



Kazakhstan Celebrates Defender of Fatherland Day, 71th Anniversary of Victory in Great Patriotic War



Photo credit: kazpravda.kz

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – President Nursultan Nazarbayev congratulated all the people of Kazakhstan on Defender of the Fatherland Day and the 71th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War victory. The latter was marked with commemorative events held throughout the nation. “For centuries, the motherland defenders have always been an embodiment of honour and prowess, courage and bravery and patriotism and selfless service to their people. Kazakh people cherish the memory about feats of all generations’ heroes who gave their lives for freedom and independence,” he said at a May 6 concert dedicated to Defender of the Fatherland Day. “Battle awards of grandfathers and fathers are priceless relics for Kazakh families. It is symbolic that Defender of the Fatherland

Day and the Great Patriotic War Victory Day follow one another on our festive calendar. This emphasises continuity of glorious military traditions of all generations of our people,” the Kazakh President said. Nazarbayev expressed special gratitude to war veterans and the workers in the rear. “The Great Victory is a symbol of our heroic history and the friendships of nations, who shoulder to shoulder overcame and defeated Hitler’s fascism. Taking care of your welfare is only a fraction of the tribute by the present generation for your self-sacrifice during the difficult years of war. Your feat of arms will never be forgotten on Kazakh land. Thank you and a low bow to all veterans for heroism and for the Great Victory, the results of which we, your children,

are reaping today,” said the head of state. During the Great Patriotic War in 1941-45, about 1.2 million Kazakhs fought on the fronts. One hundred thousand compatriots were awarded orders and medals for military merit and 500 people became Heroes of the Soviet Union. About 630,000 people died in battle from wounds and illnesses, went missing or never returned from captivity. Commemorative events were held throughout the country. The Great Victory Day celebration in the capital started with concerts and national festivities at Student Park, the square in front of Akimat (city administration) and Baiterek Monument. Viewers listened to songs from the war years and saw theatrical performances. The President noted Defender of the Fatherland Day is a glori-

ous anniversary of the birth of the country’s Armed Forces. “This year, we will mark this memorable day in preparation for the 25th anniversary of our independence. Creating the national army, air forces and naval fleet is one of the most important pages of sovereign Kazakhstan’s biography. A long way has passed from forming the first military units to the current, modern national defence and security system,” he said. “Defence expenditures are financed as a matter of priority, even despite difficulties,” Nazarbayev continued. “New types of military hardware are introduced, in full compliance with a re-armament programme. In the coming years, no less than 70 percent of all types of weapons and equipment will be renewed, while certain categories will see up to 100 percent of revamping.”

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Nazarbayev Declares Moratorium on Latest Land Code Changes

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Citing a failure of the government to adequately explain four elements of the nation’s new Land Code relating to the sale and lease of agricultural lands, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev placed a moratorium May 5 on those elements until 2017. Speaking at a specially convened high level meeting with parliamentary leaders and government officials, the President said the government instructed to set up a Commission on Land Reform that will hold public meetings

between now and 2017 to better explain those elements. He added the moratorium will be lifted if its measures are adequately explained to the public and won’t be lifted if satisfactory solution is not found. “I instruct the government to clarify all the details. If you do manage to explain to the people, we will remove the moratorium. If not, then not,” Nazarbayev said during the meeting held at the Akorda presidential residence convened following several protest rallies in cities across the country over the past two weeks. Continued on Page A2

At UN, Kazakh FM Urges Support for Idea of Global Anti-Terrorist Coalition

By Galiaskar Seitzhan

NEW YORK – On May 10, the last day of his visit to New York, Kazakhstan’s Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov participated in the High-Level Thematic Debate of the United Nations General Assembly on Global Peace and Security. The event is organised annually under the patronage of the President of the General Assembly.

The subject of this year’s theme was “In a World of Risks: A New Commitment for Peace.” Participants of the debates, in the context of an overview of the global situation, discussed security issues, such as peacekeeping, peace building, gender aspects in armed conflicts and in times of peace, as well as the interrelationship of security with sustainable development and environmental protection. Continued on Page A3

IOFS Will Promote Innovations in Agriculture and Food Security

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Government representatives of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states gathered in the city April 28 to witness the establishment of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS). The body is focused on creating a collective platform to promote food security, expanding sustainable rural and agricultural development by mobilising all available resources within the countries, exchanging best practices and experiences and promoting investment and transfer of appropriate technologies. Kazakhstan’s candidacy was approved for the post of a presiding country at the IOFS General Assembly on the same day. According to the organisation’s charter, Kazakhstan will be a permanent member. Côte d’Ivoire and Palestine were elected vice-chairs of the organisation. “I am grateful for the support of Kazakhstan’s candidacy for the post of a presiding country in the general assembly of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security. Currently, the number of member states of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security has reached 31. I would like to congratulate us all on this achievement,” said now former Kazakh Minister of Agriculture



Asylzhan Mamyrbekov at the seventh OIC Ministerial Conference for Food Security and Agriculture Development. The establishment of the IOFS was initiated by President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the 38th OIC Foreign Ministers Council, held in the Kazakh capital in 2011. The action involves Kazakhstan’s consistent transformation into a food hub of international scale. Recognising the need to address the major food security problems facing their member states, particularly the spate of hunger, malnutrition, famine, widespread poverty, growing population as well as food shortage, the member states of the second largest international organisation after the United Nations supported the crucial initiative.

The corresponding Resolution No. 3/39-E on Establishment of OIC Food Security Institution in Kazakhstan was adopted at the 39th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held Nov. 15-17, 2012 in Djibouti. The organisation will seek to solve the problems of the Islamic countries’ population by economically ensuring more affordable food due to climatic conditions and geographic location and creating the most favourable route of transport and logistics. Kazakhstan has a high potential for food security. For five years, the country has occupied a leading position in the world’s export of flour and grain. At the same time, it has reserves to improve the productivity and efficiency of agriculture as well

as a sufficient amount of natural resources, about 24 million hectares of arable land and 180 million hectares of pasture. Kazakhstan has allocated \$749,000 to create the IOFS budget to maintain the office and necessary infrastructure, said IOFS Secretariat Director General Yerzhan Zhalmukanov. Countries will pay a mandatory membership fee based on their GDP. During the IOFS General Assembly inaugural session, agreements were signed with the Islamic Development Bank totaling more than \$300 million aimed at implementing two projects in the water sector, improving the drinking water supply of rural settlements and restoring irrigation systems. Continued on Page A3

Louvre Opens Photo Exhibition ‘Marvels of Kazakhstan’

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – A photo exhibition showcasing picturesque photography from Kazakhstan opened in Paris, at Carrousel du Louvre on May 9 and will be ongoing until June 9. A total of 26 three-by-two-point-four-metre photographs are now hanging at the exhibition, which was organised with the help of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in France and the Astana EXPO 2017 national company to promote country’s tourism in the run up to the international exhibition in Astana next year. “These landscapes are truly enchanting. I want to go there as soon as possible,” Chairperson of the municipal committee of culture of the mayor’s office for Paris’s 1st Arron-

dissement Carla Arigoni said at the opening of the exhibit, as quoted by Kazakhstan’s Foreign Ministry. “This is a real joy for the participating photographers, I am really glad that more people will discover Kazakhstan,” said Maxim Zolotukhin, a well-known photographer from Almaty. One of Zolotukhin’s works was selected by the French publication Le Figaro to be portrayed at the Louvre. Visitors of the exhibit are taking part in the #WelcomeToKZ contest with the winner getting a return trip to Astana from Paris and a three night stay in the Kazakh capital and a visit to the Astana EXPO next year. Carrousel du Louvre is visited by more than 1.5 million people a month.



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“You had to bring [information] to the people who do not understand that there is no sale of agricultural lands. It was complete speculation, which means that we did not bring the point to the concrete target groups. However, the mechanisms and rules of the adopted law were not widely discussed with the public. Anxiety and concerns of the people are justified in many ways. It is not correct if Kazakhs do not understand and do not trust the taken decisions. That means that society has doubts on a number of legal provisions on this issue,” he added.

According to Nazarbayev the

Commission on Land Reform under First Deputy Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev will help explain the Land Code to the public and work on reaching the common understanding of its priorities.

Current Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dossayev, 46, who had served in the position since Aug. 6, 2014, also resigned during the government meeting. His deputy, Kairbek Uskenbayev, was also to be dismissed from his position, while Minister of Agriculture Assylzhan Mamytbekov was reprimanded.

Nazarbayev also announced numerous other decisions at the same meeting.

First, the regulation of land man-

agement issues is to be transferred from the Ministry of National Economy to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Secondly, a new government entity, the Ministry of Information and Communication is to be established. It will be charged with monitoring the media, including the Internet and social media in order to ensure adequate and timely government reaction to problems being raised there. It will further study and analyse the most acute issues for the people and develop state information policies, as well as coordinating information-related activities of government

bodies. It will also work to attract investment and technologies to develop the media and will be charged with ensuring information security.

“The people of Kazakhstan do not want Ukraine scenario, I know that,” the President told the meeting referring to the social and political upheavals in that country over the past two years and promising to take “the toughest measures” to those who would want to bring similar developments to Kazakhstan.

According to Nazarbayev, the new ministry will also work to communicate government’s positions not only



Kuandyk Bishimbayev



Askar Myrzakhmetov



Dauren Abayev

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

President Nursultan Nazarbayev met with John Watson, CEO of Chevron, in Akorda on May 6, where they discussed cooperation in oil and gas sectors, implementation of joint projects. Nazarbayev noted Chevron is a paramount partner for Kazakhstan, “We are great friends. Our cooperation is mutually advantageous. We set your company as an example for other counterparts.” Nazarbayev also drew attention to the fact that Chevron has contributed \$113 billion to the country’s budget. “85 percent of employees of Tengizchevroil LLP are Kazakhs, 73 percent of managers at all levels are also our citizens. This is a good example for other investors,” said Nazarbayev. In turn, Watson thanked Nazarbayev for providing a favourable investment climate in the country and attention to industrial development.

Kazakh Armed Forces Supreme Commander Nursultan Nazarbayev visited the Interior Ministry’s new Special Forces centre of military and methodical training located in Zarechny village in Almaty region. More than 6 billion tenge (US\$18.4 million) was spent for construction, which was started in April 2014. The centre includes a Robotech complex for sniper training, central command post, military power items, 10 sites with shooting equipment, two indoor rifle ranges, barracks for 500 people, club room and sports complex.

The per capita living wage in Kazakhstan increased an average of 7.8 percent in April 2016 compared to the same month in 2015, reaching 20,527 tenge (US\$63), reported the Committee on Statistics press service. The figure increased by 0.5 percent compared to March 2016. The living wage for men is 24,375 tenge (US\$62.5); women, 19,349 tenge (US\$59.3); young men aged 14-17, 25,916 tenge (US\$79.5) and young women, 19,860 tenge (US\$61). The living wage for children under the age of 13 stood at 16,688 tenge (US\$51.2) and the figure for retirees is 19,201 tenge (US\$59).

Almaty Agriculture Department Deputy Head Maksat Rakhmetov said plans are underway to allot 40 hectares of land in the city’s foothills to Kazakh investors who intend to revive Almaty apples (Aport), reported Kazinform. Apple World inspected the land close to Butakovka, where apples were grown in the 1940s and 1950s, he added. Public Council Chairman Rakhman Alshanov noted 154,000 tonnes of apples are imported to Almaty from China, Kyrgyzstan and Poland annually.

President Nazarbayev called on all people in Kazakhstan to actively visit the Astana EXPO 2017 exhibition during his tour of the expo town, according to inform.kz. He said tourists, primarily from the regions, should come to the city and visit the expo. The President also asked residents of each region to create a schedule of their arrival in advance. Astana EXPO 2017 head Akhmetzhan Yessimov said 3,000 events are planned during the three months long exhibition.

President Nazarbayev ordered establishing a unified call centre under the Kazakh government, reported the Akorda press service. The head of state stressed residents received more than 1.2 million public services in the first quarter of the year through the electronic government portal. He added creating a unified call centre will provide a way to explain the new norms to people, how to use the electronic government and where to go for any service. Nazarbayev stressed the centre should provide people with all the information they need.

A unique museum of the Middle Ages opened in North Kazakhstan, reported Kazakh TV. The Faizullin family from Petropavlovsk outfitted the whole kingdom with a real fortress, palaces and towers and locals are very surprised to see such a display. They are also developing sketches and collecting building materials, such as stones, bricks and even slate, and will then proceed to construction. Anvar Faizullin said the museum really looks like a palace or castle. Ruslan Faizullin noted the castle is like one from Alexander Dumas’ books and building it was his dream.

Nazarbayev Signs Law to Promote Green Economy Development

By Zhaniya Urankayaeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the law “On introducing amendments and addenda to some legislative acts of Kazakhstan on the transition to green economy,” reported the Akorda on April 28.

The amendments seek to improve legislation related to ecology and renewable energy. Changes were made to articles of the Land, Water, Environment, Tax, Enterprise codes and the law “On Administrative Offences.”

The environmental code updated environmental and natural resources protections and was complemented by the principles of extended producer responsibility. The changes also increased environmental monitoring of mineral resource activity in the state protection area in the northern part of the Caspian Sea in the winter.

Changes to the water code expanded standards for water consumption and wastewater and refined procedures for establishing

norms for water consumption and wastewater.

The changes remove restrictions on investment preferences in regard to methane extraction projects, coal seams, while implementation within the framework of the priority investment project was added to the entrepreneurial code.

The law “On supporting the use of renewable energy sources” was supplemented by amendments on the development of renewable electricity, the creation of a reserve fund in the field of renewable energy and improvement of the mechanism of their connection to the networks of the unified electricity system of the country.

Kazakhstan’s transition to a green economy involves multiple sectors, such as the sustainable use of water resources, the development of a sustainable and highly productive agriculture, energy saving and energy efficiency, electric power development, waste management system, reduction of air pollution, conservation and efficient management of ecosystems.

Kazakh Government Discusses Property Legalisation, Forest Fire Prevention

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Approximately 86,000 Kazakh citizens have introduced nearly 1.2 trillion tenge (US\$3.7 billion) worth of previously off-the-books property into the official Kazakh economy as a result of a programme allowing citizens to register such property without penalty, Finance Minister Bakhyt Sultanov told a regular session of the Kazakh government on May 3.

Of that 1.2 trillion tenge, 794 billion tenge (US\$2.4 billion) has been legalised under the programme over the last five months. Citizens have also opened 910 bank accounts under the programme and 83 percent of all money legalised under the programme was registered over the first four months of this year, Chair of the National Bank of Kazakhstan Daniyar Aki-

shev told the government meeting, adding that 30 banks and Kazpost took part in the programme.

Minister of Internal Affairs Kalukhanbet Kassymov also briefed the gathering on the prevention of forest and steppe fires. He said 4,000 forest and steppe fires occur annually in Kazakhstan, impacting an average 180 hectares and causing 230 million tenge (US\$705,341) in damage.

“Sixteen fires over a total area of 285 hectares with the amount of loss of 1.7 million tenge (US\$5,213) appeared since the beginning of the year. Four-hundred-ten fires in an area of 2,180 hectares were registered in the steppe area. There were no victims or damage [to facilities],” he informed.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has developed a plan to prevent forest and steppe fires in the

fire season. Currently, 4,779 units of vehicles, 11 helicopters with water drainers, 47 fire trains and more than 34,000 people are ready around the country to fight forest and steppe fires.

He also noted problems with the country’s fire-fighting capabilities, including the failure of some regions to budget for fire suppression efforts, construct reservoirs and build fire barriers and fire-fighting service roads. Kassymov also said agencies and local government bodies do not have sufficient fire-fighting technology and that fire stations and fire-fighting units are not operating efficiently. He also noted that 90 percent of fires are the fault of the public and urged greater education of fire prevention and safety rules.

Prime Minister Karim Massimov chaired the meeting.

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As part of the modernisation of the military complex, science-intensive production and transfer of technologies will be prioritised, he added.

The President also noted Kazakhstan develops military technical cooperation with foreign countries, while Armed Forces train through joint exercises with counterparts from Collective Security Treaty Organisation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, as well as under NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme.

The head of state noted defending the motherland is the most honourable and respected profession. He expressed his conviction that the country’s Armed Forces will always be an indestructible stronghold of independence, peace and accord in the nation’s society.

“I thank service people and civilians who work in the defence complex and all the people of Kazakhstan for a high patriotic re-

sponsibility and personal involvement in ensuring the defence of the motherland,” said Nazarbayev.

He went on to call for more global cooperation to ensure peace.

“Global peace will strongly and reliably protect peoples and nations. That is why I have put forward for the international community the Manifest, ‘The World. The 21st Century.’ It is a call to join forces against the global war and take measures to free the mankind from the threat of self-annihilation. It is especially relevant on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site which we will commemorate in a few months.”

“Achieving a fair global system free from nuclear weapons, military threats and challenges to security of the peoples based on the principles of trust and cooperation of all nations is the foundation of our foreign policy. Working towards that goal step by step, we will be making the protection of our motherland stronger and more reliable,” Nazarbayev said.



Staff Report

Astana recently held a ceremony honouring the more than 30,000 Kazakhs who helped clean up and mitigate the consequences of the April 26, 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident.

The ceremony started with a minute of silence followed by the laying of wreaths at a monument. The people who helped clean up the accident

and their relatives as well as officials, public figures and representatives of the diplomatic corps of Russia and Belarus attended the event.

More than 800,000 people from across the former Soviet Union participated in the cleanup as the explosion contaminated about 150,000 square kilometres of soil around the epicentre and the radioactivity started to radiate out of the accident zone.

EURASIA&WORLD

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EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Director of the International University Sports Federation (FISU) for Winter Universiades' preparations Milan Augustin said that preparations for the 2017 Winter Universiade in Almaty city are in process. He said that a wide range of documents have been prepared, adding that the organising committee and FISU maintain constant dialogue. The director of FISU for Winter Universiades noted that the 60 countries that had already confirmed participation in the upcoming Winter Games would be pleased with its organisation.

Chairman of Senate of Poland Stanisław Karzewski thanked Kazakhs for their warm and kind attitude to the Poles living in Kazakhstan. He said it at a meeting with Deputy Chairman of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan Yeraly Tugzhanov, Kazinform reports. Tugzhanov told the foreign guest about the activity of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan and noted that the Poles are among the most active members of the assembly. Kazakhstan is home for 32,000 Poles now. Most of them live in Karaganda, Pavlodar, North Kazakhstan and Akmola regions.

Kazinform reports that over five years the number of foreign citizens arriving in Kazakhstan has not changed. Employment of foreign workers in Kazakhstan is regulated by quotas, which means that the government sets the maximum number of foreign workers arriving to Kazakhstan. This quota does not exceed 0.7 percent of the economically active population. Thus, in 2016, the quota is 63,000 people. In the previous year, the quota was about the same.

President of the Republic of Congo Denis Sassou Nguesso received Kazakh Ambassador to Iran Bagdad Amreyev who delivered a message from President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazinform reports. The parties discussed the prospects of bilateral relations and cooperation. The President of Congo highly evaluated Kazakhstan's achievements in building statehood, foreign policy and economy. Nguesso emphasised Nazarbayev's contribution to ensuring international security, disarmament process and establishment of the global dialogue of civilisations. Amreyev thanked the President for the support of Kazakhstan's foreign policy actions within the international organisations and expressed hope for establishment of a constructive dialogue between Kazakhstan and Congo in trade and economy.

Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the UN Kairat Abdurakhmanov and Charge d'Affaires a.i. of Liberia to the UN George Patten signed a joint communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states in New York. The parties exchanged opinions about the prospects of cooperation at the bilateral level in terms of important issues of the agenda of the UN representing the mutual interests of Kazakhstan and Liberia. Fulfilment of the goals of sustainable development, protection of the environment, healthcare, peacekeeping and post-crisis development are among the priorities. The parties also noted the importance of the expansion of mutually beneficial contacts between the states, especially in the education sphere. Kazakhstan also thanked Liberia for the decision to take part in EXPO 2017.

A delegation from Kazakhstan took part in a meeting of Executive Committee of the International Exhibition Bureau in Paris. Members of the executive committee heard the reports on the preparation for EXPO 2017, the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan informs. Head of the Secretariat of EXPO 2017 Ayan Yerenov reported about the work conducted since the last meeting of the executive committee on the attraction of international participants, development of the legal framework and on measures on fulfilment of the obligations of Kazakhstan before the International Exhibition Bureau. The International Exhibitions Bureau positively assessed the progress of preparations for EXPO 2017.

President Nazarbayev Attends Victory Day Parade in Moscow, Meets President Putin

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev discussed bilateral cooperation as well as international and regional issues with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a May 8-9 trip to Russia. Nazarbayev also participated in the grand Victory Day Parade in Moscow's Red Square May 9.

Nazarbayev congratulated Putin on the 71th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War and Russia's first rocket launch from its new Vostochny spaceport in the Far East.



"I have arrived here to congratulate you on Russia's huge technological success, the launch from the Vostochny spaceport,"

Nazarbayev said, adding that the spaceport was "state-of-the-art."

"You have done it, you have made history for Russia and it will be remembered by many generations. As an ally, as a closest partner, I am impressed," he added, as reported by Tass.ru.

The first launch from the new Vostochny spaceport with the help of the Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket took place at 05:01 a.m. Moscow time (02:01 GMT) on April 28.

Nazarbayev also noted during his trip that the Supreme Council of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), including the Russian and Kazakh

leaders, will meet by the end of May in Astana. This meeting will be followed by a meeting of leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Tashkent in June.

"There are many meetings on the agenda of this year. Currently, the EAEU is developing in its normal mode. We will overcome the difficulties of the crisis," Nazarbayev said.

In turn, Putin expressed confidence that Russian-Kazakh relations will continue to develop. Putin thanked Nazarbayev for visiting Moscow and said Nazarbayev's participation in the Victory Day Parade will strengthen the trust between the two countries.

"Undoubtedly, it is a manifestation of our special relations, our allied relations. It is very pleasing for us and we would like to thank you for that," Putin said, according to Tass.ru.

UN Hosts Religions for Peace Discussion on Kazakhstan Initiative

By Galiaskar Seitzhan

NEW YORK – Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov represented Kazakhstan at the high-level forum titled Religions for Peace at the United Nations General Assembly (UN GA) May 6.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev put forward the initiative to hold the forum designed to build upon the efforts of the UN to combat violent extremism and promote peace and security at the 70th session of the UN GA in September 2015, as well as at the meeting with UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova in Paris in November 2015. The proposal found backing from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the UN member states and leaders of religious congregations and international NGOs.

Idrissov, in his address, stressed that the forum testified to the joint response from UN member states and faith leaders to Nazarbayev's initiative to break the alleged links between terrorism and religions.

"The attendance of so many distinguished figures at this high level conversation clearly reflects the importance and urgency of the crisis we face. The task is clear. Our great faiths, with their common

values, should be a major asset in bringing people together and promoting peace," he said.

UN General Assembly President Mogens Lyketteft stressed the importance of the forum's theme. "Terrorist attacks all over the world demonstrate very clearly that achieving harmony and strengthening intercultural and interreligious dialogue is a great challenge and perhaps more important today than at any time in our recent past. Violent extremism is a particularly serious concern," he said. According to him, a constructive exchange of views of leaders in this area is designed to ensure that all world religions have made a substantial contribution to combating terrorism and the ideology of violent extremism.

High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilisations Nasser Abdulaziz Al-Nasser thanked the Kazakh delegation for the initiative and representatives of all religions for voicing their concerns and putting forward their practical recommendations at the forum.

"The engagement of religious leaders is essential to counteract the messages of the leaders of terrorist groups who distort the core of religious beliefs for self-serving purposes. We need religious leaders to assert their rejection of vio-

lent doctrines and emphasise the peaceful and tolerant values inherent in their theologies. We need religious leaders to condemn the destruction by extremists of ancient sites that are the testimony of the history of the ancient cultures and symbols of pluralism and tolerance," he underlined.

As one of the essential means of strengthening global security, Idrissov highlighted the fight against the threat of nuclear weapons and the "virus of war." In this context, he presented the participants with President Nazarbayev's recently announced Manifest, "The World. The 21st Century."

"We call upon religious leaders to endorse the concept of a world free of nuclear danger and actively participate in a global drive to make this dream a reality. We must also admit that durable peace is not achievable without measures to restore mutual trust between states," he added.

According to Idrissov, Kazakhstan also believes strongly that peace and development must be the central pillars of a strategic plan to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the UN and deliver the vision of a nuclear-weapons-free world by the date.

"I can promise our country, if we are successful in our bid for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security

Council for 2017-18, will spare no effort to work with the international community to drive progress towards these important goals," he stressed.

Idrissov also noted that on May 31 Astana will host an international conference under the title "Religions Against Terrorism," which will bring together faith leaders, politicians, and academicians to elaborate working recommendations on tackling the harmful ideologies of violent extremism.

Earlier, on May 5, Idrissov attended the seventh annual dinner with American religious leaders, representatives of the U.S. administration, experts and the U.S. business community.

The meeting discussed the issues of religious tolerance promotion, interfaith understanding and countering violent terrorism in the context of international initiatives of Nazarbayev and his Manifest.

According to a press release from Kazakhstan's Embassy in Washington, DC, President of the Asia Policy Society Institute and former Prime Minister of Australia Kevin Rudd commended Kazakhstan's efforts in promoting mutual understanding and respect between religions and cultures. Among other participants, U.S. Representative Steve Israel (D –

New York) expressed on behalf of the American people gratitude to Kazakhstan for the leadership and contribution to the global process of interaction between different religions and cultures.

The participants exchanged ideas in the context of the decisions and objectives of the Fifth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religion held in June 2015 in Astana, as well as discussed issues related to the role of religious leaders in building a world based on tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation.

More than 30 representatives of various religious movements in the U.S., including Protestantism, Orthodoxy, Mormonism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, and others, attended the event.

The annual dinner with religious leaders in America that was launched in 2008 found broad support, both in religious and political circles of the U.S., as well as became an effective forum for further strengthening relations between Kazakhstan and American societies, the Kazakh Embassy in Washington said.

The Kazakh foreign ministry also reported that while in New York Idrissov held working meetings with regional groups of the UN to discuss Kazakhstan's bid for a non-permanent membership in 2017-2018.

Idrissov's visit in New York concludes on May 10 with participation in another High-Level Thematic Debate at the UN General Assembly titled "In a World of Risks: A New Commitment for Peace."

At UN, Kazakh FM Urges Support for Idea of Global Anti-Terrorist Coalition

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Mogens Lyketteft, President of the General Assembly; Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations; Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, former President of Indonesia; Leymah Gbowee, the renowned Liberian peace activist and the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; Amr Moussa, the sixth Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and foreign ministers and deputy ministers from 25 UN member states attended the high-level debates.

Idrissov told the audience about Kazakhstan's approaches on the meeting's issues. The foreign minister highlighted the main provisions of the Manifest "The World. The 21st Century," along with other anti-war, anti-nuclear-

weapons and anti-terrorist initiatives of President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

"The world will benefit from both the end goal and the process of disarmament: moving towards a nuclear-weapons-free world will equip humankind with a cooperative mechanism to sustain and support security at the lowest levels of armaments. Such a process will release excessive expenditure to be transferred to social and economic development in line with Kazakhstan's initiative to allocate annually 1 percent of national defence budgets to sustainable development," the minister said.

During the debates, the delegation of Kazakhstan also urged implementation of the anti-terrorist initiatives offered by Nazarbayev last September at the UN, such as

the establishment of a unified list of extremist and terrorist organisations, as well as the elaboration of a commonly agreed terminology in the fight against international terrorism. This work is to culminate in the adoption of the UN Comprehensive Instrument to Combat Terrorism as an outcome of establishing a unified global network, or coalition, to counter international terrorism and extremism.

"We call on member states to endorse Kazakhstan's proposal to establish a global anti-terrorist coalition (network) under the UN, as well as universal mechanisms to bring perpetrators to justice," the minister urged.

Idrissov also discussed related issues in meetings with Jean-Paul Laborde, Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee

and Jehangir Khan, Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF).

Idrissov also participated in a ministerial-level working lunch on the theme, "The Next Secretary-General in a World of Risks: Expectations vs. Realities," organised by Mogens Lyketteft. During this event, the Kazakh Foreign Minister moderated a discussion group focusing on challenges to global peace and security. The group reviewed ways to adapt the global architecture of collective security to modern threats and challenges at a time when the UN needs to remain a publicly accepted and credible structure.

The participants also discussed the role of the next Secretary-General of the UN in implementing these processes. The group

noted that the next Secretary-General for this purpose should more actively utilise Article 99 of the UN Charter, which envisages that the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

Among the key tasks of Idrissov's visit to New York was also the promotion of Kazakhstan's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2017-18, and familiarising the international community with the priorities of the country if elected to serve on this prestigious body. He held a series of meetings with his counterparts from the around the world in this connection.

IOFS Will Promote Innovations in Agriculture and Food Security

Continued from Page A1

"Under the project on improving the water supply in Almaty region (Enbekshikazakh and Karasai districts), construction of water pipelines is planned in 15 locations. The total length is 680 kilometres, including 234 kilometres of distribution pipelines and 446 kilometres of

water supply network. Also, [there is] construction of a wastewater treatment plant with a capacity of 18.8 m3/day and the restoration of the six existing drainage wells. The amount of attracted funds is \$75.3 million," reported the Kazakh Agriculture Ministry press office.

The second project, "Reconstruction of the irrigation and

drainage systems in the Republic of Kazakhstan," provides for restoring the irrigation system in 58,000 hectares of land in some districts of Almaty region and improving the soil condition of 92,500 hectares in the Maktaral and Shardara districts of South Kazakhstan region. A total of 512 vertical drainage wells are to be

restored with surveillance cameras installed on them and about 270 irrigation channels and 50 operational bridges are to be implemented. The project will cost \$235.5 million, with co-financing provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The projects are part of the reforms on the phased tran-

sition of the water sector from budget dependence to self-sufficiency and improving its investment attractiveness.

OIC, a successor of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference established in 1969, was renamed during the 38th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. It is the only regional association designed to represent the universal interests of the Islamic world in the international arena. Members include 57 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America, with a population of about 1.6 billion.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

Int'l Experts to Discuss Challenges of Global Economy at Astana Economic Forum 2016

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – The main trends and challenges of global economic development and ensuring long-term economic growth in new reality conditions will be discussed May 25-26 at the 9th annual Astana Economic Forum (AEF) to be held under the theme of “New Economic Reality: Diversification, Innovations and Economics of Knowledge.”

Experts from the monetary community, politics, leaders of major financial and international organisations and Nobel laureates will participate in this year's forum. The expected speakers include Chinese Internet commerce company Ali Baba Group founder Jack Ma, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) President Sir Suma Chakrabarti and Columbia University economics professor and earth institute director Jeffrey Sachs.

The forum will be preceded May 24 by an IMF regional forum involving Lagarde and the governments of the Caucasus, Central Asian countries and Eurasian Economic Union member nations.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology economics professor and co-author of “Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty” Daron Acemoglu, former member of Ronald Reagan's Economic Policy Advisory Board Arthur Laffer and Nobel



Prize in Economic Sciences winners Christopher Pissarides, Edward Prescott and Thomas Sargent are also expected to attend.

The key events will include the Kazakh investment summit organised in cooperation with The Economist, the Great Silk Road countries' forum held jointly with the Boao Forum Secretariat for Asia and the Kazakh privatisation forum coordinated with The Financial Times.

Lectures on economics, a series of workshops on the use of Blockchain technologies, networking and master classes from leading world experts and business gurus are also scheduled. A number of activities for Kazakh university students will also be planned.

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AEF 2016 partners include international organisations and financial institutions like the Asian Development Bank, EBRD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations and World Bank, according to its website.

Held annually in the capital, the AEF is known as a platform for international dialogue that allows constructive discussion of economic development concerning both Central Asia and the entire world in relation to changes witnessed in the global economy. The participation of government and business figures from more than 80 countries distinguishes the forum and its activities, according to its website. The AEF serves as a platform for finding efficient solutions to address the major economic and social challenges of the day.

IMF Releases Updated Regional Economic Outlook

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) released its updated Regional Economic Outlook for the Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA). The document, presented April 25, indicated the economic growth in the region has slowed to a two-decade low, “owing to the large and sustained decline in commodity prices, wide-ranging spill-overs from Russia's recession and the slowdown and rebalancing of China's economy.”

“Two thousand sixteen is an historic and momentous year for the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia – their 25th year of independence since the breakup of the Soviet Union. From rather challenging beginnings, the CCA countries have made enormous gains over the past quarter century and have much to celebrate,” according to the op-ed “Economic Shadow over CCA Anniversary Celebrations” by Juha Kähkönen, deputy director of the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia Department, published by IntelliNews.

“Without a doubt, 2016 is a time for celebrating the CCA's first 25 years of independence – and the many achievements of all these countries. But it is also a time to find ways of becoming less dependent on commodities and remittances and promoting the development of the private sector as the engine of growth. In a proud and historic year for the CCA, this will not only help to weather the current storm, but also lay the foundations for stronger growth and prosperity in the coming years,” he added.

According to the op-ed, average growth for the period from 2017-2021 is projected to be 3.7 percent, while in 2000-2014 the rate was 8.3 percent.

“Therefore, to navigate this difficult terrain successfully, the CCA countries urgently need bold policy responses,” said Kähkönen. “For the CCA's oil exporters, whose growth will drop from 3.2 percent in 2015 to 1.1 percent this year, the steep fall in international oil prices and spill-overs from the recession in Russia have led to cuts in public investment, a weakening of private demand and increased exchange rate and monetary policy uncertainty. Lower oil production in some countries is also weighing on the outlook. For the CCA's oil importers, whose

growth will dip from 3 percent last year to 2.6 percent in 2016, the positive impact of cheaper oil is being more than offset by lower remittances from Russia, lower demand from China for CCA-produced goods and lower prices in other commodities, such as copper, aluminium and cotton,” he added.



Photo credit: Bankstr.ru

limit public expenditure cuts that harm long-term growth prospects and safeguard targeted social spending. Overall, it is vital for sufficient savings to be set aside for future generations and for public debt to remain on a sustainable footing,” according to the op-ed.

KÄHKÖNEN: “Two thousand sixteen is an historic and momentous year for the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia – their 25th year of independence since the breakup of the Soviet Union. From rather challenging beginnings, [these] countries have made enormous gains over the past quarter century and have much to celebrate.”

The report also mentioned measures that have been taken to deal with unexpected issues. One such measure is the full exchange rate flexibility, which has also been introduced in Kazakhstan. According to the source, it has been “effective in absorbing the impact on export and fiscal revenues and preserving valuable international reserves.” At the same time, however, it has created pressures on inflation and the financial sector, which is “highly dollarised and has a significant number of un-hedged borrowers and large non-performing loans from previous crises.”

Authorities have also increased fiscal spending to both soften the impact of the shocks and support economic activity, which was mentioned in the piece.

“Yet, with these shocks expected to last and with public debt projected to rise, this stance will eventually need to move toward consolidating fiscal positions in the medium term. Such plans should

crucial to have clear communication on policy actions, as a lack of clarity can increase uncertainty, weaken confidence and ultimately undermine the effectiveness of policy actions,” noted the op-ed.

The opinion added the CCA region needs reforms that promote diversification away from commodities, reduce reliance on remittances, foster a competitive business environment and create jobs.

“Thanks largely to high commodity prices and strong remittance flows, living standards in the region – as measured by real GDP per capita – doubled in the past 12 years. At the much lower growth rate projected for 2017-21 and in the absence of much-needed reforms, it would take about 25 years for living standards to double again. This underscores just how critical market-enabling reforms, improvements in the quality of education, deepening of financial markets and broad-based trade integration are to improving the region's outlook,” it stated.

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ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister of Agriculture Assylzhan Mamytbekov, who on May 6 resigned his post, earlier said 176 billion tenge (US\$540 million) will be allocated under the Agrobusiness 2020 programme to support the agricultural and industrial complex in 2016, reported Kazinform. He indicated the amount increased 2.6 times compared to 2011. The global reforming of the complex's subsidy system using further automation of the process will be continued, added Mamytbekov. He explained the main idea of the reform is to reduce non-working subsidies and state expenses. Plans have been made to cancel the hectare subsidy in 2016 and change it to cattle breeding.

Senate Speaker Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said Kazakhstan must strengthen its position in the Russian market within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). He indicated Kazakhstan is located between main food consumption markets such as China, Russia, the Middle East and Europe, where the demand for food is constantly increasing. Demand for environmentally-friendly products is also growing by 20-30 percent annually. Since the EAEU market is one of the most promising, Kazakhstan's agricultural sector has additional opportunities to strengthen its position in the Russian market, he said.

Fitch Ratings downgraded Kazakhstan's long-term foreign currency issuer default rating (IDR) from BBB+ to BBB, according to inform.kz. The local currency IDR was also reduced from A- to BBB. Despite the changes, the international agency indicated the outlooks are stable. The report showed the issue rating on Kazakhstan's senior unsecured foreign currency bonds has been downgraded from BBB+ to BBB. The country's ceiling has been revised from A- to BBB+ and the short-term foreign currency IDR is affirmed at F2. Agency experts expect the Kazakh economy to contract by 1 percent in 2016 (contrary to many other forecasts of around 1 percent of positive growth), which is below the five-year growth average of 4.6 percent and the BBB median of 3.3 percent.

Senate Speaker Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said the development pace of agricultural production lags behind the average statistical indicators of economic growth. The agrarian sector produces only 4.7 percent of the state's GDP, according to inform.kz. “The level of agricultural productivity is the lowest in comparison with other sectors,” said Tokayev. He added Kazakhstan has a lack of up-to-date soil cultivation technologies, quality seed grain and up-to-date harvesting vehicles. Tokayev noted according to preliminary data, in 2015 the sector's productivity was a little bit more than \$5,600 per person employed, a figure 3.5 times less than the country's average indicator and much less than in developed countries.

Prime Minister Karim Massimov held a regular sitting of the government, reported Primeminister.kz, focusing on the legislation process. The amount of claimed property in the country reached 1.4 trillion tenge (US\$4.3 billion), approximately 1.2 trillion tenge (US\$3.7 billion) of which has been already legalised. National Bank Chairman Daniyar Akishev reported 910 accounts were opened by 30 banks.

The amount of pension savings accrued in the Single Accumulative Pension Fund reached 6.7 trillion tenge (US\$20.5 billion) as of April 1, according to the fund's press service. The profitability of pension assets distributed to depositors' accounts from Jan. 1-March 31 was 2.4 percent and the annual revenue stood at 16.9 percent. The weighted average return on repayment of debt financial instruments kept in the fund's pension assets investment portfolio reached 10.5 percent as of April 1.

Over 700,000 Containers Per Year to Travel China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran Railway by 2020

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – More than 700,000 containers per year will be transported along the China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran transnational railway by 2020, Vice President of Kazakhstan Temir Zholy Kanat Alpysbayev recently announced.

The announcement followed a recent meeting in Beijing of more than 130 transportation and rail professionals along with government officials from China, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The event was organised by the embassies of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in China and Kazakhstan Temir Zholy.

Representatives of numerous transport and logistics companies and export-oriented China provinces interested in using the transnational China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran route were present. The increased traffic will involve establishing regular container train communication from Lianyungang to Bandar Abbas and Tehran cities, Alpysbayev said.

According to him, creating unimpeded passage of trains, increasing the moving speed of container trains to more than 1,000 kilometres a day, providing favourable

tariff terms, as well as expanding transport and logistics line of services will become major factors in increasing transport container activity.

“Of course, Kazakhstan's transport and logistics infrastructure development is being considered by our partners as the main factor of success. Great attention and interest were shown to Khorgos – East Gate special economic zone development. All these matters were discussed, plans were outlined and work will continue on their realisation,” Alpysbayev noted.

The company vice president also told the meeting of transit officials about the potential of China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway.

“Its potential constitutes more than 700,000 containers per year as of today, according to experts' evaluation. We plan to achieve this figure by year 2020,” he stressed.

Alpysbayev reminded that Kazakhstan and China have two railway transitions that can ensure cargo trans-shipment of more than 40 million tonnes a year.

“Additional transport and logistics centres, which will allow to implement distribution, consolidation and other cargo trans-shipment services are being cre-

ated throughout transport corridor. Transit transportations are the most promising for us,” he concluded.

“If revenues from transit amounted to about 23-25 percent two years ago, last year we reached over 30 percent. Transit taking more than 50 percent from freight transpor-

ation in the income structure by 2020 is our task.”

Kazakhstan's Ambassador in China Shakhmat Nuryshv, Turkmenistan's Ambassador in China Chinar Rustamova, Mayor of Xi'an city of China's Shaanxi Province Shanguan Jiqing, Chief

of Marketing for Turkmenistan's Ministry of Railway transport Azat Arzymedov, Alpysbayev, representatives of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and 40 Chinese transport companies participated in the meeting, the Kazinform news agency reported.



Photo credit: Railways.kz

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Glencore is exploring options for its biggest gold mine, which could include a \$2 billion sale and the possibility to reduce its debt burden, according to the Financial Times. Chinese miners are expected to buy Glencore's Vasilkovskoye project in Kazakhstan. The company made the decision to sell the mine after being approached by several suitors and has appointed BMO Capital Markets and Deutsche Bank to handle a possible deal. A successful disposal could help Glencore reduce its net debt below \$18 billion this year and decrease it to \$15 billion by the end of 2017.

The Belarusian government approved draft agreements with KazAgroFinance (Kazakhstan), Gazprombank Leasing (Russia) and Eximleasing (Ukraine) to provide goods produced in Belarus to Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine under the terms of a financial lease, reported BelTA. The Belarusian Industry and Finance Ministries have been authorised to hold negotiations and sign agreements with companies from the three countries. Belgazprombank, Belarusbank and BPS-Sberbank were named agent banks to implement the conditions under the agreements.

Repair and restoration works at Kashagan oil field are being performed slightly ahead of plan, reported the Ministry of Energy press service. Kashagan's reserves are estimated at 4.8 billion tonnes of oil and production is expected to resume in late 2016 after the pipelines are replaced. The field was discovered in the 2000s and is 80 kilometres from Atyrau in the northern part of the Caspian Sea. Developing the field was completed with the help of artificial islands. The total oil reserves are 38 billion barrels, about 10 billion of which are recoverable, and oil from the field is characterised as "high-quality." Kashagan's gas reserves are estimated at more than 1 trillion cubic metres. Total investment in the project to date is approximately \$50 billion.

Kazakhstan Temir Zholy's net profit reached 32.6 billion tenge (US\$100 million) in January-April 2016, reported the company's press service. The volume of transit container transportation on the China-Europe-China route through Kazakh territory increased by 205 percent in January-April 2016 compared to the same period in 2015. This enabled the companies to increase their income and achieve positive financial results.

The Almaty administration met with a Danish business delegation led by Denmark's Ambassador in Russia and Kazakhstan Thomas Winkler. The guests highlighted the dynamic development of cooperation between Almaty and Denmark. Twenty-four joint ventures and 25 enterprises with the participation of the Danish capital are currently registered in the city. Winkler noted Almaty's enormous potential for investment and emphasised its attractiveness. The Ambassador noted the metropolis demonstrates high rates of economic and industrial-innovative development and said the city successfully operates its own business area which allows it to create new companies with foreign capital. The Danish party intends to continue investing in agriculture, energy and high technologies.

Golden Camel signed an agreement with the South Kazakhstan administration, reported Kazinform. Kazakhstan is among the leaders in the production of camel milk, which is the reason the administration plans to establish a processing plant. The facility, with the capacity to produce eight tonnes of dried camel milk per day, is expected to be operational in March 2017. The total cost of the project is 12.8 billion tenge (US\$39.2 million).

Ontustik Invest 2016 Highlights South Kazakhstan's Business Potential

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The April 28-29 Ontustik Invest 2016 forum and exhibition highlighted business opportunities in South Kazakhstan.

"South Kazakhstan is an important trade centre with 11 industrial zones. Developing tourism and agricultural fields are interesting for investors. We consider that the number of foreign guests at the event shows the significance of the region and its investment environment," said Turkish Deputy Minister of Economy Fatih Metin who attended the event.

An exhibition under the event gathered hundreds of foreign and local business persons, representa-



tives of state bodies and diplomatic missions.

The investment climate of the region is well known as one of the

most favourable in the state. Local companies produce foodstuffs, construction materials, equipment, clothes, pharmaceutical prod-

ucts and agricultural goods. More than 60 companies participated in the exhibition and presented their goods at the event.

"We emphasise quality control. Our prices are moderate. Our products are made using only natural milk. We process up to 15 tonnes of milk per day and plan to produce different types of cheese. As of today, our products are sold in Almaty, Shymkent, Taraz, Karaganda and we plan to export them to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan," said businessman Ismail Mamedov.

Investors are interested in food processing and engineering, oil refining and pharmacy.

More than 700 participants from 24 states took part in the event.

As a result, 41 memorandums in the amount of \$2.5 billion were signed. Different plenary sessions, roundtable conferences and informational tours for companies took place at the event.

"I come to Kazakhstan for the second time to support state schools and colleges. Now, we are working on a plan, but I can say that we are going to invest up to \$1 billion," said First Director of Global Project Capital Kenneth Fulton.

Chinese investors are interested in the establishment of a plant producing energy saving lamps. Representative of Tong Di Khon Chzhin Dzhun said his company is holding negotiations with the administration of the region.

Moldova Expresses Interest in Buying Kazakh Railroad Products

Staff Report

Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) President Askar Mamin and the head of the Railroad of Moldova Yuri Topal held a meeting in Astana on April 25. The Moldovan representative expressed the high interest of his company in purchasing Kazakh railroad products, reported the press service of KZT.

During the meeting, the sides discussed issues of bilateral cooperation in the field of logistics, transport and railway engineering.

According to the press statement, particular attention was paid to the participation of Kazakh companies in the railway modernisation of Moldova, the procurement of modern locomotives, freight and passenger cars, as well as long rails, wheel-bandage products and car casting from Kazakhstan to Moldova.

The delegation also visited the Locomotive Kurastyru Zauyty and Tulpar Talgo companies, where they got acquainted with a range of products, production lines and de-

velopment perspectives of the two plants. In addition, the Moldovan representatives visited the Centre for Transport Technology, which is a branch company of Kazakhstan Temir Zholy.

As part of the visit, the Moldovan delegation was invited to Ekibastuz to visit Kazakhstan Wagon Company and Prommashkomplekt enterprise. Both companies produce wagons, turnouts, and wheels and drew attention of the guests, who appreciated the capacity of the Kazakh producers.



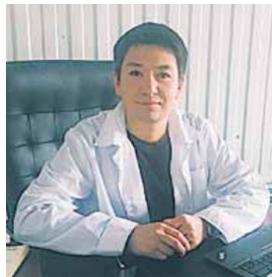
Young Entrepreneurs Run Chemical Company in Cooperation with Disney and Marvel

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Goldman & Young, created by friends Daniyar Nurmaganbetov and Diyas Yagmurov, develops and manufactures chemicals for use in the Horeca (hotel/restaurant/café) sphere, cosmetic products for children and household chemicals. Based in Almaty, the company plans to open an office in the capital this year and enter Russia's market in 2018.

"We have more than 100 kinds of products, as well as lots of new products in development. The company employs about 30 people. For the distribution of our Horeca products, we work with dealers and mass market products are promoted by our partner company Prima Distribution," said Nurmaganbetov in a recent interview for this story. "The main prospect for us is our company's development in the Horeca market in Kazakhstan."

The concept was born during a lecture on entrepreneurship in 2011 at INSEAD, the international graduate business school. Initially, the idea was to create boutique cosmetics similar to Tailored Cosmetics, luxury shops where beauticians examine the characteristics and needs of the client's hair and skin, then manufacture care products with a unique set of active substances and vitamins. Past



Diyas Yagmurov

experience with Procter & Gamble, as well as projects with the Kazakhstan Investment Fund, allowed him to open his own factory.

"I wanted to start a business in Paris; however, after finding out the working conditions in the EU (European Union), I quickly realised that it would be connected with very high risk. For example, if the business failed, we would have to pay the dismissed employees up to 37 months of wages," he said.

After reviewing the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, Nurmaganbetov and his family moved to Singapore to study at its INSEAD campus. He ultimately made the decision to return to his native land.

"That country [Singapore] was number one in the rankings. But there, I simply did not like some things and I realised that I did not

want to live in this city-country," he said. "The country [Kazakhstan] has created good conditions for development of business and it is number 41 in the mentioned ranking."

In Kazakhstan, his idea evolved into a project on children's cosmetics. He invited his close friend Yagmurov, who supported the idea, to join the initial team.

The company's name came purely by chance.

"Now people say that we are young and gold and some say it has roots in Israel," said Nurmaganbetov.

The initial capital was relatively small. They started with a 50-square metre rented building until investors later supported the idea.

When it came to cooperation and an agreement with Disney and Marvel, the team admitted it was hard to reach out to such global giants.

"We had been sending letters and requests, but they were left unanswered. As a result, I had to use 'connections.' During the training programme at Harvard Business School, the development director of Disney's business in Russia was in the same class with me. I found him in our database and in spite of the fact that at that time he was not working in the company, he recommended me to management. But he added that Disney usually did not work with start-ups. We were able to convince them. And now, we have been successfully cooperating for four years."

"We are proud to produce our products in Kazakhstan. I had never believed that government supporting measures worked, but in reality it was very effective. We have received a loan from Kazinvestbank at a rate of 6 percent per annum in tenge within the Damu programme for the construction of our new plant and the purchase of equipment. The company Kaznex Invest is helping us with access to foreign markets. Last year, we went to the exhibition in the cities of Novosibirsk and Tehran and this



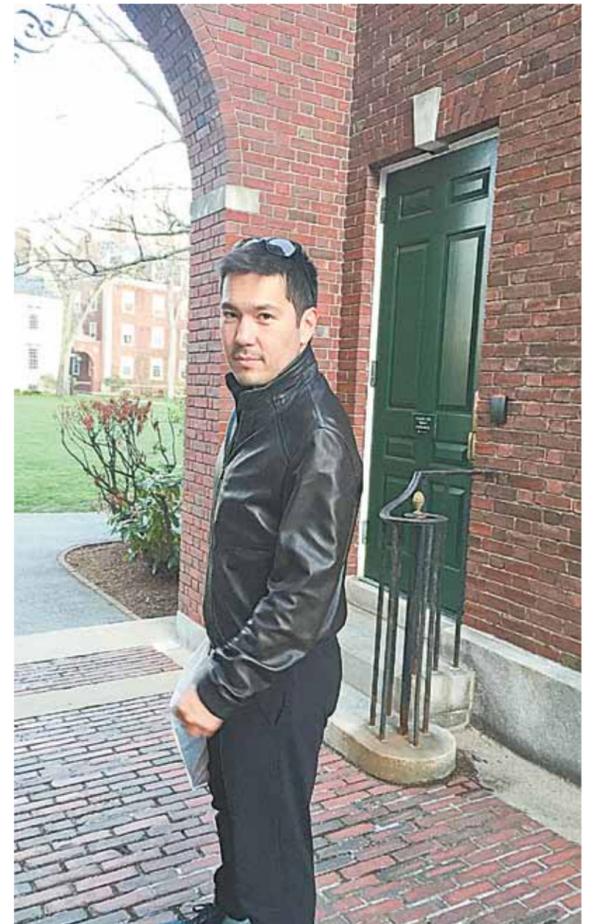
year we have exhibited in Moscow," said Nurmaganbetov.

They added Chevron supports local producers and the company began delivery this month to their shift camp in the Tengiz field. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) also provided a grant to implement a GMP (good manufacturing practices) system in their production.

"That will put our company on the same level of quality control with any global manufacturers. Also, this bank on a grant basis

has helped us to attract experts with experience of more than 40 years to promote our products in the market of Kazakhstan and abroad," said Nurmaganbetov.

"There are almost no local raw materials and we are bringing all the products from Europe, the U.S. and China. The list of our suppliers has the best suppliers of chemical raw materials. They support us and understand that we are at the stage of formation. They assist us with the development of the best formulas," said Nurmaganbetov.



Daniyar Nurmaganbetov

EDITORIAL & OPINION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

Defender of the Fatherland Day: Time to Thank Armed Forces

Such has been the success of Kazakhstan over the last 24 years that it can be easy to forget that the country is located in an unstable region. It is a tribute to Kazakhstan and its closest neighbours that they have lived in peace together since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

It is a mark as well of the good sense of the Kazakh people that the extreme and violent ideologies which have sadly taken a hold in countries not far from our borders have found no home here. Kazakhstan stands as an example of how those of different backgrounds and faiths can live together in harmony.

But peace should never be taken for granted. We can see tragically from too many parts of the world the dangers that countries face. It is why the role of the Kazakh Armed Forces in protecting our people and land from outside threats continues to be important and is rightly celebrated this week.

It was 24 years ago on May 7 that the Kazakh Armed Forces formally came into being. The date is significant as it falls in the week when countries celebrate the end of war in Europe and the bravery and sacrifice of those who fought against the evil of Nazism.

Kazakhstan was, of course, a republic within the Soviet Union at that time. But its contribution in lifting this shadow from the world was immense. More than a million men and women from Kazakhstan fought against Hitler's armies, and only half of them returned home after the war.

Fortunately our Armed Forces have not been called into action to defend our territory. But no one should doubt that they would be up to the task. Our land, air and naval forces are highly motivated, well trained and well-equipped with an increasingly high proportion of its sophisticated armaments and vehicles produced within Kazakhstan.

By boosting our domestic defence industry, not only are skills, jobs and expertise being grown which can help the development of other hi-tech industries, but it is easier to

keep a control of costs. This explains why Kazakhstan has been able to keep its military strong without major budget increases.

Indeed, President Nazarbayev has warned against the dangers of a new arms race in defence spending. He called, in his recent Manifesto, for all countries to divert resources from existing military budgets to support global sustainable development. Kazakhstan shows there is no conflict between maintaining a strong national defence force and being a consistent campaigner for peace and disarmament.

In many ways, our Armed Forces are a symbol of our country's successful foreign policy which is based on co-operation and dialogue. Kazakhstan is a founding member of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and our forces work together closely with those of other CSTO members.

But they also have a long track record of co-operation with NATO including the crucial logistic support given to its mission in Afghanistan. Among the initiatives to strengthen these links is the regular exchange programme between U.S. and Kazakh cadets who visit America's renowned West Point military academy.

The increased understanding such programmes and co-operation bring has never been more important. Our Armed Forces find themselves working increasingly with other countries on international peace-keeping missions. Kazakhstan has recognised its growing responsibility, as our economy develops, to play its part in promoting global peace and stability. Our officers are in the forefront of this work, helping protect civilian lives in the world's trouble spots.

It is this immense contribution to our country's progress and security which is celebrated across the country on Defender of the Fatherland Day on May 7. A national holiday, it gives us the chance to pause and think about the central role the Armed Forces have played and continue to play in the life and success of our country. They are a credit to our nation.

Is Kazakhstan Able to Bring EAEU and EU Together?

By Adil Kaukenov



Kazakhstan is so far the only country in the post-Soviet area that signed the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union. On May 1, the economic part of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU entered into force provisionally, while Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov has been called the best advocate of the European Union. Is Astana able to implement the plans on bringing together the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the European Union?

Currently, the Eurasian Economic Union is not only building up the system of internal cooperation between its members, but also establishing mechanisms to work with external economic players. The significance of the latter is growing against the backdrop of low commodity prices as well as the systemic crisis in the economies of the EAEU.

In these conditions, the development of multi-vector and diversified external economic ties is an imperative. However, today the obvious logic of economic benefits in different areas has been put aside by political circumstances. Here, we talk about the relations between the EAEU and the European Union. Due to the fact that Russia and Western states initiated cut-backs in economic ties across a big sector, both the Eurasian Economic Union as an integration union and separate countries therein suffer.

In this context, Kazakhstan, being considered today as the most successful state in the EAEU in terms of maintaining and developing international cooperation with all potential partners of the Union, can be both a model and a mediator in building dialogue between the EAEU and the EU. This position is proved by the highly developed cooperation between Kazakhstan and Europe, and the willingness of Astana, as the historic author of Eurasian integration, to manage and promote the dialogue between the EAEU and the EU.

Development of Kazakhstan-EU Dialogue

Today, the European Union is the biggest trade partner of Kazakhstan. Statistics say that in 2015 trade turnover between Kazakhstan and the EU amounted to \$31.3 billion, which accounts for more than 40 percent of total foreign trade of Kazakhstan. The major part of foreign direct investments attracted to the country come from the European Union (The Netherlands, France, Italy, Belgium, the United Kingdom, etc.). Furthermore, over the last decade, the trade turnover increased 13 times, the volume of European investments in the Kazakh economy – 10 times.

The great success of Kazakh diplomacy in the European direction is proved by the fact that Kazakhstan is the only country in the post-Soviet area that has signed the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union. This document, signed last December during the visit of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini to Kazakhstan, is a second-generation agreement. It covers 29

areas of cooperation, where the trade section is notable for its thorough stipulation. On March 25, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev signed a law on ratification of this agreement and since May 1, its economic part is provisionally effective.

At the same time, Kazakhstan is very active in not only establishing governmental mechanisms to improve cooperation, but also in attracting European investments and working with businesses. For example, the Spanish delegation that visited Kazakhstan recently included, besides head of the delegation, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain José Manuel García-Margallo, representatives of major Spanish companies such as INDRA, MAXAM, INECO, TECNICAL REUNIDAS, EUROFINSA and others.

Kazakhstan interacts actively with Europe in the format of cooperation with supranational bodies of the EU. For example, in mid-April, the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan and the European Commission achieved an agreement to develop a roadmap on deepening cooperation in agriculture; they also consider the transit of goods through the territory of the EAEU.

Finally, amid the crisis of confidence and economic relations between the EU and the EAEU, Kazakhstan consistently remains a constructive partner and, partially, a mediator in relations between the integration unions. It is not a coincidence that at the 13th Eurasian Media Forum held in Astana on April 22, French Ambassador Francis Etienne called Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov the best advocate of the European Union.

These words were heard after the statement by Idrissov, in which he noted that relations with the EU are of special importance for Kazakhstan and that the world has not yet created a better integration model than the European Union.

Promotion of EAEU-EU Dialogue

The progress described above in cooperation between Kazakhstan and Europe shows not only the importance of the Western vector in Astana's foreign policy, but also the general foreign policy strategy of the state. Within the Eurasian Economic Union, Kazakhstan is a flagship in promoting cooperation with other key players, including China and Iran.

At the same time, fortunately, Kazakhstan has an understanding at the highest level that in modern these conditions underlying the country's transition beyond a commodity economy and in a world in which the importance of integrational unions is growing, bilateral relations cannot fully provide Kazakhstan with the type of opportunities it could have

after lifting excessive barriers and harmonising the entire spectrum of standards covering economic cooperation.

For this period of chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the EAEU, it was proposed to announce 2016 "The year for deepening economic relations of the Union with third countries and key integration unions." Among its priorities are bridging the EAEU and the Silk Way Economic Belt, deepening cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the European Union.

In April, during a visit to the United States, President Nazarbayev informed that there were discussions with the European Council and the European Commission regarding prospects for cooperation between the EU and the EAEU. The President of Kazakhstan proposed to conduct a joint conference of the two unions for politicians and experts to clear the air in that issue. According to Nazarbayev, it is necessary to ensure mutual trade in a calm manner.

The fact that we need such an initiative is proven and demonstrated regularly by the scepticism of Europeans regarding the prospects and economic character of the EAEU, and by the regularly articulated discontent of Russia for the imposed sanctions and politicisation of economic cooperation. For example, on April 8, Speaker of the State Duma Sergei Naryshkin noted that by imposing sanctions, the European Union in fact isolated itself from the whole Eurasian integration process. And on April 13, at the enlarged session of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev said, "Now we receive more signs of interest in joint work from the European partners. Recently, they were not ready for that, but now it seems that there are such signs. We are ready for such action, but, of course, we need to act on the basis of equality, consideration of each other's interests, and mutual benefit."

In such conditions, Kazakhstan's proposal to organise a large-scale platform to exchange opinions seems to be difficult to implement, but on the other hand – very relevant, because the logic of economic interest gradually decreases the barriers of political discontent.

In this context, besides comprehensive bilateral ties, Kazakhstan maintains a high level of confidence with the European Union in political and business circles, and it has the strategic vision in the need to improve cooperation between the two integration unions. There are chances that Astana will play a key role in resuming the dialogue.

Political challenges substantially moderated the process of cooperation between the European and Eurasian Economic Unions. But today it doesn't seem relevant to discuss the revitalisation of the project "From Lisbon to Vladivostok" or the full institutional partnership of the two organisations. However, the establishment of the platform, where officials, parliament members, businesspersons and civil society of the two unions can give each other full information on their plans, projects, strategic goals and even concerns, is more than possible.

The author is an independent political scientist.



THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN IS SEEKING A SEAT ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL AS A NON-PERMANENT MEMBER FOR 2017-2018. OUR PRIORITIES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS REFLECT FOUR PRIMARY ISSUES FACING THE WORLD TODAY: FOOD SECURITY, WATER SECURITY, ENERGY SECURITY AND NUCLEAR SECURITY.

IN THE 24 YEARS SINCE OUR INDEPENDENCE, KAZAKHSTAN HAS WORKED TIRELESSLY TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES IN OUR OWN COUNTRY AND BEYOND. AMONG MANY OTHER INITIATIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS, KAZAKHSTAN IS CURRENTLY:

ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST GRAIN PRODUCERS AND WHEAT EXPORTERS. WE HAVE DISTRIBUTED WHEAT AND FOOD TO NATIONS IN NEED.

A CONSTRUCTIVE INNOVATOR IN WATER SECURITY COOPERATION AND TECHNOLOGIES. WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN THE RESTORATION OF THE ARAL SEA.

AN ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF DEVELOPING A GREEN ECONOMY AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES THROUGH OUR GREEN BRIDGE INITIATIVE AND AS HOSTS OF EXPO 2017, THEME OF WHICH IS "FUTURE ENERGY".

A GLOBAL LEADER IN NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION, DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY, AN INITIATOR OF ADOPTING A UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD AND A SPONSOR OF THE ATOM PROJECT, A WORLDWIDE PETITION CAMPAIGN TO PERMANENTLY END NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING.

These issues are complex and interdependent. They require global cooperation and relationship building. Kazakhstan has come a long way in a short time because we know that cooperation is the key to success. We are dedicated to knowledge and resource sharing in order to help make the world a better, more secure place for its citizens.

The achievement and maintenance of international peace and global security are paramount to the success of the planet and its people. In Kazakhstan, we are ready to do our part to ensure that success as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

For more information and a video on Kazakhstan's initiatives, please visit mfa.gov.kz.



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OPINIONS

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Refugees and Migrants: A Crisis of Solidarity

By Ban Ki-moon

This September, the United Nations General Assembly will bring together world leaders to address one of the leading challenges of our time: responding to large movements of refugees and migrants.

War, human rights violations, underdevelopment, climate change and natural disasters are leading more people to leave their homes than at any time since we have had reliable data. More than 60 million people – half of them children – have fled violence or persecution and are now refugees and internally displaced persons. An additional 225 million are migrants who have left their countries in search of better opportunities or simply for survival.

But this is not a crisis of numbers; it is a crisis of solidarity. Almost 90 per cent of the world's refugees are hosted in developing countries. Eight countries host more than half the world's refugees. Just ten countries provide 75



per cent of the UN's budget to ease and resolve their plight.

With equitable responsibility sharing, there would be no crisis for host countries. We can afford to help, and we know what we need to do to handle large movements of refugees and migrants. Yet too often, we let fear and ignorance get in the way. Human needs end up overshadowed, and xenophobia speaks louder than reason.

Countries on the front lines of this crisis are struggling every day

to meet the challenge. On September 19, the General Assembly will hold a high-level meeting to strengthen our efforts for the longer term. To help the international community seize this opportunity, I have just issued a report, "In Safety and Dignity", with recommendations on how the world can take more effective collective action.

We need to begin by recognizing our common humanity. Millions of people on the move have been exposed to extreme suffering. Thousands have died in the Mediterranean, on the Andaman Sea, in the Sahel and in Central America. Refugees and migrants are not "others"; they are as diverse as the human family itself. Movements of people are a quintessentially global phenomenon that demands a global sharing of responsibility.

Second, far from being a threat, refugees and migrants contribute to the growth and development of host countries as well as their countries of origin. The better new arrivals are integrated, the greater their contribution to society will

be. We need more measures to promote the social and economic inclusion of refugees and migrants.

Third, political and community leaders have a responsibility to speak out against discrimination and intolerance, and to counter those who seek to win votes through fear mongering and divisiveness. This is a time to build bridges, not walls, between people.

Fourth, we have to give greater attention to addressing the drivers of forced displacement. The United Nations continues to strengthen its work to prevent conflict, resolve disputes peacefully and address violations of human rights before they escalate. One powerful new tool is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a blueprint agreed last year by all 193 members of the United Nations that includes a strong focus on justice, institutions and peaceful societies.

Fifth, we need to strengthen the international systems that manage large movements of people so that they uphold human rights norms and provide the necessary protections. States must honour

their international legal obligations, including the 1951 Refugee Convention. Countries where refugees arrive first should not be left to shoulder the demands alone. My report proposes a "global compact on responsibility sharing for refugees".

There is a pressing need to do more to combat smugglers and traffickers, to rescue and protect people en route, and to ensure their safety and dignity at borders. More orderly and legal pathways for migrants and refugees will be crucial, so that desperate people are not forced to turn to criminal networks in their search for safety.

The number of migrants is expected to continue to grow as a result of trade, labour and skill shortages, the ease of travel and communications, rising inequality and climate change. My report proposes important measures to improve global governance in this area, including through a "global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration".

Refugee and migrant crises are far from insurmountable, but they

cannot be addressed by states acting alone. Today, millions of refugees and migrants are being deprived of their basic rights, and the world is depriving itself of the full benefits of what refugees and migrants have to offer.

The World Humanitarian Summit I am convening in Istanbul May 23 and 24 will seek new commitments from states and others to work together to protect people and build resilience. I expect the September 19 meeting of the General Assembly to point the way toward solutions to the most immediate refugee and migration challenges, and commit world leaders to greater global cooperation on these issues.

Human beings have moved from place to place across the millennia, by choice and under duress, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Only by upholding our duty to protect those fleeing persecution and violence, and by embracing the opportunities that refugees and migrants offer to their new societies, will we be able to achieve a more prosperous and fairer future for all.

The author is the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan's Contribution to Settlement of Iranian Nuclear Programme Issue

By Marat Shibutov

The first half of 2015 was marked by a great success in international diplomacy: the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme. The second half of 2015 and 2016 demonstrate its implementation. This landmark diplomatic agreement has its major authors: Iran, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the P5+1, as well as minor authors with less significant and obvious roles. However, one should remember that though minor participants were not the main drivers of the agreement, without them the process would have been delayed. Kazakhstan was among these participants, and we are going to consider its role.

Why Does Iran Need a Nuclear Programme?

Iran's nuclear programme was launched by Shah Reza Pahlavi back in the 1950s, and it was continued by the Islamic Republic, following the overthrow of the Shah.

There were several reasons for Iran to look to nuclear power as a solution to its energy and other needs. Firstly, without coal and hydro resources as crucial energy sources, Iran had to use oil and gas for its power plants. As of 2006, 75 percent of electricity in Iran was produced from natural gas, 18 percent from oil and 7 percent from hydropower plants. Iran generated almost all of its electricity from gas and oil.

Second, Iran needed power for its fast-growing population. From about 19 million in 1956, Iran's population increased to 75 million in 2011. Such growth was accompanied by both industrialisation and urbanisation – the number of industries and the number of cities increased. This led to the continuous growth of energy consumption.

Third, Iran needed to make optimal use of its oil and natural gas, which are both valuable commodities for oil refineries and the chemical industry and an important export product.

Fourth, Iran lacked close foreign electricity sources that could regularly supply cheap electricity. Most of Iran's neighbours have either power shortages or very bad relations with the country.

Finally, nuclear power plants are considered to be the source of power generation most adapted to military use, making them also a security issue – or asset. These plants can accumulate fuel reserves for several years, which thermal power plants cannot do; plus, fuel volumes are so small they don't require special transport and are easily protected.

In Iran, the need for nuclear energy was clear: it would solve many problems for the country and make it the leader of the region. But in



implementing their programme, two problems arose.

First, Iran chose to create the full nuclear cycle, not just build a nuclear power plant and procure nuclear fuel for it. That is why concerns were raised that not only could fuel be produced, but also highly-enriched uranium for nuclear bombs. This choice was based on the fact that American and German corporations unilaterally terminated contracts with Iran after the Islamic revolution and did not fulfill their obligations.

Second, Iran's theocratic government has not been well-perceived by its neighbours – a year after the revolution, Iran and Iraq went to war, a war which would last eight years. Iran also played a role in controversial activities in Lebanon, Syria and other countries. Iran had become a leader in the Middle East and the Islamic World many years before. Its resources and achievements are great, but with nuclear weapons, it would be unstoppable. This prospect scared many countries.

The development of the Iranian nuclear programme led to a situation in which it became not only an Iranian or regional issue, but a major problem of global politics. Thus, of course, it attracted attention.

In 2003, the IAEA, several Western countries and the UN Security Council launched negotiations on the Iranian nuclear programme.

How and Why Were Negotiations on the Iranian Nuclear Programme Conducted?

Negotiations with Iran started when IAEA inspectors found evidence of enriched uranium and began to suspect that Iran's nuclear programme also had military objectives.

Thus began a long process of sanctions and negotiations. In 2005, the U.S. adopted sanctions against Iran; in 2006, the UN Security Council followed; in 2010, the European Union. In 2006, the P5+1 negotiation group was established, encompassing the U.S., Russia, the U.K., France, China and Germany. The group began to negotiate with Iran on behalf of the world community.

Under sanctions and participating in hit and miss negotiations, Iran continued to develop its nuclear programme. In late 2013, it launched the Fordow enrichment plant, which could produce uranium at a more than 20 percent concentration, making it applicable for creating a nuclear

weapon. This momentous event stopped the sanctions and proved that the parties must come to an agreement.

In 2013 came a breakthrough in negotiations, and the P5+1 and Iran came to a compromise. Almaty hosted two rounds of negotiations, Istanbul hosted one round, and 2013 ended with the signing of the Joint Plan, which stipulated the lifting of sanctions in exchange for capping the concentration of the uranium Iran could produce at 5 percent and freezing the construction of new uranium enrichment centres by Iran.

The final turning point was achieved in Vienna in 2015 when the parties signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme, which guaranteed exclusively peaceful goals of the Iranian nuclear programme.

The plan ensures the gradual and full lifting of sanctions of the UN Security Council and international and national sanctions related to the Iranian nuclear programme, including steps to provide access to such areas as trade, technologies, finance and energy.

Kazakhstan's Role in Settling the Iranian Nuclear Issue

During the negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran, Kazakhstan improved its relations with Iran step by step, slowly becoming a major supplier of grain to the country. Total turnover peaked at \$2.5 billion in 2007, which is similar to the trade between Russia and Iran. Moreover, between 2009–2011, Kazakhstan built its part of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railroad, which was officially opened in December 2014. This railroad, the second way for Iran to bypass the sea blockade (the other was via the Caspian Sea) made the new route very valuable. Thus, by the end of the negotiations on the nuclear programme, Kazakhstan had become a trusted partner of Iran.

Now, let's talk about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme itself – why it is interesting for Kazakhstan.

The main aspect of the JCPOA for Kazakhstan is in paragraphs 5 and 7, section A 'Enrichment, Enrichment R&D, Stockpiles'.

They imply that uranium, except natural and nuclear fuel pellets, must not be stockpiled in Iran in more or less substantial quantities. On the other hand, the Iranian nuclear programme does not stop nuclear facilities, which require uranium, from being maintained in its territory. Obviously, the P5+1 guarantees that Iran will be able to buy both natural uranium and hexafluoride on the market. Here, the role of Kazakhstan becomes clear.

A small remark: trade in uranium is a much-regulated and politically-motivated market – one does not simply buy a physical quantity of uranium. Any deal here is only the outcome of political, not economic agreements. As for the list of uranium exporters, it is short and includes Kazakhstan, Canada, Australia, Niger, Namibia, Russia, and Uzbekistan.

Others produce uranium only for their own needs. Almost the same trend is related to the companies which produce uranium – they also belong to a small group of countries: Kazatomprom (Kazakhstan), Cameco (Canada), Areva (France), ARMZ – Uranium One (Russia), Rio Tinto (Australia – the United Kingdom), BHP Billiton (Australia – the United Kingdom), Paladin Energy (Australia), Navoi MMK (Uzbekistan).

Excluding those countries which initiated sanctions against Iran and treated it quite negatively, like France and the United Kingdom, in principle, Iran can buy uranium only from three countries – Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan. At the same time, Uzbekistan does not produce much and maintains neutrality in many international issues; thus, among guaranteed suppliers there are only Kazakhstan and Russia, but Russia one time did not supply the promised and partially-paid-for S-300 missile system.

In general, despite such a big choice Iran has no other options but Russia and Kazakhstan. On December 27, 2015, Kazatomprom sold the first 60 tonnes of natural uranium to Iran on commercial conditions as the specified Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) compensation for removing low enriched uranium (LEU) from the country. Apparently, this trade will continue and will help Iran to further buy natural uranium and enrich it, then export it to the world market – a very beneficial business which will help to maintain science and technologies.

On the other hand, Iran also needs nuclear fuel which can only be produced from LEU; notably, in big amounts – one core load of VVER-1,000 is about 75 tonnes. That means uranium hexafluoride is needed, but it cannot be brought to the country. Now, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) LEU Bank takes the lead.

IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan

Before adopting the JCPOA on the Iranian nuclear programme, Kazakhstan made, perhaps, one of its most interesting diplomatic deals.

On April 27, 2015, the Kazakh government approved the agreement with the IAEA to establish the IAEA LEU Bank in the country. It

was preceded by a large amount of work.

Given that the list of countries providing commercial services on enrichment is very short (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), as the list of countries producing nuclear fuel, this market has always been monopolised and has always been under the threat of deficit. What if the market doesn't sell LEU or nuclear fuel – developing countries cannot independently produce them for their nuclear power plants (NPPs) and they will have to pay any price set for them or may undermine their energy plans. At the same time, the United Nations (UN) Security Council and the nuclear club don't want developing countries to build their own enrichment facilities – it is fraught with risks of nuclear proliferation. That is why in 2006, the world community started to think and propose options of an LEU Bank. The situation was developed in the following way:

On November 26, 2010, the IAEA developed the document "Assurance of Supply: Establishment of an IAEA Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank for the Supply of LEU to Member States."

On May 20, 2011 the IAEA announced a tender to choose the country which would host the bank.

On July 29, 2011, Kazakhstan submitted its application for hosting the bank, attaching information on two sites – the Ulba Metallurgical Plant and the National Nuclear Centre in Kurchatov.

In March 2012, upon the outcomes of the open competition Kazakhstan was the only candidate country to host the bank.

In May 2012, the IAEA delegation visited Ust Kamenogorsk and Astana. From July 2012–March 2013, the sides held, in total, seven rounds of negotiations on the agency's draft agreement between the IAEA and Kazakhstan on the establishment of the LEU Bank in Kazakhstan.

On August 27, 2015, the IAEA and Kazakhstan signed the agreement.

Technically, the LEU Bank is just part of the uranium hexafluoride stockpile of the Ulba Metallurgical Plant, which has its own security and 60 full cylinders (up to 90 tonnes) of uranium hexafluoride (UF₆) with nominal enrichment of U-235 up to and including 4.95 percent.

Economically, it is an assurance of a nuclear fuel supply at market prices and without limitations for all developing countries.

Legally, it is a Kazakh legal entity which must ensure control over LEU for IAEA as well as protect and transport it to the Kazakh boundaries.

Politically, it is part of the big system designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in the world, similar to its other parts in Russia and the United Kingdom.

Thus, Kazakhstan also became a host country for an IAEA unit, like the laboratories in Austria and Monaco, the research centre in Italy and the regional offices in Canada, Japan, Switzerland and the U.S.

How Did Settlement of the Iranian Issues Influence Kazakhstan: Pros and Cons

Looking back, we need to clearly identify the advantages and disadvantages for Kazakhstan as to the outcome of the Iranian nuclear programme deal.

Let's start with pros:

Relations between Kazakhstan and Iran reached a new milestone; cementing them in documents in 2016 is to be complimented by strengthened economic cooperation.

Iran will be a market for our natural uranium for many years.

Kazakhstan became part of the important system for LEU and nuclear non-proliferation. The logical link "Kazakhstan-Uranium" becomes increasingly strong around the world, though inside the country people think more about oil.

Kazakhstan took a real part in big politics, even if it played a secondary role. However, it was noted by the U.S. and other participants in the negotiations. Identity in such process means a lot.

Establishing such an important international facility in the East Kazakhstan region is an additional contribution of our country, and this region in particular, to international security.

Of course, such a large scale process has its cons:

Higher competition with Iranian oil on the Asian markets, even if small, because Iran will increase its production rate. On the other hand, the Iranian oil will be sold legally and now, Iran has no reason to sell it below market prices.

The IAEA LEU Bank triggers the outburst of radiophobia among Kazakh people, but it is mostly due to the hysteria caused by the illiterate mass media. This problem is purely local and can be solved.

Costs on road construction and on diplomatic and other actions are not recovered – it requires more time. We need to attract carriers and freights to ensure proceeds from the transit.

Conclusions

The Kazakh contribution to the settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue was not so big against the general background, but for the country itself it was a major foreign policy achievement over the entire history of its independence. The country has been successfully using the existing resources (uranium, geographic location) and building a persistently and consistently-general multidimensional strategy for about eight years. Kazakhstan managed to achieve what it wants and we hope that it will repeat such success.

The author is an independent political analyst.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

Astana, Warsaw Seek Closer Cooperation in Political, Economic Spheres

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev met May 5 at the Akorda with Poland's Marshal of the Senate Stanislaw Karczewski, where the parties discussed prospects of economic, investment and inter-parliamentary cooperation, reported the President's press office.

"We have a great respect for what is being done in Poland. Your country is one of Europe's leaders in terms of development and we want to have close political relations with Warsaw," said Nazarbayev.

He added that last September, on the margins of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, he conferred with Polish President Andrzej Duda when the latter invited Nazarbayev to visit his country.

"I hope that this visit will become a new point in further deepening our good and friendly relations," said the Kazakh President.

Karczewski thanked the head of state for his contribution in developing bilateral cooperation and noted the Polish government is preparing for the Kazakh leader's visit to Warsaw.

Kazakh Senate Chairman Kassym-Jomart Tokayev also held talks with his Polish colleague. During their dialogue, the sides discussed issues of Kazakh-Polish cooperation and exchanged views on pressing international problems.

Tokayev and Karczewski agreed to continue the inter-parliamentary discourse and interaction between the upper chambers of the two parliaments. The parties also noted their nations' similar approaches on regional and global security.

"Poland is one of the most developed states of Eastern Europe and has a great potential. Kazakhstan is interested in further fruitful development of bilateral cooperation. President Nursultan Nazarbayev personally did much to strengthen the mutually-beneficial relations between the two countries, whether in the field of political dialogue or trade, economic and cultural fields. Our task is to continue working in this direction," said Tokayev.

Karczewski noted Poland considers Kazakhstan a strategic partner and intends to promote cooperation in the political, economic, trade and investment spheres. He added Poland appreciates Nazarbayev's Manifesto "The World. The 21st Century."

"We fully share the President's opinion which is expressed in the

manifesto, that only peace and disarmament can positively influence the attitudes of the world," he said.

In addition to the meetings between Nazarbayev and Karczewski, the visit included meetings with Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) Chairman Baktykozha Izmukhambetov and Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK) Deputy Chair Yeraly Tugzhanov at the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation. As part of the visit, the Polish delegation is also to go to Taraz to visit the graves of the Polish soldiers who died in the south of Kazakhstan during World War II as they were preparing to form the so called Anders Army to fight the Nazis and Kokshetau where they will meet with the ethnic Poles leaving in the area.

Most Poles living in Kazakhstan are descendants of those deported



from Central Ukraine in the 1930s-40s. During this difficult period, Kazakhstan became a homeland for peoples who suffered from the totalitarian regime of the Soviet government. Karczewski expressed his appreciation in a letter penned to Tokayev on March 1, the Day of Gratitude celebrated in the nation for the first time this year.

"Paying tribute to our compatriots and their suffering, we would like to express our gratitude to the Kazakhs, who in difficult times accepted them as brothers," he wrote.

Poland's trade turnover with Kazakhstan accounts for 70 percent of Poland's total with Central Asian countries. Bilateral trade by the end of 2015 amounted to \$1.13 billion with Kazakh exports amounting to \$789.2 billion, and imports reaching \$340.8 billion, according to the Kazakh Agency of Statistics.

Kazakh Military Observers Return from UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire



Photo credit: Birens.kz

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Kazakh Armed Forces Major Akylbai Kussainov and Captain Rustem Suleimenov returned from Côte d'Ivoire where they served as UN mili-

tary observers for one year, according to the Kazakh country's Ministry of Defence. They inspected military units, conducted surveillance, patrolled and performed other tasks during the mission.

An acute political crisis oc-

curred in the West African country in 2010-2011. Only the United Nations and global community acknowledged the head of state after presidential elections, the ministry reported. UN's Security Council made a decision to introduce the UN's subdivision to resolve this problem.

"Monitoring UN's mandate and requirements fulfilment, agreements signed between the government and the UN are the main tasks of a military observer in UN mission. We also inspected military units, conducted surveillance, conducted patrolling, air patrolling during the mission. Kazakhstan's officers and preparation of our officers is being highly evaluated among those officers who fulfil UN missions," said Kussainov.

Six officers are currently doing the service as military ob-

servers in UN's peacekeeping missions: five in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and one officer in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

"Impartiality is most important. A military observer is considered a civilian in a uniform. We work for civilians, and in this regard cannot take a weapon in our hands. A military observer must make a decision by himself, whether to take protection with him or not and assess the situation in case of need," noted the major.

In peacekeeping operations, military observers are UN personnel and comply with the principle of neutrality by not supporting either conflicting side. They watch for peace agreements to be complied with. This is a small in number contingent of military personnel, which thereby makes a contribution to ensuring safety all over the world.

FM Idrissov Lays Out President's Peace Initiatives at CICA Meeting in Beijing

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov told the April 28 fifth foreign ministers' meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Beijing that the world is experiencing a crisis of confidence between global players caused by a polarity of their interests.

"Indiscriminate use of economic sanctions leads to additional financial and economic costs, as well as intensifies social tensions. The world stands on the brink of another arms race, the growing figure of the world's defence spending confirms this fact," Idrissov told the conference held under the theme "Promoting safety through dialogue."

Idrissov outlined initiatives proposed by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to restore confidence in international relations, including the Manifesto "The World. 21st Century." He also stressed the role of the United Nations in fighting terrorism and the importance of the early adoption of a comprehensive UN convention against terrorism as well as the creation of a global antiterrorist network (coalition) under the auspices of the UN initiated by Nazarbayev.

Idrissov also explained the main aspects of Kazakhstan's proposal to create an Organisation for Security and Development in Asia on the basis of the CICA.

"I am confident that the work of this organisation will allow [us] to concentrate our joint efforts on building a safe and economically stable Asia, whereas its decisions will be made solely on the basis of consensus," Idrissov noted.

Idrissov also met on the sidelines of the conference with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss bilateral cooperation, upcoming bilateral meetings as well as regional and international

issues. Idrissov also met with the foreign ministers of Russia, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

President of China Xi Jinping also spoke to the gathering, reiterating China's adherence to UN Security Council resolutions and its commitment to the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, securing peace and stability on the peninsula and resolving issues through dialogue and negotiation.

Xi urged all the parties involved to exercise restraint, avoid provocation and pull the nuclear issue back to a track of dialogue and negotiations.

Xi also said China is committed to peace and stability in the South China Sea. While China will safeguard its sovereignty, rights and interests, it is willing to peacefully solve disputes through friendly consultation and dialogue with the countries directly involved, he said, according to Xinhua.

The conference allowed CICA members to discuss regional and global security, current threats and CICA's role in maintaining peace and stability in Asia. Particular attention was paid to increasing cooperation within CICA.

Conference participants adopted a declaration recording CICA members' cooperative approaches to implementing the five dimensions in accordance with the CICA catalogue of confidence measures.

The event was attended by the foreign ministers of 26 member states of the CICA and eight delegations of observer countries, as well as representatives of international organisations such as the UN, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), League of Arab States (LAG), TURKPA, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and others.

President Nazarbayev first proposed the establishment of CICA at the UN General Assembly in October 1992.

Kazakhstan Supports New Silk Road and One Belt, One Road Initiatives

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan supports the New Silk Road and One Belt, One Road initiatives and is implementing its own economic policy – Nurly Zhol – in accordance with the long-term vision of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, stated Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United States Kairat Umarov at the April 28-29 Trans-Caspian Trade and Transit-Corridor East-West forum at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) of Johns Hopkins University.

As reported by the press service of the Foreign Ministry of Kazakhstan, more than 200 business and regional experts attended the event, which was organised by the embassies of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey to the United States with the support of

the World Bank, business associations and corporations.

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Tong said he encourages U.S. efforts to renovate the infrastructure of countries in the region, to open transport corridors as well as to diversify the economy. According to him, the U.S. initiative for ministerial dialogue C5+1, aimed at the development of trade and economic relations between the U.S. and five Central Asian countries, also contributes to a more effective use of trade routes and logistics centres opening along the new Silk Road.

"Modernisation of infrastructure has been developing rapidly in Kazakhstan, aided by timely implementation of the programme documents of development," said Vice-President of Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) Kanat Alpysbayev. Positioning Kazakhstan as



a bridge between East and West as well as North and South, KTZ's representative discussed construction of the Khorgos-Eastern Gate Special Economic Zone as well as modernisation of the Aktau port and the opening of a logistics centre in Kazakhstan and construction of new railways.

Each delegation, which included representatives of state bodies and national companies, gave a single promise that through the joint reduction of transit fees, simplification of customs procedures, as well as improving the efficiency of logistics operations, ground transportation of goods between China and Europe is becoming more competitive.

In this regard, American logistics, infrastructure and high-tech companies have been invited to participate in the implementation of infrastructure projects and the use of trade routes in Eurasia. Vice-President of the U.S. Cham-

ber of Commerce Gary Litman confirmed the readiness of American business to be engaged in a dialogue with governments of the region on the use of opening business opportunities.

Given the success of the event, one of its initiators and moderator, Chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at SAIS Fred Starr, offered to hold this forum on an annual basis in Washington. Participating countries reacted positively to this proposal.

According to the foreign ministry of Kazakhstan, delegates of the four countries also briefed the U.S. Congress on April 29 about economic processes in Eurasia. Their colleagues from the State Department reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to long-term cooperation with Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey for the implementation of existing plans, initiatives and infrastructure projects.



Nation&Capital

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Kazakhstan Launches Unique Tourism Centre in Shymkent



By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The Ontustik Tourism Centre opened in Shymkent April 29. The centre provides information for tourists and gathers representatives of tour operators, guides and interpreters, migration services and coach companies. In such a manner, tourists can use the services at a single location.

Akim (Governor) of South Kazakhstan Beibut Atamkulov said the region has many tourism opportunities and the new centre will help tourism development. A day-and-night call centre operates in the Ontustik Tourism Centre, which is unique in Kazakhstan. All services are free.

The establishment of the centre is timely because of EXPO 2017

and Universiade 2017 and the administration of South Kazakhstan plans to improve the operation of tour operators, instruct volunteers and enhance access to information about tourist attractions, as well as improve the quality of services and tourism routes.

The administration of South Kazakhstan plans to reconstruct the territory of Mausoleum of Khoja

Ahmed Yassawi and build tourism infrastructure to attract more tourists interested in historical and cultural tourism in Turkestan, a town 150 kilometres north of Shymkent, the regional capital of South Kazakhstan.

Turkestan is considered a spiritual centre of Turkic peoples and the oldest capital of the Kazakh Khanate. Today, the Silk Ways routes, which pass through the territory of South Kazakhstan, attract strong interest. The administration plans to construct bazaar, guest homes and cafes in an Asian style. It is planned to build ethnographic towns as well.

It is also planned to develop healing and health-improving tourism in the region because it has the Saryagash resort with mineral and thermal waters. The plan includes construction of a resort town with new hotels, SPA centres, outdoor and indoor pools, a water world, a bazaar and shopping centres. Saryagash is located 120 kilometres south of Shymkent.

Kaskasu Mountain skiing resort in the Tolebi district is another promising project, which can create new jobs, develop social infrastructure and increase investment in the region.

Thousands Ride in Astana to Commemorate Victory in WWII in Europe



Photo credit: Kazpravda.kz

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – More than 2,000 people, including well-known professional athletes, participated in a bike ride in Astana May 7 to commemorate the 71st anniversary of the Soviet people's Victory in the Great Patriotic War against Nazi Germany (and the Second World War in Europe).

The race started from the square in front of the Saltanat Saraiy (Pal-

ace of Festivities) and concluded at the Saryarka Velodrome.

The ride was part of the nationwide Victory charity project designed to pay respect to the veterans of the Great Patriotic War.

It also gave an official start to the summer cycling season in the capital. At the finish line, organisers awarded the winners in multiple categories, with some winners receiving bicycles.

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Preparations for Brazil 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Full Swing

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The Kazakh National Olympic Committee (NOC) launched a special campaign April 30 to mark the 100 days until the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. An event organised with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Akimat (city administration) was aimed at promoting the Olympic Movement and supporting the athletes.

The federations, including boxing, cycling, judo, taekwondo, tennis, triathlon, weightlifting and wrestling, conducted master classes, competitions and autograph and photo sessions at the special area.

Akim (Mayor) Adilbek Dzhakysybekov, Minister of Culture and Sports Arystanbek Mukhamediuly, NOC General Secretary Daniyar Abulgazin and famous Kazakh athletes Arman Chilmanov, Lyazzat Kungebayeva, Yuri Melnichenko, Gani Seidildayev, Dariga Shakimova, Yuri Shukin, Georgi Tsursumia, Daniyar Yeleussinov, Yerlan Yestek and Askhat Zhitekeyev also participated in the campaign.

“We hope our athletes and our pride will bring gold medals this year. I am glad that there are a lot of children [here] today. This is a good example for them to be engaged in sports in the future and

become full citizens of our country. The National Olympic Committee would like to thank our Ministry and the Akimat of Astana for their support and attention to the development of mass sports,” said Abulgazin at the opening ceremony.

Kazakh athletes have already won 82 Olympic licenses. The protection of clean athletes, expansion of international cooperation, modernisation of the organisation by implementing the best practices of sports management and strengthening the role of athletes and national federations remain NOC's priority tasks.

In mid-April, NOC President Timur Kulibayev met with International Olympic Committee

(IOC) President Thomas Bach in Lausanne. The organisation heads discussed developing the global Olympic Movement and increasing the role of the Central Asian region in promoting its values, global cooperation with international organisations such as the UN and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), implementing the recommendations of the Olympic Agenda 2020 and the role of sports in the preservation of peace.

“Today, sports are one of the most effective instruments for promoting the social and cultural development of society. We fully recognise its growing contribution to the preservation of peace and

development of society through the promotion of the principles of tolerance and respect, gender equality and social integration of youth,” said Kulibayev.

Bach supported NOC's plans to strengthen the role of the national federations, stressing they are the driving force in sports development.

“The National Olympic Committee of Kazakhstan did a great job to adopt the charter and bring all regulatory documents in full compliance with the Olympic Charter in close cooperation with the IOC within a six-month period. It is a great achievement and the first step that lays the foundation for effective work of the sports industry,” he said.

One of NOC's priorities is the fight for fair and clean sports. Because one of the Regional Anti-Doping Organisation is located within the country, the measures to improve the internal system of doping control are becoming even more important and Kazakhstan is playing an important role in developing the anti-doping movement in Central Asia.

New equipment was installed in the anti-doping laboratory in Almaty. It complies with the World Anti-Doping Agency's requirements and is highly sensitive to the doping agents, ensuring the high reliability of research results.



Photo credit: Vesti.kz

‘Stay in Touch with the Dutch’ – KLM Launches New Flights to Astana

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Royal Dutch Airlines KLM has expanded its air traffic network by adding the Kazakh capital to its itineraries in addition to the existing route to and from Almaty. The new flights began May 3.

“We are very pleased to announce the opening of a new KLM route to Astana, which will complement the existing flight connection between Amsterdam and our other destination in Kazakhstan – Almaty city. The introduction of a new eighth destina-



tion in addition to Salt Lake City, Genoa, Ibiza, Dresden, Southampton, Inverness and

Valencia confirms the KLM strategy to develop the route network for its customers,”

President and CEO of KLM Peter Elbers said.

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THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

ASTANA OPERA

- May 14 at 6 p.m. Romeo and Juliette, Ballet
- May 17 at 7 p.m. Birzhan Sara, Opera
- May 19 at 7 p.m. Karagoz, Ballet
- May 21 at 6 p.m. Viva l'Opera, Opera
- May 22 at 6 p.m. Gala Ballet

KORME EXHIBITION HALL

- May 14 at 8 p.m. Evening of Professional Boxing

SHANYRAK ART HOUSE

- May 15 at 8 a.m. Yoga Club Get-Together

BURABAI

- May 15 at 9 a.m. Eco-Picnic at Burabai Resort

GORKY RUSSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

- May 18 at 7 p.m. Master and Margaritta, Spectacle
- May 20 at 7 p.m. Mixed Feeling, Spectacle

KAZAKHSTAN CONCERT HALL

- May 18 at 7 p.m. Gakku Musical Award and Concert

NATIONAL ACADEMIC LIBRARY

- May 21-31 from 9 a.m. Rise - Exhibition of Karipbek Kuyukov

PEOPLE

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10th-Grader from Aktobe Translates Harry Potter into Kazakh



By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Aktobe Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS) student Assylai Seitenova has translated the first of Harry Potter books into Kazakh to help foreigners learn the language and make the series available for her compatriots in the

native tongue, national television broadcast Kazakh TV reports.

“During the translation, I faced a lot of problems,” Seitenova said in an interview on Kazakh TV. “It was too hard to translate from the original language into Kazakh. And of course, my English teacher Akbota [Abisheva] helped

me. Many of my friends are really interested in [this project] and in such an attractive cover. It does attract people as it is very nice.”

According to the 10th grader this project took her three months and drew much hype among the people. She is planning to continue her work and will translate other books of the series in the future with the help of her English teacher.

“We were translating from the original language into Kazakh,” Abisheva said. “It was a difficult job. During the process, we learned spoken English, compared it with the Russian translation and then created the text in Kazakh. Our main goal was popularisation of the Kazakh language among foreign students and colleagues, who want to learn Kazakh. We thought the world best-seller will be especially interesting in the learning process.”

Currently her translation of “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” can be downloaded from the Internet. Another NIS student Olzhas Yessenbayev helped with filling in creative content and graphics.

Both school students are not after fame or money, but are only interested in promoting the Kazakh language.

Female University Cadets Dance Becomes Social Media Sensation



By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – More than 100 female university cadets congratulated their male counterparts on the eve of the Defender of the Fatherland Day, celebrated in Kazakhstan on May 7.

The cadets shaped a number seven – to highlight the date – and danced under the tunes of the famous song by Tez Cadey “Seve.” What started out as almost ‘the

usual training day’ in the military turned out to be a social media hit in the country as university students lured viewers into the positive dance in the clip.

The video then continues with eye-catching boot-dancing and moves, blowing kisses and smiling at the end.

The short recording was a reply to the International Women’s Day flash-mob on March 8 performed by men.

Defender of the Fatherland Day is celebrated in Russia and some other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on Feb. 23, however, Kazakhstan marks it on May 7, the day of the establishment of country’s Armed Forces in 1992.

The holiday is usually celebrated with military parades, concerts and other events throughout the country and is accompanied with big fireworks each year.

BI Group Employee Is Almaty Marathon Champion

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – BI Group employee Aidyn Kasen recently became the undisputed champion of the fifth Almaty charity marathon. He covered the race in 2 hours, 42 minutes and 58 seconds and the victory was his first at the 42-kilometre distance. Kasen, who has been

interested in running for quite a while, previously participated in different races and won half (21 kilometre) marathons.

“I was engaged in athletics from sixth-seventh grade, starting from the six-kilometre distance then bigger and bigger. This is my sixth marathon already. My impression from the marathon is only positive! First, I ran with the leaders

and at the 30th kilometre they began to lag behind and I eventually managed to come out running first. I am very pleased by the support from my colleagues. Thank you BI Group! We have a great team!” said Kasen, according to Tengrinews.kz.

The event offered races at several distances – a 42 kilometre, 195 metre classic marathon; 21

kilometre, 97 metre half marathon; three kilometres for kids and Ekiden marathon relay involving a team of six, reported the news agency. A 10-kilometre Nordic walk was this year’s novelty special feature.

“For five years, athletes and running enthusiasts have been waiting for the last Sunday of April to run the treasured kilometres in Almaty

and experience an incredible energy of sports celebration and will-power,” wrote Tengrinews.kz.

The race, with more than 30 runners, started at the Park of the First President and ended in the stadium city centre. People gathered from all over Kazakhstan and other countries, participants and supporters staged flash mobs and dance warm-ups and drones flew

in the sky to capture the moment, according to the report.

“BI Group became one of the largest and creative companies among the marathon participants. Race participants in orange T-shirts and a cheerleading team wearing white were banging drums, dancing an athletic dance, waving flags and shouting the company’s motto while escorting their runners to the start,” said the news agency.

Ninety-four BI Group employees participated in the various distances, with 13 running a full marathon, including company head Aidyn Rakhimbayev.

The BI Marathon, a charity amateur race hosted by the construction company, will be held in the capital May 28 to support a healthy lifestyle and treatment for children with cerebral palsy.

“We began preparing for the marathon in the winter at the beginning of 2016... All funds will be handed over to Zhuldyzai charity fund. Online registration on the marathon’s official website, bi-marathon.kz, will be opened soon. Come to Astana and run to a victory along with us!” said Rakhimbayev, according to Tengrinews.kz.



Aidyn Kasen



Photo: Tengrinews.kz



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CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

Almaty Marks 100th Anniversary of Music Legends



Chingiz Kapin

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Happy People Sing, a musical revue dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Frank Sinatra and Edith Piaf, will be



Iren Aravina

held May 16 at the Lermontov State Russian Drama Theatre in Almaty. The performance features one of the most popular and sought-after Kazakh actors Chingiz Kapin as Sinatra and actress

Aisulu Azimbayeva portraying Piaf.

The production is a collaboration of musicologist and singer Iren Aravina, who wrote the script, and ARTISHOCK Theatre actress and director Galina Pyanova, who is staging the performance. An improvisation with live performance and choreography, it is unlike typical presentations on the local stage. The feast for jazz devotees is presented by renowned band Jazz House, with principal vocal parts performed by Aravina and Alexei Timofeyev.

The play is a kind of journey through Piaf's and Sinatra's careers. The destinies of both vocalists always excited historians, writers and filmmakers in the theatre and cinema. Although there are many performances and films about each singer individually, none has been presented showing them together.

"This is not my first project, as I produced some musical performances with different ensembles. But this is the first time I have worked on such a large-scale project. We set a difficult task, as there was no written script of a play. As for the actors, they are young and emotional. They both are unique personalities. I greatly respect them and I am excited to work with them. Now the preparation for the premiere is in full swing," said Aravina in an interview for this story.

She explained the decision to combine the works of the two outstanding musicians.

"Sinatra and Piaf sang practically about the same things. They sang about love feelings in different forms, from the light flirting to the deepest drama. We wanted to show this palette of feelings and how much they are close in spirit as the artists."

"Timofeyev, a baritone, has a gorge-

ous voice and he is the only one in Kazakhstan who sings Sinatra's full repertoire. I cannot say that I am the best singer of Piaf's songs and I must confess I admire Piaf. I allow myself to adopt her repertoire and songs and convey my attitude toward her in the public's eye. I started my music career with an introduction to Piaf and to me it is a very big responsibility," she added.

The musicians and actors will perform on the stage at the same time.

"It is necessary to organise more music festivals in our country to popularise high-quality music and educate our young generation. If there is no good-quality music, unfortunately the mentality of the inhabitants of the city and the level of culture will fall," noted Aravina.

She also launched Silk Music Fest, a celebration of authentic music staged last year in Almaty and featuring well-known musicians from Armenia, Georgia, Russia and the United States. She expects to organise six concerts in 2016.

Jazz vocalists including Charles Turner III and Michelle Walker, virtuoso guitarist Adam Rafferty, the Alexei Cheremizov Quartet, jazz quartets Projazz and Sergei Pronya and Almaty jazz musicians Victor Khomenkov and Valery Nasibulin have already held concerts as part of the series.

"Each festival brings a powerful educational and intellectual opportunity. It promotes the personal acquaintance of musicians from different countries and thus cultural relations are improving and new projects are born. We talk a lot about the listeners trying to expand their horizons and develop their taste and forget about the musicians. Musicians need festivals, perhaps even more than the listeners," said Aravina.



Aisulu Azimbayeva

Cultural Centre in Argentina Spreads Kazakh News, Stays Active

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Being thousands of kilometres from what one calls "homeland" could, with time, easily erase anyone's identity. Yet despite the migratory nature of the current day, Kazakh citizens on the other side of the planet are making efforts to disseminate information about their country, break stereotypes and remember the best of their homeland.

"I have been living in Argentina for 16 years and migrated here with my family," said Centro Kazajo (Centre of Culture of Kazakhstan) head Irina Vagner in an exclusive interview with The Astana Times. The centre, in Rosario, Argentina, is the only one in South America.

Originally from Almaty, Vagner's mother needed to live by the ocean due to health reasons and at the time they had friends permanently residing in Argentina.

"I haven't been back in Kazakh-

stan since I moved to Argentina," she said. "My brother travels back quite often, so I am informed about the motherland from a reliable source, so to speak. Besides, I keep in touch with acquaintances and friends from Almaty and Astana. I am really homesick; I especially miss Almaty and the Medeo ice rink that I used to visit every Sunday. No doubt the establishment of the centre [Centro Kazajo] relieves my homesickness a little, as I constantly speak about Kazakhstan."

Vagner added she would like to visit Kazakhstan in 2017 with members of the centre.

"Our centre was established in November 2014 in Rosario, the second largest city in Argentina, at my initiative with the help and support of my husband Gustavo Gutiérrez and the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Brazil," she said.

Throughout the years the centre has been active in various events, from presenting national clothes and dishes to telling about the

country's well-known people and achievements.

"Among our priorities are a declaration of Almaty and Rosario as twin cities, creation of a national Kazakh dance troupe and launching Kazakh language-speaking courses," said Vagner.

The centre is also planning to include evenings of national music and cuisine, showing Kazakh films and exhibiting paintings by the nation's artists.

"We also want to install a three-metre monument replica of the Baiterek Tower in one of the restaurants in Rosario," she said.

The members are mostly volunteers and once a month the centre organises a dinner to thank them for their hard work.

"There is very little information about Kazakhstan in Argentina. We tell [them] about the beautiful nature, traditions, Kazakh hospitality and of course about the impressive economic development in the past 15 years," she said. "Argentines know about Gen-

nady Golovkin, about Baikonur. Some mistake life in Kazakhstan by comparing it with the film 'Borat,' but I always reply to that with the brilliant answer of Nursultan Nazarbayev that there can't be bad advertising. I think the main goal of our centre is to popularise Kazakhstan in Latin America," said Vagner.

The majority of Kazakh citizens in Argentina are contractors with international companies engaged in different walks of life, including private entrepreneurship.

"I personally would like to note the unquestionable need for promotion of Kazakhstan and its culture in Argentina. Our country interests Argentines at different levels; the Argentines as a whole have a reasonably-high level of culture and are open to everything unfamiliar and different from the usual for them. I am sure that our desire to move in this direction and assistance from the Kazakh authorities may greatly assist the speedy achievement of this goal," said Vagner.



Kazakh Tenor Promotes Country Abroad



Photo credit: Kazakh-TV

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Inspired by Brian McKnight and Luciano Pavarotti, Diyaz Mussalimov is a singer from East Kazakhstan who has devoted his life to music. Currently, he lives in the United States, where he creates songs and participates in projects, as well as studies at in New York University and represents Kazakhstan at high-level events.

He has performed at the United Nations headquarters representing Kazakhstan. "It was an honour for me to sing Kazakh songs. I also sang national anthems of the U.S. and Kazakhstan on the Day of Independence of our country at the reception of our embassy. I also represented the culture of Kazakhstan during the celebration of Nauryz in the mayor's office in Brooklyn. I appreciate every opportunity to represent my country in America," said Mussalimov, according to an interview on Kazakh TV.

Mussalimov was born in Semey in 1991 and started singing when he was about four years old. Later he won the grand prix at a contest in Russia and started participating in competitions in the countries of Europe and Asia. When he was 10, he visited the U.S. for the first time and was chosen as one of the singers to represent Kazakhstan.

From an early age, he dreamt of becoming an artist and to study at the Russian University of Theatre Arts. But it didn't work out, so he became a student in Almaty and chose solo singing as his major. As he wanted to continue study-

ing, he started thinking about going to the U.S., where he went for a summer under the Work and Travel Programme earlier. There, in Virginia, he was introduced to gospel music, which attracted his attention immediately.

Later, he entered Norfolk State University.

"I always wanted to sing with African Americans, listen to jazz. And my dream came true. Ninety-nine percent of my university were African Americans and its graduates are very well-known and famous musicians. Scholarship covered only 75 percent of my expenses. For excellent study, I was awarded with Barack Obama scholarship. In 2015, I graduated from the university with an excellent GPA," said Mussalimov.

While studying at the university, he was a soloist during many tours and shared Kazakh songs with many audiences.

"During my studies, I took first place in the competition, where more than 30 states participated. By the time I was about to graduate, many people knew about our country and its location on the map," he said, according to Kazakh TV.

Since graduating from Norfolk last year, the young tenor has become a master degree student at New York University. "In the future, I want to teach music, but people recommend that I become a great singer first."

He says he misses Kazakhstan very much, especially his family and friends. "I want to return back home with goals that will help to raise country's culture."

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Astana Public Transport Introduces Smart Card Payment System



By Kseniya Voronina

Astana Cards, which will be used to pay for public transportation in Astana, became available May 4.

These cards are part of the new Astra Plat payment system for public transport, which is going to be introduced on May 31 for express and suburban routes and by the end of the summer for all city routes, reported the press service of Astana LRT.

An event was held at the Zhastar Palace on May 4 to distribute a limited number of cards, some members of the public will receive the cards by mail.

In August last year, the Astana LRT requested pensioners, people

with disabilities and members of large families to come and make a picture needed for the transport card.

Like in the Onai payment system, which operates in Almaty public transport, owners of the Astana Card should validate their cards using a special device or validator every time they get onto a bus. The device can be also used to check the current balance of the card.

It was reported that ten special offices, 30 depositing machines and 25 sale points will be opened gradually for Astana Cards. In the future, this network will be expanded and integrated into the network of payment terminals and online banking portals. If passengers don't have time to buy a

transport card, they will be able to buy a single ticket with a QR-code in the cab terminal, which will be installed next to bus drivers.

The city's officials believe that the introduction of the Astra Plat electronic system for public transport will help solve various problems, such as lack of single tickets accounting, lack of accurate data on passenger traffic and exact income of employees of public transport. The measure will also help to eliminate the flaws of the existing system. Passengers may also find the new system convenient, as they no longer need cash to pay for transportation.

Also for public transportation passengers, the mobile Astra Bus app for iOS and Android is available to download.

Wind and Solar-Equipped Building to Serve as Test Model for New Construction Standards

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

ASTANA – The Kazakhstan Centre for Modernisation and Development of Housing and Communal Services moved this year to a new building equipped with energy-saving wind and solar energy systems. The building will serve as a test for the systems with an eye towards introducing them into new construction nationwide.

The solar panels added to the building collect energy from the sun and generate electricity. The wind turbine is not working yet, but will be put into operation soon.

According to Deputy Chairman of the Centre Serik Amanbayev, the building hasn't been put into operation completely, but is partially functioning now. The building is equipped with a completely independent energy supply system based on solar panels and wind

turbines, which produce electricity and heating.

"This is kind of an experiment and the main purpose is to identify the effectiveness of such systems. If our expectations to reduce costs for domestic services will be realised, the same systems will be distributed across the country in the future," said Chairman of the Centre Sergey Chaizhunusov.

According to Chaizhunusov, the average energy consumption of a modern building in Kazakhstan is about 250-270 kilowatt per square metre. In Europe, this number stands at about 130 kilowatt per square metre. With the help of special devices that generate energy from the sun and the wind, it is expected that buildings will consume only about 30 kilowatt per square metre.

It was reported that the building will be put into full operation before the end of the current year and

by the beginning of EXPO 2017 will become a working model of energy-efficient buildings constructed in Kazakhstan.

The chairman also said that the process of implementing energy-saving systems should be included in the design stage before the construction work begins, that is why it is impossible to equip already constructed buildings with such a system.

Gas, water, steam and energy metres are going to be installed in all buildings. An additional 12 billion tenge (US\$36.4 million) has been allocated for the purpose.

In addition it was decided that, as part of the compulsory work during an overhaul, special automated heat points should be introduced in buildings. This will help to automatically adjust the temperature in the whole house depending on weather conditions outside.

"The system will operate



throughout the year, so that people won't need to open windows when it's too hot, or provide additional

thermal insulation when it's too cold, as the temperature will be regulated by heat points. I hope

these measures will pay off during the foreseeable period of time," Chaizhunusov concluded.

New Plant in Atyrau Produces Salt

By Azamat Suzdykbayev

A new plant in Atyrau is going to produce salt and chemical solutions. The salt is mined on Inder Lake, which covers more than 110 square kilometres and is the biggest in the region.

The lake is heavily saturated with salt, as its waters contain four billion of the so called white gold and the stocks are increasing each year. In general, experts consider the Inder region one of the richest in terms of minerals which can be used during the next hundred years.

There is already one salt processing plant constructed onshore, which produces 1,000 tonnes of

food salt and 20,000 tonnes of technical salt every year.

"We have successfully exported the produced salt to Belarus, Russia and other neighbouring countries during the past years. Usually, we work in accordance with order receipts," said plant employees Serik Otynshtiyev.

Due to established and successful salt production, another plant has been opened recently. It became the anchor project included in the regional map of the current industrialisation. The emphasis will be placed on the production of sodium hypochlorite, which helps purify drinking water. It is expected that the plant will start producing household products in the future.

The head of the company Abyrbek Toktybayev expressed his confidence that the products will be in considerable demand.

"The salt water left after the processing is pumped out of the lake to the factory and is subjected to high temperatures after which we can generate sodium hypochlorite. It is then used as a means for disinfection. The production capacity is 30,000 tonnes of sodium hypochlorite. Experts believe the products will be in demand for oil pipeline complexes, as well as for military and medical institutions," said Toktybayev.

Today, 40 people work at the plant. Once it reaches full production capacity, the number of jobs will also increase.



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WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

Number of Organ Transplant Operations Grows in Kazakhstan



By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – Kazakhstan has taken comprehensive measures to develop domestic transplantation surgeries, which increase the number of organ transplants. For comparison, in 2009-2010 there were nine transplantations and in 2015 – 204.

“Only two technologies were introduced in 2011, four in 2010, seven in 2012, and 10 in 2015. These include operations for heart transplant, liver, artificial left ventricle, kidney, pancreas, bone marrow. Such medical services for Kazakh citizens used to be available only abroad,” according to a statement by the Kazakh Ministry of Healthcare.

The first heart transplant was

performed in Kazakhstan in 2012. In total, 20 such operations were performed in 2015. In 2012, six patients had a liver transplant and in 2015 a total of 51 patients had the same procedure. Kidney transplants topped the list in 2010 with nine. In 2015, 204 were performed. There was only one bone marrow transplant in 2010 and in 2015 there were 44.

“Development of unique technologies shows that today it is possible to transplant all organs in Kazakhstan. A strong human, intellectual, scientific and resource potential and a good material and technical bases have been established to achieve such results,” the ministry noted.

Also, the number of patients treated with high-tech tools in the

country increased five times since 2010.

“In this case, due to widespread introduction of new technologies since 2014, 30 high technology aid services (HTAS) were transferred into the category of specialised assistance. In 2010, some 10,690 patients received HTAS, in 2011 – 34,706, in 2012 – 41,747, in 2013 – 54,454, in 2014 – 46,391 and in 2015 – 55,975.”

HTAS medical care is provided to citizens when diseases require particularly complex diagnostic and treatment methods and use of unique medical technologies. The introduction of the Unified National Health System in 2010 contributed to the development of high technologies in all regions, thus ensuring the availability of HTAS care for rural residents.

British Embassy to Host Charity Run to Support Shugyla Fund

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The British Embassy is organising and inviting residents to participate in the May 14 Sport Relief Mile to benefit Shugyla Public Fund. The race is described on its website as a “mass participation event open to everyone, regardless of their athletic prowess or mobility. People are encouraged to cover a distance of approximately one mile by whatever means they are able.”

Sport Relief was launched in 2002 by Comic Relief UK, which assists poor and disadvantaged people across the world. British embassies organise Sport Relief Miles in many countries.

This year’s run, the fourth in Kazakhstan, is also supported by the city administration and several private enterprises. Previous races attracted around 400 people and helped different charity funds.

Shugyla Public Fund was established in 2007 by entrepreneurs Meirkhan Abdrakhmanov and Alibek Umirzhanov. Its main goals are implementing socially significant projects and organising and holding charitable events. Funds for the projects are being collected in several ways – through the E-pay system, transfers via QIWI terminal, mercy envelopes and SMS.

“Our fund helps families with many children, single mothers, orphans and children with cerebral palsy. Each year Shugyla Fund holds several actions such as Bereke, which is targeted at delivery of food products and household appliances; Podari Teplo (Russian for Give Warmth), a project



on coal distribution in the winter time, and Pora v shkolu (Russian for Back to School), aimed at the distribution of school supplies to children from poor and large families. There is also a project called Semya Pomogaet Semye (Family Helps Family) and it is about free distribution of clothing in special social stores which are organised on the basis of the fund. The Luchshi Den v Godu (Best Day of the Year) is a programme of additional assistance to orphans and children from problem families. Rehabilitation of Children with Cerebral Palsy (Reabilitaciya detei c diagnozom DCP) was created to support low-income families with children with disabilities. In our opinion, all the projects are important, because a lot of people need help and everyone has different life situations and sometimes they are emergencies,” said Mereke Mukhatai, head of the fund’s capital office.

He added this year the fund is planning to open the assistance of-

for children with cerebral palsy, as well as launch several public service advertisements on social networks that reflect the problems of those who are often not noticed by people who are healthy or need not worry about their next meal.

“Every day is filled with our running in search of money for existence; our life goes on with smartphones, tablets, computers or TV. And so we do not notice that literally next to us there are people who cannot afford even a piece of bread. Our vast country is rich in culture, peace and hospitality and we believe that together we will be stronger, kinder and more intelligent,” said Mukhatai.

The run will start at 11 a.m. in Zheruiyk Park (central entrance from Baurzhan Momysuly Avenue). Those who are interested should send their name, company and e-mail address to britishembassyastana@gmail.com. The contact number is +7 (7172) 556217 and the event has pages on Facebook and Twitter.

Thousands Ride in Astana to Commemorate Victory in WWII in Europe

Continued from Page B1

The Astana city mayor’s office and the Kazakhstan Cycling Federation arranged the event with the backing of the National Olympic Committee, the Samruk Kazyna Trust Social Development Foundation, and the Astana Presidential Professional Sports Club (PPSC).

“Today, we celebrate a festival of sports. It is gratifying that the bike ride attracted great interest from residents of the capital. With this action, we pay tribute to the heroism of our veterans in

the Great Patriotic War, which we will always remember,” said Vice-President of the Kazakhstan Cycling Federation President and CEO of the Astana PPSC Amanbek Kulchikov. The organisers of the bike ride plan a series of mass events in the coming months to promote sports and a healthy lifestyle.

“With such projects, we attract our compatriots to mass sport, as they have a chance to see famous athletes and bike on the main roads of Astana. The health of the nation is one of the key factors for further development of Kazakh-

stan. Without the mass character of sports in the country, we will hardly see victories of Kazakh athletes at international competitions. In the future, we would like to help arrange more events like today’s. It is now less than a hundred days left to the Summer Olympics and already now we notice in the people’s moods the expectation of a great feast of sports. We hope that in Rio we will have many reasons to be proud of our country,” National Olympic Committee Executive Director Serik Kaskabasov commented after the event.



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TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

Beauties and Legends of Taraz Await New Visitors



By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Architectural treasures, marvellous monuments, picturesque buildings, bustling bazaars and streets surrounded by lush greenery. If this sounds magical and attractive, Taraz, a city with a unique history and Oriental hospitality traditions, is a definite destination point.

Taraz is like an open-air museum. Once known as a city of merchants, it is one of the oldest cities in Kazakhstan.

Tourists visiting the ancient and young city of Taraz have much to see. Caravanserais and craft producers, merchant's warehouses

and shops are perfectly preserved, according to Advantour.com.

Taraz is located in the southwest portion of the Zhambyl province in the centre of Talas-Assin oasis. The population is 380,900 people (as of 2009). The city has six archaeological monuments, including the ancient settlements of Taraz and Tortkul from the 1st-17th centuries, Tonkeris Manor from the 6th-12th centuries, 13 historical monuments, 53 architecture and urban planning monuments and seven monumental art objects.

Taraz celebrated its official 2,000th anniversary in 2001. The city was a major trade centre on

the Silk Road and known as the capital of the Karakhanid state.

What to See in Taraz

The mausoleum, located 15 kilometres east of Taraz, was built in the 11th century. It is known for its unique dome tent and included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage list.

Aisha-Bibi Mausoleum

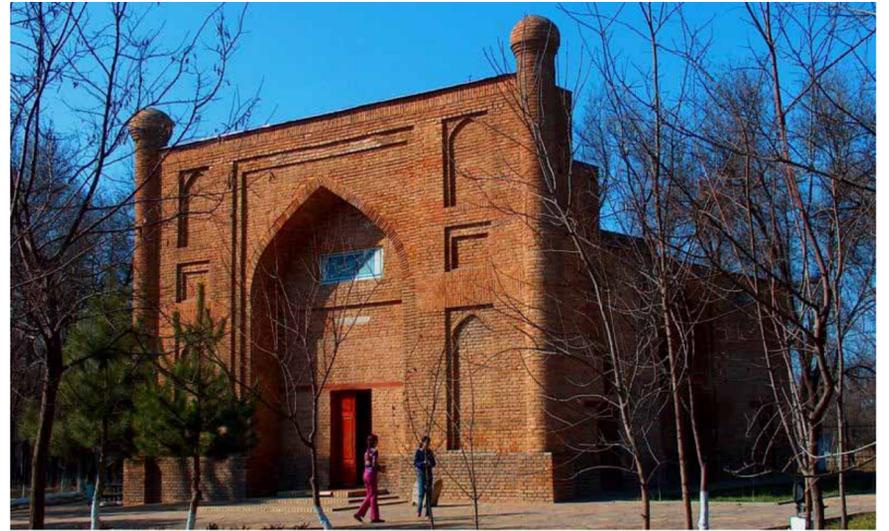
This 11th century tomb is located near the Babaji-Khatun mausoleum. According to legend, the mausoleum was built by one of the rulers of the Karakhanid dynasty over the grave of his beautiful bride Aisha-Bibi, daughter of Sufi poet Hakim-Ata. Folk legends say a treacherous snake cut the young girl's life short on her way to her beloved. The building looks incredibly light and elegant, decorated with terracotta tiles with floral and geometric patterns. The masterpiece of ancient architects has remained for more than eight centuries with no changes or damages.

Aulie-Ata Karakhan Mausoleum

The mausoleum was built in the 11th century over the grave of one of the rulers of the Karakhanid dy-



Babaji-Khatun Mausoleum



Aulie-Ata Karakhan Mausoleum

nasty. It looks like a portal-dome structure with walls built with mud brick from the Karakhanid era. The original stone tombstone is preserved in the mausoleum.

Hamмам (bathhouse)

Built in the 10th-12th centuries, Hammam is located in the territory of the ancient city of Taraz. The Middle Ages construction is a brick-tile building with a 10 by

10-metre quadrangular plan oriented in the four cardinal directions. The bathhouse was built with complex sewerage and a heating system of ceramic pipes. At present, Hammam is valuable for the study of the water supply of medieval Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

How to Get There

The distance from Astana to Taraz is 1,255 km. A round-trip

flight costs 32,800 tenge (US\$99) by Air Astana and 35,891 tenge (US\$109) by Scat Airlines (as of April 29). There are also several flights from Almaty with prices starting from 47,736 tenge (US\$145).

The high speed Talgo train from the capital to Taraz takes about 12 hours and a one-way trip is 10,791 tenge (US\$33). There are also a number of daily travel options from Almaty by train, bus and car.



Photo: Enormous.com

World's "Greenest" State to Participate at EXPO 2017



By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – EXPO 2017 Commissioner Rapol Zhoshybayev discussed bilateral cooperation at the Vatican April 30 with Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and recently appointed Commissioner for the Vatican's section at EXPO 2017 in Astana.

Turkson praised Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's contribution to developing global interreligious accord through the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. He also noted the large role the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan plays in ensuring peace in Kazakhstan.

The Kazakh EXPO 2017 Com-

missioner thanked Turkson for supporting and participating in the religious congresses. He also briefed Turkson on expo preparations and the sides agreed on the location of the Vatican's pavilion.

Zhoshybayev added that the Vatican's participation in EXPO 2017 will spread spirituality, conveying cultural and spiritual messages through world art masterpieces.

According to the Cardinal, in 2009, the Vatican installed the largest solar panel in Europe with a 100MW capacity on the roof of Paul VI Audience Hall at a cost of \$600 million. This made the Vatican the first solar-powered country and the world's "greenest" state. The Vatican has reduced its carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by 225 tonnes per year.

'Stay in Touch with the Dutch' – KLM Launches New Flights to Astana

Continued from Page B1

Astana is now KLM's eighth new destination. According to the official released data, there will be four flights a week; on Tuesdays and Fridays from Amsterdam via Astana to Almaty and back to Amsterdam and on Wednesdays and Sundays from Amsterdam via Almaty to Astana and back.

"Flights to Astana and Almaty will be carried out by Airbus A330-200 aircraft. Three classes of service will be available on board of KLM aircrafts: 30 seats in World Business Class, 35 seats in Economy Comfort zone, and 178 seats in economy class. In the Economy Comfort zone, passengers are provided with an additional 10 centimetres space for legs, a twofold larger seat angle in comparison with the standard economy-class seats and priority, when leaving the aircraft," KLM officials noted.

"Stay in touch with the Dutch," Dutch Ambassador in Kazakhstan Hans Driesser said at the launch ceremony at the capital's Marriott hotel on May 3 as he evoked one of the popular slogans of the Dutch efforts to expand connections with the rest of the world.

The Dutch ambassador underlined the importance of establishing such an air link on the threshold of Kazakhstan's major international exhibition next year – EXPO 2017. Driesser will assume the role of the Dutch nation-

al EXPO commissioner next year during the event.

"I have flown KLM only a few times in my life and what really stood out was the comfort and service," Askar Abdulov, guest at the Marriott ceremony told The Astana Times. "I am glad that now Kazakh citizens will have a direct flight right into the heart of the Netherlands – Amsterdam. Also,

their international airport Schiphol is the fourth largest airport in Europe and is also very comfortable and easy to navigate."

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines was founded in The Netherlands in 1919. Today it is the oldest airline that kept its original name. In 2004, the company was merged with Air France and the two formed a group of airlines Air France-KLM. In

collaboration with Air France, Delta and other partners in SkyTeam alliance, KLM offers more than 1,050 destinations around the world providing convenient connecting flights from Kazakhstan to Europe, the U.S., Canada, South America, the Caribbean Islands and the African continent. KLM has been flying from Amsterdam to Almaty since 1995.



WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

Kazakhstan's National Hockey Team Wins World Championship Opener but Falls to Russia, Norway



By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

The Kazakh national hockey team beat the Swiss national team in a shootout May 7 to win its first match of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) World Championships. This year's championships are being played in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia.

The win for the Andrei Nazarov-managed team earned them two points in Group A against the Swiss, who won silver medals three years ago in Sweden.

In the starting period, the Swiss twice put the puck into Vitaly Kolesnik's goal. While Sven Andrighetto's goal was not approved by the officials, Samuel Walsler's attempt was recognised valid making the score 1:0.

Kazakhstan's Roman Savchenko responded with a goal to tie the game at 1:1.

"It is good that I scored such a lucky goal. It happens if there is a focus on hitting the opponent's goal," Savchenko said after the game.

Kazakhstan's captain Roman Starchenko brought his team forward 1:2 with an assist from Evgeny Rymarev. The Swiss responded instantly as Denis Hollenstein restored the balance 2:2.

And overtime period did not break the tie and a shootout was held. Kazakhstan turned out the luckier one and thus earned its first two points at the tournament. Hollenstein and Starchenko were recognised the best players of the match.

The victory over the Swiss became the first one for the Kazakh team in the top flight over the past 11 years.

The following day, the Kazakh national team had a tough

meeting against the main favourites of the tournament. The Russians in their opening match gave way to the Czech Republic team, missing three unanswered goals.

Few could imagine before the meeting that the national team of Kazakhstan would create serious difficulties for the "Red Machine." However, from the beginning, it all went a bit different from what many expected.

Kazakhstan is yet to win a game against Russia in ice hockey. The last "decent" loss against the Russians was 10 years ago at the Olympics in Turin 0:1. At the 2014 World Championship in Minsk, Russia won 7:2. The two Kazakh goals were then missed by Sergei Borovskiy who defends the Russian net in this tournament as well.



The Russians took an early 1:0 lead against the Kazakhs with a score by Evgeniy Dadonov.

However, Kazakhstan soon tied and took the lead. Brandon Bochenski's assist was skilfully used by Dustin Boyd, and soon afterwards Starchenko brought the Kazakhs forward, 2:1.

The Kazakh fans' joy was short-lived, as Roman Lyubimov equalised for the Russians within seconds. The hosts needed a victory desperately, and Sergei Mozyakin made the score 3:2 into their favour. However, in the final minute of the first period, Rymarev's effort helped Kazakhstan restore a tie score.

Such audacity from Kazakhstan was surprising to many. Famous Russian sports journalist Igor Rabiner at half-time wrote that he was in amazement about how it was possible for HC Torpedo Ust-

Kamenogorsk, which plays in the Supreme Hockey League (VHL), Russia's second-in-rank, to score against the first Russian holder of the Vezina Trophy in history (the trophy is awarded to the best goalkeeper in the National Hockey League).

However, in the final third of the game, the Russian managed to break the tie. Belov scored twice and Lyubimov once for the Russians while Kazakhstan responded only with one goal from Maxim Semenov. The final score was 6:4 in Russia's favour. Team Kazakhstan, however, provided a decent fight to ice hockey's true powerhouse.

"We knew the Russians had nowhere to retreat. We expected a difficult game. Thanks to the guys who until the middle of the third period kept the intrigue in the game," said Kazakhstan's head

coach Andrei Nazarov following the match.

The third match on the Moscow ice was less fortunate for team Kazakhstan, which gave way to Norway 2:4. After this setback, the team of Kazakhstan dropped to seventh place in their group.

Ahead for the Kazakhs are games against Sweden, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Denmark. All the matches of the national team are aired live in the country by Kazsport TV.

In the group stage of the IIHF World Championships, 16 teams are divided into two groups of eight each. From each group four teams go into the playoffs, and the last team from each is relegated to play in the lower division the next year. In the group stage, teams in each group play each other once.

First Kazakh MMA Fighter Hopes to Make UFC Entry



Zamzagul "Bopai" Faizollanova

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Kazakh women have been conquering new heights in politics and business for quite some time. However, new Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter Zamzagul "Bopai" Faizollanova has opened a whole new chapter in the life of women in Kazakhstan.

Faizollanova has been a judoka since she was 13 years old and has been in MMA for a little less than a year. So far, she has three wins in her short career but is determined and hungry for more with the support of her loved ones.

"At first, my parents were against my [fighting career] but later started rooting for me and gave me their blessings to continue," she told local media.

The Kazakh said that she studied female fighters and thought extensively before becoming a female

MMA fighter and finally decided to fight after considering how popular women's MMA is today.

"I have two [training sessions] per day: grappling in the morning and punching in the evenings," she said about her intensive trainings. "I made a lot of defensive mistakes and in my stance, and had a lot of work to do in cutting distance but we are working on it."

Faizollanova is planning on making her entrance to the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) in the future and confessed she admired Ronda Rousey.

"[Rousey] is an icon for many. I am a Kazakh and I don't approve of her behaviour outside the octagon, but I respect her as a professional. Women's MMA has gotten to a new level practically because of her. I think she will easily get back her title."

FISU Supervision Committee: Universiade 2017 Will Be One of the Best

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – The International University Sports Federation (FISU) supervision committee visited Almaty recently for an inspection, reported the Universiade 2017 organising committee's press office.

"We came here to inspect the preparation for the Games and to help solve some issues if needed. Today at the beginning of our visit, we had a very fruitful meeting with the organising committee and I was satisfied with the outcome. We were given a good interim report from the organising committee. I can say confidently that my first impression was very good. I have been involved in the preparation of several Universiades and I think that people who are involved in the preparation of this one are doing very well," said the CSU Chair Marian Dymalski in his interview with almaty2017.com.

The FISU delegation also consist-

ed of Winter Universiade Director Milan Augustin, Administration Director Hedwige Hankart, Education Services Director Kole Gjeloshaj, Development Director Laurent Briel, Branding and Marketing Manager Adelia Faizulina, Executive Assistant Jiho Kim and Assistant Paola Forni.

Augustin said preparations for the Games are proceeding in accordance with the plan. The guests noted progress in different directions such as transportation, accommodation, media, broadcasting and ICT, sports and medical services, test events, ceremonies and venues management.

"We hope that the more than 60 countries that have registered to participate in the Winter Universiade will be very satisfied with the work of the organising committee and the Winter Universiade 2017 itself. Kazakhstan is also a large country in terms of sports. There are many Olympic medalists and I think that

during the Universiade you will show a good side of your country and this Universiade will be one of the best in the history of FISU," said Augustin.

The delegation visited the Universiade venue building sites, such as the Ice Palace with a capacity of 12,000, Ice Arena with 3,000 seats and Athletes' Village, as well as sports venues such as Baluan Sholak Sports Palace, Sunkar International Ski Jumping Complex, Medeu High-Mountain Ice Rink, Shymbulak Ski Resort and Alatau Cross-Country Skiing and Biathlon Stadium.

"It is very important to focus on outdoor sports now, because they depend on the weather conditions and a snow making system may be needed. I am very happy that the National University Federations of Kazakhstan are also involved, which means that they are interested in gaining the experience of the Universiade and possibilities of using them in future," noted Winter Universiade

2013 in Trentino Executive Advisor and Sport Director Ubaldo Prucker.

In arranging for the Games, functional plans have been developed that describe about 800 processes to prepare for and hold the event, said organising committee Director Asset Abdualiyev.

"The organising committee is currently in its active phase of preparation for the Games and such international expert consultations of the FISU are very important for us in terms of preparation for the biggest sporting event in the history of Kazakhstan. Universiade is a national project which will positively impact on the recognition of Almaty as a tourist and modern city with a rich 1,000-year history," he said.

The Winter Universiade in Almaty has already reached a record number of participating countries. Sixty-four nations are currently registered for the event, which will be held Jan. 29-Feb. 8, 2017 and include 12 sports disciplines.



International University Sports Federation Supervision Committee.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2016

Filtered, Bottled or Tap: What Kind of Water to Drink



By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – In our digital, fast-moving and modern era, we sometimes forget to ask ourselves essential questions. One such question is what type of water are we drinking these days? Is it properly disinfected? Has it been correctly stored before we actually consume it? Should we drink purified, filtered, alkaline or spring water? And for capital residents, “Can we drink its tap water?”

They say water is life. Mankind survived thanks to water from the beginning of civilisation; the translation of the name Mesopotamia, from the Greek “between rivers,” removes any doubt. Yet there are controversial scientific research studies and consumers are left with questions: who is funding this research – marketers, governments or business communities?

Water is a strategic resource and is therefore under strict control by the authorities. In Kazakhstan, the Sanitary Epidemic

Station (SES) monitors water control, overseeing all private water purification companies on a regular basis.

Purified Water

There are numerous private companies that offer purified water and deliver it in blue 19-litre bottles. The Astana Times interviewed the owners of one of such company in its quest to better understand what type of water to drink.

“Tap water in Astana is in compliance with all standards of the Sanitary Regulations and Norms (SRN) [of Kazakhstan],” said Lola Mustafina, co-founder of EcoLife, a water purifying company established in the city in 2008.

“Nonetheless in my humble opinion, people should drink purified water, because the sewage system is on the whole hundreds of thousands of kilometres and the pipes do contain some parts concentration of bacteria. The city is growing every day and

new materials are used; you can't do water lab tests every day. I believe that water of high quality can only be purified.”

The SES strictly monitors her company and non-compliance may trigger discrepancies with authorities and the state in general, she added. EcoLife conducts weekly lab tests and uses up-to-date technologies, customised for the city's water with Chinese technologies to purify it and give it an exquisite taste.

The concern for potential customers relates to questions of how fresh the water is and how long it is stored from the minute it is poured into bottles to the time it is brought to your doorstep?

“We don't keep the water on the premises for more than 12 hours. Actually, the storage time is from three to six months as long as it is stored properly – nothing would happen to it if produced properly. If the production was improper, the water would go bad within a month for sure,” said Mustafina.

EcoLife usually delivers the same day. A 19-litre contain-

er is delivered for 600 tenge (US\$1.70) with an exchange of an empty bottle of the same capacity or 2,100 tenge (US\$3.50) without an exchange.

Pros: No need to buy additional cartridges. Water pumps start at 2,000 tenge (US\$3.40) and water dispensers are around 15,000 tenge (US\$44). Water dispensers need to be cleaned at least twice a year; water pumps can be easily washed every once in a while.

Cons: Consumers can't be sure if the containers are properly washed and cleaned unless they visit the company, so order only from reliable and trusted suppliers like EcoLife or Khrustalnaya. There is no way to determine when companies actually change their filters; the only hope is to rely on SES and their compliance. Estimated time of delivery (ETD) can be unpredictable. Deliveries are hard to schedule and can't always be on time for a family where all work during the day.

Filtered Water

In addition to many purifying companies, there is an array of filters. They include water purifying pitchers, filter tips for tap water and installed filters with separate small taps mounted on the side of the sink.

Kazakhstan Aqua Astana Director Berik Akhmet, whose company sells water filters, believes tap water is good enough for drinking but offers alternatives to purify it “to reduce the level of chlorine.”

“Chlorine is the only way to clear the water of bacteria so it needs the chemical, but still chlorine doesn't have a healthy effect on human bodies. If you test water in part A of the city and compare the result from part B of the city, the properties will be different. That's normal, as it travels hundreds of kilometres through different pipelines,” said Akhmet, who confirmed Mustafina's comment on sewage and pipe-traveling from a single source.

The company offers two types



of water filters for consumption, based on the split opinion whether or not water needs to be desalinated.

“Western scholars are saying it doesn't matter if the water is salinised or has a very low level of salt containing calcium and magnesium. So we are offering both options to our clients. We sell filters for reverse osmosis water that purifies water of calcium and magnesium and streaming water that leaves calcium and magnesium,” said Akhmet.

Aqua Astana offers various brand filters like Aquaphor, Aquavis and Hubert. All are cartridge-based filters that need to be renewed. Depending on the complexity of the filter and its functions, prices vary from 15,000 tenge (US\$44) to 120,000 tenge (US\$352).

Pros: There is no need to call delivery companies and wait for them at home and no bottles that take up extra room in the kitchen.

Cons: The hassle to change the cartridges and not knowing when to properly change them. The companies recommend changing them periodically in stages but there is no way for them to monitor how much water consumers are actually using. A family of two could use 100 litres a week; a family of 10, perhaps 1,000 litres. Cartridge changes should not be based on time, but on usage.

Tap Water

As both Mustafina and Akhmet indicated, tap water is compliant with all standards and while drinkable, has a high level of chlorine.

The main water supply for the capital is the city water reservoir built in 1969. According to official data taken from the state-run Astana Su Arnsy (the capital's water supplier), the water is constantly tested at their laboratory.

“The water is chlorinated (for reduction of bacteria), coagulated (to reduce turbidity), clarified, filtered through a layer of filter materials (reducing the concentration of suspended solids) and then chlorinated again (to protect it from external contamination and growth of bacteria, in other words disinfected),” according to its website.

“The quality of tap water is continuously monitored at all stages of the process. The microbiological indicators are checked once per day, the organoleptic indicators (for odour, color and turbidity) are checked 12 times a day and the residual chlorine is checked once per hour.”

All arguments are valid. The answer lies in preferences and beliefs in different theories and the results one is seeking.

Made in Kazakhstan Product Store Opens

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

A newly opened store in Citrum shopping mall in Astana offers 2,000 different domestically produced goods. The shop is part of the Khalyk Markasy (People's Mark) programme and gathered 100 Kazakh producers.

According to Vice Minister of Agriculture Gulmira Issayeva, the Ministry of Agriculture has undertaken several initiatives to strengthen the position of Kazakh products on domestic markets and the new store is one of them.

“The Khalyk Markasy programme allows domestic producers to directly supply their products to the store. Despite the fact that 95 percent of goods are made in Kazakhstan, we have to import several types of products, such as apples, sugar, cheese, butter and fish. A programme to establish intensive orchards has been recently launched. We also subsidise producers and support the production of sugar beets in order to improve the situation,” Issayeva said.

In stores with the Khalyk Markasy logo, customers will be able to buy local products at factory prices.



“At the moment the store is already 35 percent stocked. The margin on domestic products is only 3 percent, but manufacturing companies get a 3 percent discount, so buyers will receive domestic products at factory price. There are no intermediaries and the owners rely on high turnover for this very reason,” explained head of the programme Rimma Tazhibayeva.

According to her, Kalyk Markasy shops are to be opened throughout Kazakhstan, in particular in the North Kazakhstan and Karaganda regions. In Almaty, such supermarkets will be opened until July 6. The programme also aims even-

tually to promote Kazakh products on international markets.

“Today we have opened a store where 50 percent of the whole production was produced in Zhambyl region. We have organised an experiment to find out how many consumers want to buy Kazakh products. The results showed that the demand for locally produced goods is pretty high. Our customers are mainly focused on dairy, meat and grain products, so we decided to focus on them,” said Tazhibayeva.

Issayeva also called on Kazakh citizens to actively seek out domestic products, as they are of high quality, environmentally friendly and safe for consumption. She also noted that 70 billion tenge (US\$214 million) in subsidies has been allocated for livestock and crop production.

“We have automated the issuance of subsidies and reduced the number of documents that must be submitted by applicants. Today, farmers just need to come to the city administration, fill in the application form and sign it. After that the application will be considered and then approved or denied,” added Issayeva.

The Citrum shopping mall is at 41 Koshkarbayev Street in Astana. Another store is located in the Artym shopping mall.



Unique Business Helps Foreign Travelers Navigate Astana

By Nika Andreyeva

The sphere of business and culture in Kazakhstan is rapidly developing. The capital city Astana is the administrative centre of the country, offering perspectives and opportunities for existing and newly established companies.

Kazakhs are one of the most hospitable peoples, who treat each guest with kindness and respect. Visitors coming to Kazakhstan, whose numbers are growing as the country develops, are not the exception.

Numerous investors, interna-

tional partners and experts come to the country to work with local companies or establish new business. The country also attracts many visitors who want to learn more about the cultural life of Astana.

Unfortunately, there are several obstacles each visitor usually faces upon his arrival to an unknown place – accommodations, travel facilities around the city and the language are challenges. New company GuestLight seeks to make visitors' first time in Astana easier.

The company, being a development tool for business and culture

in Kazakhstan, offers a wide range of support opportunities to foreign visitors and international partners.

GuestLight assists visitors from the moment they arrive at the airport and until the last minute of their stay in the city. It organises safe and easy transfer around Astana and beyond, accommodations at one of the best hotels in the city, medical care consulting, ticket booking, visa support for other countries and help with daily life routines.

GuestLight is available around the clock. Address: 20/1 Orynbor Street, Astana. Phone: 8 (7172) 287867.

