a later time.

"A wife would want her husband to be successful and must support him in happiness and distress. My family supports me with prayers, motivation and encouragement. They make me feel like I can do anything and they are my everything," he said.

The striker said he would stay to continue playing football in Kazakhstan.

"Why not; nobody knows what will happen tomorrow, so I live everything for God to decide," he said.

When playing in the Kazakh championship, Twumasi noted the team does not see many fans and supporters.

"They must come to support players so that we can feel good ambience from great people and fans which also motivates players to do some things better, but we can't do it without them," he said. "That's why players need fans to attend the country's championships and then everything will be prosperous, not only for Astana alone but the whole of Kazakhstan."

"I want to say a big thanks to everyone for their support and kindness," he said.

Astana Arlans Defeat Uzbek Tigers to Secure WSB Playoffs Spot

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

The Astana Arlans boxing club inflicted a major 4:1 defeat upon strong rivals Uzbek Tigers April 2 and reached the quarterfinals of the World Series Boxing (WSB), 4:1.

The visitors took the lead before the start of the game, which took place in Ust-Kamenogorsk. Arlans boxer Zakir Safullin had to leave the city shortly before the match due to an undisclosed, "valid" reason. Therefore, a technical victory in the first bout was awarded to his opponent Elnur Abduraimov.

The first into the ring were the boxers out of the 52 kilogramme weight category – Azat Makhmetov from the Astana Arlans and Abrorzhon Kadyrov from the Uzbek Tigers. The Kazakh club's boxer won through a technical knockout and restored an equal score in the match. Later, Aslanbek Shymbergenov defeated Mahmoud Gaipov and put the Arlans forward. Another TKO came from the team's debutant Arman Rysbek who, in the 81 kilogramme weight category defeated, Uzbek Shukhrat Abdullaev.

Kamschybek Kunkabayev concluded the Kazakh club's clear victory with a victory against Mirzohidzhon Abdullayev in the 91 kilogramme weight category. The

final result was 4-1 in favour of the Kazakh team.

Thus, the Astana Arlans avenged themselves for the first round's defeat in Tashkent when the Tigers crushed the visiting Kazakhs 4:1.

"Of course, we can say that the team has fully completed the task. I am glad that our guys showed a will to win and character. I want to thank all of our boxers and coaches of the club for good work. The Uzbek team is a serious contender, but this evening the Kazakh boxers were stronger," said the head coach of the Astana Arlans professional boxing club Nurlan Akurpekov.

"On behalf of the Astana Arlans and Professional Presidential Club Astana, I want to congratulate all the fans of Kazakh Boxing with a convincing victory of our team. I think the Arlans fulfilled their promise and presented us with a real festival of boxing. In each of the bouts, we saw a good boxing from our guys and their evident desire to win," said Director General of the Astana Arlans boxing team, Olympic champion Serik Sapiev commenting on the outcome.

The Kazakh club will now face Caciques Venezuela in the WSB quarterfinal.

The Arlans are part of the Presidential Professional Sports Club "Astana."

Judo Athletes from 80 Countries to Compete in Stage of World Grand Prix in Almaty

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

Following the Judo World Championships last August in Astana, Kazakhstan will once again host a major international judo tournament.

On May 13-15, Almaty will host the International Judo Federation's Grand Prix stage. Athletes from more than 80 countries are expected to attend. The tournament will bring together the strongest tatami masters to challenge the rating points needed to obtain a license to participate in the upcoming Summer Olympics in Rio. The competitors will also seek to win a share of the tournament's special prize fund, which in Almaty will be \$100,000.

According to the rules of the International Judo Federation, Team Kazakhstan as the host is entitled to nominate up to four athletes in each weight category at the tournament.

Also, during the competition, a ceremony of the official open-

ing of a Judo Academy in Almaty is expected. Meeting highest international standards, the sports complex will include a major hall fitting four tatami, a gym, a dor-

mitory and a dining room capable of hosting up to 100 people. It will not only be used for training the national team of Kazakhstan, but will be open to use for the

younger generation of wrestlers. The academy will host the international gathering, seminars, and workshops with international experts.



Kazakhstan to Make Second Appearance in Futsal World Cup

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

Having won bronze medals at the recent UEFA Futsal Euro, the Kazakhstan national futsal team will soon head to South America. The Brazilian coach Cacau-managed team won a ticket to the FIFA Futsal World Championship, to be held Sept. 10 – Oct. 2 in Colombia.

The Kazakhs crushed Poland 7-0 April 12 in the second leg of the elimination round.

The win followed a 1-1 draw in the first meeting March 29 in the northwestern Polish city of Szczecin, so the decision about which team would head to the championship this fall needed to be solved in Almaty. The match attracted a lot of attention from fans and set an occupancy record at Baluan Sholak Arena. According to preliminary estimates, more than 5,000 people filled the hall.

In the first half, they witnessed

their favourites scoring five goals. Kazakh goalkeeper Higuaita, known for his unusual attacking style, opened the drive. Serik Zhambankulov and Douglas Jr. each scored twice, in the fourth and 12th minutes and fifth and 15th minutes, respectively, of the first half.

The second half saw two more balls in the Polish goal. In the 25th minute, Leo made use of a mistake by the visitors' defence and the goalkeeper and scored into an empty net. In the 30th minute, Arnold Knaub recorded his first goal at the national team level for the final score.

The more-than-convincing victory will allow Team Kazakhstan to try and impress at the world championships for the second time in its history. The Kazakhs participated in Guatemala in 2000, when they lost all three matches in the group that included the hosts and futsal powerhouses Brazil and Portugal.

"To me, my whole team and each player individually, are all he-

roes. They played not for money, but for the honour of Kazakhstan. I am very proud of them, especially of the goalkeeper [Higuaita]. I want to thank the fans for their support today. I am honoured to work in Kazakhstan. I have worked here for a long time and we were able to obtain this qualification for the World Cup only because everyone went to the field with the intention to give his everything to the maximum. All [that we achieved today] is thanks to our players," said the Brazilian coach.

The players also commented after the game.

"I believe the support of the fans played a significant role in our victory. The Poles were probably surprised to see how fans in Kazakhstan are able to support their players. Our fans confirmed, [thus] they are the best! They were our sixth player tonight," said Zhambankulov.

"There was tremendous sup-

port from the fans and with it we had no right to lose. We showed a good display tonight. I would like

to dedicate our victory to the entire Kazakhstan. I hope that at the World Cup in Colombia we will be

able to represent our country well," said team captain Dinmukhambet Suleimenov.



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

New Kazakhstan Military History Museum Offers Display with Items from Swedish Army History



By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Opened only five months ago, there is not yet a lot on the web about Kazakhstan's only historic military museum. As it establishes ties and exchanges information with museums abroad and conducts its own research, its more than 7,000 unique exhibits combined with a display from the Swedish Army Museum are awaiting their viewers.

"We are very glad and it is a big responsibility for us. There are many similar military, historical museums in the Commonwealth of Independent States, but in Kazakhstan our museum is the first and only," said deputy director Askar Kasymov in a recent interview for this story.

Kazakhstan's Armed Forces national historic military museum is

the first of its kind operating under the country's Ministry of Defence. An initiative of the minister, it was opened Dec. 1 by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, he added.

The display is located on Respublika Avenue, in the building with the blue dome-shaped top which was built in 2000 and which was previously occupied by the Presidential Centre of Culture and the Nazarbayev Centre.

As one of its basic tasks, the museum works continuously to obtain and assemble displays. The exhibits are being refilled with numerous private collection showpieces.

Kasymov noted the museum shows Kazakhstan's history from the Stone Age to the present day and has unique examples from each period, some of which are



the only one or two samples in the world. They include the first stirrups (stapes), exhibits from the Bronze and Stone Age, a smooth-bore gun (a gun with an unrifled barrel), bladed weapon and rare armours.

"Each exhibit in our museum is unique. For example, the Shakshi medieval type of weapon is a stone with the look of a Sarmatian army's soldier. There are only three such types of Shakshi in the world and two of them are in our museum," he said.

Exposition halls including the Kazakhstan Armed Forces, periodic exhibitions, 19th century antiquity, 20th century military history, 20th and 21st century weapons, fine arts and history of Kazakh warfare are unique in themselves and have become an extra feature

of the building's structural and architectural appearance.

"Our museum is equipped with modern interactive facilities such as mappings and touchscreens with a database on deceased and missing military men called upon from Kazakhstan's territory during the years of the Great Patriotic War," said Kasymov.

The national museum collaborates with museums in other countries through cooperation memorandums and electronic exhibits.

"We started to establish ties before opening, primarily with Russia. We want to visit China, Mongolia and other nearby countries where the history of military work and our history in general are intertwined," he added.

The museum also wishes to form partnerships and share sci-



entific information with a wider geographic range of similar museums. "Things between Life and Death," a portable exhibition from the Swedish Army Museum in Stockholm, will open April 28.

"Our experts are going to visit the UK and Sweden for an exchange of experiences," said Kasymov. "We also work with archives and renovators in order for our renovators to level up and see new trends in renovating, popularising and conserving showpieces for future generations."

In addition to exhibitions, the museum completes research activity by constantly conducting conferences, discussions and events on military topics.

"We have already held three roundtable sessions dedicated to the Alash Orda activities. We

are doing research on the Golden Horde and archives in Russia. As of today, we signed cooperation memorandums with almost all archives and plan to hold more extensive international level seminars," he added.

All guides at the museum are presented in Kazakh, Russian and English, with one given in Chinese. Entrance is free of charge.

"In the future, we want to have more language choices such as German, French and Turkish. We understand that our capital city expects a lot of foreigners to arrive in anticipation of the expo exhibition and that is why we always work on this matter," said Kasymov.

The museum plans to release a showpiece catalogue and a website is currently under development.

Astana Collects Electronic and Electric Waste



By Azamat Syzdykbayev

ASTANA – The Kazakh Ministry of Energy recently announced a new action to collect electronic and electric waste. From April 15-May 15, capital residents can donate old electronic equipment and related items at the Technodom and Alser shopping halls.

The action is aimed at eliminating electronic and electric waste materials, which usually contain lead, mercury and other elements dangerous to human health. Recycling will also make it possible to effectively reuse the items.

Energy waste management department head Yerzhan Nurbekov noted the ministry is considering various disposal methods for electric appliances.

"We need to carry out the collection of solid waste separately and now we are testing various options of how to do this in a more convenient way for everyone. We have developed national standards for electrical equipment and its usage, so this action is the first step in identifying possible disposal options. Most likely, in the end we will represent a hybrid option, as we need to involve smaller settlements and regional centres, where the recycling equipment will cost more," said Nurbekov.

A special awareness campaign

will be organised to increase the social responsibility of Kazakh citizens. School children will learn about the dangers created by old electronic and electric waste, as well as the numerous benefits of recycling.

"The action will be partly supported by the students from Saken Seifullin Agrotechnical University and the members of the PosadiDerevo.kz public organisation. At this point, special containers for mobile phones and batteries have been installed in Technodom and Alser," said Nurbekov.

Extended Producer Responsibility production director Aidyn Nurakhmetov called the action an experiment.

"As part of it, we want to see what kind of household products people will bring to us and whether they need a particular financial reward for that. The main difficulty in this process is not the recycling, but the collection. We need to establish collection facilities, cooperate with major electronic shops and organise the construction of a large-scale waste treatment plant," he said.

Several special containers to gather lamps, batteries and other electric waste have been constructed in many courtyards in Astana. Much more must be done, however, to successfully coordinate the whole process.

Rental Bike Stations Now Operating Around the City

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Stations with bikes for rent have been placed around the city and opened for rental on April 15, according to the akimat (city administration) press service.

Last year, the number of bicycle stations was increased to 150 with more than 1,800 bicycles in use. Around 1,378 users registered. Most of the stations are located within 300-500 metres from each other.

According to the akimat, online payments have been introduced, as well as smartphone applications for Android and iOS, where users are able to see bicycles' stations location and the number available.

Those who wish to ride on a bike should visit velobike.kz and regis-

ter. The subscription fee is 5,000 tenge (US\$15), deposit for the plastic card is 1,000 tenge (US\$3) and it is returnable. The minimum balance required on the card is 500 tenge (US\$1.5).

After registration users need to visit the sales department located on the second floor of the Mega Shopping centre to pay a fee and deposit and pick up a user card. Residents need to present identity cards, and non-residents will have to show passports and documents showing occupation in Kazakhstan. According to the sales department manager, business cards will be accepted as proof of employment.

With a user card, users can use any bicycle station. The first half hour is free; from 31 minutes to one hour the fee is 100 tenge



(US\$0.3); from one hour to two hours it is 250 tenge (US\$0.75), and from two to three hours is 500 tenge (US\$1.5). After three hours, every hour is charged at 1,000 tenge (US\$3). All the detailed information and fines can be seen on the website.

Astana Bike is a project that was implemented by the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund with the support of the Astana city administration. The project is part of the city's effort to provide affordable and environmentally friendly transportation.

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