



President Nazarbayev Visits Turkey, Meets with Erdogan



Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev (L) and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan meet on Aug. 6 in Ankara.

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed bilateral cooperation and international issues Aug. 6 in Ankara, the Akorda press service reported. “Turkey is one of the closest and most reliable political and economic partners of our country. We have developing relationships based on a common historical past and spiritual heritage. Kazakhstan supports the brotherly Turkish people and is always ready to provide any assistance,” said Nazarbayev, adding the two countries have agreements in trade and investments.

“Today in Kazakhstan, more than 1,600 enterprises successfully operate with the Turkish capital. Turkish business took an active part in the construction of Astana. To date, representatives of Turkish companies have performed construction works totalling \$20 billion. Last year, the trade turnover between our countries totalled \$2 billion,” Nazarbayev informed. Nazarbayev also emphasised the importance of the joint economic programme “New Synergy” that was adopted during Erdogan’s state visit to the Kazakh capital last year. “Our goal is to increase the volume of mutual trade turnover to \$10 billion. The programme

provides for the implementation of 20 investment projects worth about \$813 million. Considering that Turkey is a key transit country with a developed infrastructure, I invited the Turkish business people to take part in the state programme Nuryly Zhol. In this regard, it is important to create Kazakh-Turkish industrial zones, which will give impetus for further expansion of economic opportunities between the two countries,” Nazarbayev said. The sides said they will work cooperatively to address international security and global challenges, such as terrorism. Nazarbayev also emphasised bilateral cultural and humanitarian

cooperation and invited Turks to attend EXPO 2017. “Next year, Astana will host the international exhibition EXPO 2017 dedicated to the innovations in the field of alternative energy under the slogan Future Energy,” he said. The sides also noted agreement on the issue of Kazakh-Turkish high schools, which operate in Kazakhstan. Erdogan thanked Nazarbayev for efforts to normalise relations between Turkey and Russia, as well as Kazakhstan’s support in a difficult period for his country. He also noted that Nazarbayev was the first president who visited Turkey after the attempted military coup.

Canadian Ambassador Seeks to Broaden Bilateral Relationship

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Ambassador of Canada to Kazakhstan Shawn Steil shared in an Aug. 5 interview with The Astana Times thoughts on cooperation, bilateral trade and cultural similarities between the countries, personal impressions on Kazakhstan and past projects. “Canada and Kazakhstan have a really strong, healthy relationship. ... Part of it is based on the fact that despite being very far apart, we have great similarities in population density, similar climate, geography and natural resource base. So on the basis of those similarities, I think we found a really strong platform for cooperation,” Steil noted. The two countries formally established diplomatic relations

on April 10, 1992, shortly after Kazakhstan’s independence. According to Steil, since then a strong platform for cooperation has been set, high level visits were organised and exchanged at various levels took place in the recent years, including ministers of agriculture exchanging visits and signing a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in 2012. In November 2013, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird visited Astana and concluded negotiations on a nuclear cooperation agreement that both countries ratified in 2014. The ambassador notes that Kazakhstan surpassed Canada as the world’s largest producer of uranium in 2009, however, Kazakhstan’s uranium is being produced in cooperation with Canada. **Continued on Page A8**

Judokas, Weightlifter Win Nation’s First Medals at Rio Olympics

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

RIO DE JANEIRO – On Aug. 6, the first day of competitions at the Summer Olympics in Rio, Team Kazakhstan won its first medals, namely two of them. Both in judo, Yeldos Smetov won silver in the weight category up to 60 kg among men, while Otgontsetseg Galbadrakh claimed bronze in the weight category up to 48 kg among women. Two days later, weightlifter Farkhad Kharki added another bronze to the team’s bag in the weight category up to 62 kg among men. In the judo competition’s first round Smetov, who is the reigning world champion, was victorious against Libyan wrestler Mohamed Elkawisa. In the second round Briton Ashley McKenzie and in the quarterfinals Diyorbek Uroboev from Uzbekistan were defeated, in both cases with a score of yuko. In the semi-finals, Smetov

was stronger than Orkhan Safarov of Azerbaijan. In the final bout, the Kazakh judoka lost in an equal fight to Beslan Mudranov representing Russia. The main time of the bout ended in a draw and in extra-time, Smetov’s rival managed to earn ten more points. “We planned to claim gold and set the goal to Yeldos. In the end, we missed very narrowly. We won second place and pleased our compatriots. I think after the semi-final, we were all overwhelmed with emotion, and in the final Yeldos could not contain back,” commented head coach of the Kazakhstan judo team Yermek Imambekov. Smetov admitted he was pleased with the result and would continue to train hard in order to become an Olympic champion at the next games in Tokyo 2020. “I was ready. I went up to this competition in good shape and I think that I gave my one hundred percent. **Continued on Page B7**

Kazakhstan Signs Paris Climate Change Agreement



By Ualikhan Zhansai

NEW YORK – Kazakhstan has signed the Paris Climate Change Agreement. Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov signed the document which was adopted at the December COP21 summit on Aug. 2 at UN Headquarters in New York. “The Paris Agreement is a global consensus document reflecting the world’s will to prevent climate change and to fight together against environmental degradation,” Idrissov said at the signing. Most UN member states signed

the agreement in April; Idrissov said technicalities delayed his country’s signing. The document will enter into force after the majority of countries responsible for global greenhouse gas emissions sign it. “Much depends on its smooth ratification by the states,” Idrissov noted. “I hope that with the support of the government and the Parliament, Kazakhstan will be a model of prompt ratification of the agreement and will encourage the key signatory states to ensure its early entry into force.” According to the press service of Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, addressing global climate change is a key condition for ensuring sustainable development, eliminating poverty and achieving socio-economic well-being for all countries. The Paris Agreement is an important symbol of the world community’s determination to put an end to environmental degradation. The signing comes as Kazakhstan prepares to host EXPO 2017, which will focus on sustainable energy for the future. After the signing, Idrissov met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who congratulated Kazakhstan on its accession to such an important international document,

as well as on the country’s election as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017–2018. They also discussed the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, as well as sustainable development and peace-building. Idrissov emphasised Kazakhstan’s consistent support of international efforts to strengthen global security through the implementation of the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, both at the regional and national levels. He also thanked Ban for his support of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev’s initiative to convene the “Religions for Peace” High-Level Conversation on May 6 as part of the General Assembly and informed him of the results of the International Parliamentary Conference “Religions against Terrorism,” held the same month in Astana. The sides also touched on possibilities for cooperation between Kazakhstan and the UN on green energy programmes. The secretary-general noted the importance of EXPO 2017 in Astana, the theme of which reflects the urgent need to develop green technologies across the globe. On the same day, Idrissov took part in the UN Security Council open debates on children and armed conflict. In his statement, Idrissov outlined Kazakhstan’s principal position on the international problem and noted contributions made by Kazakhstan to solve it, in particular in Afghanistan, where the country has delivered humanitarian assistance programmes focusing on providing access to education and health care.

Kazakhstan at Olympic Games in Rio



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NATION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Astana Celebrates Mandela Day

Staff Report

Mandela Day, the annual international day of July 18 honouring anti-apartheid leader, philanthropist and former South African President Nelson Mandela, has been observed in Kazakhstan since 2012. The community is becoming aware of the celebration through activities arranged by the South African Embassy in Kazakhstan.

The embassy has hosted a number of events in previous years, such as the first Nelson Mandela lecture by former South African political prisoner and anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Kathrada, held at KAZGUU University in conjunction with KIMEP University and the United Nations Office in Astana; dedication of a row of trees to Mandela in Astana; Nelson Mandela Art Exhibition at Kulanshi Art Gallery in Astana; street painting event for orphans in Astana; 67 Minutes of Yoga workshop facilitated by Ruweida Soni, wife of Ambassador Shirish Soni; establishing Nelson Mandela auditorium in Al-Farabi University in Astana; translating the book of Mandela quotations into Russian by students of KAZGUU University and Russian University and then from Russian to Kazakh by Kazakh writer Bakhyt Rustemov; screening of the movie "Long Walk to Freedom" and celebrating with orphans of the Korgau Private Charity Foundation in Astana.



Embassy of South Africa in Kazakhstan staff.

This year the mission kicked off its celebration of Madiba's (the South African title of respect and affection for Mandela) life and legacy by visiting the trees and plaque dedicated by the Akimat (Mayor).

The SOS Children's Village and Zhanara Baizhuldinova, a woman who adopted 11 orphans, were identified as the focus of the mission to honour Madiba's life and legacy.

The embassy assisted her by moving building material and litter, such as batteries, old doors, metal pipes, plastic, etc. to more appropriate areas. A fence was also fixed, making it a safer environment. The embassy provided food such as homemade cakes and pies, fruits, juices, sweets and cookies.

Another embassy group visited the children's village, which has operated in Astana since 2000 to provide assistance to families and homes for children. Amid all the current social and economic changes, SOS Children's Villages provide support for vulnerable youngsters who have lost parental care.

As part of Mandela Day the Spiritual Ambassador documentary, covering the Sonis' spiritual life, was rebroadcast July 17 on SABC2 TV.

The embassy's efforts were highly appreciated and the wish was expressed that cooperation will continue. Positive comments were received on Facebook, especially regarding the assistance to Baizhuldinova, with people indicating they would like to get involved.

Two More Policemen Dead Following Attacks in Almaty

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – The press service of Almaty's Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) has announced that two policemen who were injured in the July 18 shooting spree in Almaty by Ruslan Kulekbayev died Aug. 1, bringing the death toll of the attack to eight.

"Two policemen who suffered gunshot wounds while combating the unlawful acts by Ruslan Kulekbayev died in the critical care unit of Almaty's first aid ambulance hospital. Doctors were fighting for their lives until the end. Unfortunately, their injuries were serious," said the Aug. 1 statement.

Senior Sergeant Serik Abildayev and Lieutenant Meirambek Rakhmatullayev were the two most recent victims.

Abildayev, born in 1973, was a member of the road patrol regiment of the local police service of Almaty's DIA.

He served in internal affairs agencies since 1994 and had been awarded first, second and third degree medals for flawless activity in internal affairs agencies, a badge honouring his 20 years of service to Kazakhstan's police, and certificates from the Kazakh Ministry of Internal Affairs and Almaty's DIA during his service. Abildayev was married and had three daughters.

Rakhmatullayev, born in 1992, was a DIA district inspector for the Almaty region and had joined the police force in 2012. He was repeatedly awarded by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Almaty's DIA for his service. Rakhmatullayev was married.

"The leadership, the veterans' council and the personnel of Almaty's internal affairs department express their profound condolences to the relatives and loved ones of Abildayev and Rakhmatullayev," the DIA press service reported.

On July 18, Kulekbayev, a 26-year-old native of Kyzylorda region who had twice served time in prison for armed robbery and possession of firearms and who was suspected of killing a female citizen of Uzbekistan the night before, attacked a police station in Almaty.

At the time, six people lost their lives, among them four policemen, one retired Internal Affairs Ministry worker and one border guard officer who was off-duty. All police workers were married with children.

The attacks were motivated by revenge against law enforcement bodies and initiated and executed by Kulekbayev alone, authorities say. Kulekbayev's case will be investigated under several articles of the Criminal Code, including "Killing of one or more persons," "Terrorism," "Attacking state bodies" and "Resisting detention."

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Some 150 items produced in Kazakhstan will have the EXPO 2017 logo. These include consumer products like souvenirs and clothing, stationery and food items, others. However, manufacturers have to sign a contract with the Astana EXPO 2017 National Company in order to use the official symbols and obtain a license, and only then will the goods be available on the shelves of chain stores and sales outlets across the country. About 25 manufacturers intend to cooperate with the national company. However, cases of illegal use of the logo do exist – more than 20 such cases have been detected so far.

More than 280,000 children will receive assistance to prepare for the new school year as part of the annual "Road to School" charity event that was launched nine years ago. The main purpose of the event is to help children who have been left without parental care and children from large families prepare for school. Through this campaign, more than 2 million children have been helped in the years the programme operated. Representatives of large domestic companies, government agencies, businesses and the public have made significant contributions to the event. Besides school uniforms, other issues like transportation costs and free food have been tackled. "As part of this campaign, about 300,000 children are helped every year. In 2015, local executive bodies reached 318,026 children and financed them with about 2 billion tenge (US\$565). Last year, 20,000 more children received financial assistance," Manshuk Abdylkarim, acting chairperson of the Committee on the Protection of Children's Rights, noted.

Kyzylorda prosecutors recommend banning smartphones in schools, Kazakh TV reports. The reason was this upsetting statistic: according to experts of the supervisory body, 106 adolescents in the region were part of a group that had been promoting suicidal ideas via social networks. Also, 65 percent of crimes committed in schools involve stolen gadgets. Prosecutors believe that a ban on smartphones in schools will have a positive impact on students' achievements, as they will not be distracted during class. The supervisory agency also says the restriction will comfort children from poor families, since their parents cannot afford expensive electronic devices.

In addition to the main production zone, there are plans to enter the second stage of the national space centre's construction by 2020. The facility will include a residential complex which will accommodate 700-1,000 Kazkosmos specialists and have a kindergarten, sports and shopping centres and hotel. A museum open zone with models of launch vehicles and exhibition halls as well as an observatory for students will be constructed.

The Public Council of Astana has proposed to reduce parking fees three times, Kazakh TV reports. According to the council, the prices will bite some drivers. It is expected that the price of one hour of parking will be 150 tenge (US\$0.42), with the cost for 8 hours 1,200 tenge (US\$3.3). According to Chairman of the Public Council of Astana Samsyrbai Yessilov, this is quite pricey. The first paid parking lot will be located on Nurlu Zhol Boulevard, on the left bank of the capital, where the largest administrative buildings and houses are located.

In other transport news: on July 30, a tariff zone for suburban routes will be introduced in Astana. This is the first preparatory stage for the introduction of an electronic fare collection system. The suburban area of the capital is divided into four tariff zones. The length of each of them is up to 15 kilometres. The cost ranges from 90 tenge (US\$0.25) to 400 tenge (US\$1.1), with the price changing based on where the passenger is located. From the original complicated system of 84 tariffs, the number has now been decreased to five. The city administration is also planning to charge for entry to the city starting next year. Currently, laws are being reviewed for this purpose. Local authorities hope to unload some of the traffic off the capital's streets. Paid entry to Astana will be implemented on the following routes: Astana-Karaganda, Astana-Kostanay, Astana-Pavlodar, Astana-Kosshy, Astana-Korgalzhyn and Astana-Kokshetau. This initiative was previously discussed at the meeting of the Public Council in May.

Spacecraft Assembly Testing Complex to Be Built in Astana

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Kazakh First Deputy Prime Minister Bakhytzhah Sagintayev paid a visit July 26 to the capital's National Space Centre. Minister for Investment and Development Zhenis Kassymbek reported about the main development projects of Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary, the national space agency, as part of the trip.

"All the major projects launched by Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary will be supported. The head of state instructed that the establishment of the country's space industry must

be done efficiently and in a timely manner. Today, the main task is the creation of a spacecraft assembly and testing complex," said Kassymbek during his tour to the construction site in mid-July.

The company has begun implementing the space remote sensing system and ground-based high-precision satellite navigation infrastructure, according to Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary head Marat Nurguzhin. It is scheduled to complete construction and start operation of the spacecraft assembly and testing complex.

The guests saw a demonstration of Earth space monitoring with

the KazEOSat-1 and KazEOSat-2 spacecraft. Agency specialists also spoke about the reception and processing of satellite images technology, opportunities for using space remote sensing system products and services for the country's economy.

The space infrastructure under construction belongs to Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary and includes the existing ground-based space system of remote sensing, a system of high-precision satellite navigation and spacecraft assembly as well as other production facilities. The complex is housed within a 30-hectare administrative and residential area.

The company is the owner of the high-precision satellite navigation infrastructure system and provides guaranteed coordinate and timely services for global navigation satellite systems on Kazakhstan's territory.

Images of more than five million square kilometres of territory were made by Kazakhstan's satellite remote sensing in the first half of 2016. The space monitoring products have been donated to governmental authorities.

Creation of its own space system for scientific and technological purposes is among the promising projects of Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary. The design and assembly

of micro-satellite technology and a scientific nano-satellite is being conducted by local specialists trained overseas.

Creation of its own space system for scientific and technological purposes is among the promising projects of Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary. The design and assembly

Air Company Awards Plane to Children's Centre

Staff Report

In early June, the Kazakh airline company Air Control announced the winner of the competition for the best use of the decommissioned aircraft was the Children's Scientific and Educational Centre Evrikum in Almaty.

"To tell the truth, it was not easy to make a choice. However, the

main factors for us were the social approach of the project, interesting and unusual idea, and most importantly, the financial capacity of the applicant of carrying out a worthy project. We were aware that the implementation of such a project will require considerable financial investments from the very beginning. As a result, we pay attention to the seriousness of the main contenders

for the aircraft, their original ideas and resources for its implementation. We made the choice. The winner and a new owner of the Yak-40 aircraft is Evrikum, the children's scientific and educational centre. We congratulate this wonderful and unique park in Almaty. We found the perfect place for our other winged aircraft, which is conveniently located in the vast territory of the Grand

Park centre," the company's press office reported.

During the competition announced in early June, the applications were submitted from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Spain, Australia and El Salvador.

"The whole team of our company voted unanimously for the aircraft to stay in our home city of Almaty. We will be glad if this legendary board

starts a new life, bringing benefit and joy to all the residents and guests of the southern capital. The interest and excitement showed how relevant the topic is of 'planes in good hands.' We strongly believe and hope that our initiative will be interesting for many airlines around the world as the number of old planes in the park is striking and depressing. We sincerely urge our colleagues to do the same," continued the statement.

New Astana's Mayor Becomes Closer to Capital's Residents

By Natalya Kan

ASTANA – Asset Issekeshiev, named mayor of the Kazakh capital June 21, has been well accepted by its residents due to his work and decisions that show how far he is willing to go to bring the city to a new level.

The newly-appointed mayor communicates with people through social networks. His Facebook page covers news about city life, weather, sports and projects.

The mayor writes posts almost every day including local and foreign news. He shared reports July 22 about flooding in Astana, linking it to Kazakhstan's pouring rains which led to flooding in major cities. Issekeshiev indicated the government was exercising all efforts to resolve the issue and the flooded roads would soon be improved.



Astana Akim Asset Issekeshiev (L) and BI Group CEO Aidyn Rakhimbayev.

Issekeshiev's first promise after his appointment was a pledge to support programmes to fight crime, especially small violations.

"Local police service began to increase public safety by implementing the policy of 'zero tolerance' to small offenses – hooliganism, smok-

ing and drinking alcoholic drinks in public places to emission of garbage. So, since the beginning of July some 3,927 violations have been revealed," according to an official source Issekeshiev reposted on Facebook.

By commenting on the "good example to others," the mayor ex-

pressed his approval for the act of a valorous police officer who helped a driver on the road change a tire.

Issekeshiev regularly shares news about sports and public events. His Facebook page contained information about the third qualification round of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Champions League July 27 between the Astana and Celtic football clubs (FC). He added some streets have been blocked because of the match, with detour routes used as alternatives.

He also noted Alau Ice Arena opened its doors July 23 in summer mode. Residents and guests of the capital can spend their time playing badminton, table tennis and mini golf.

The centre is open daily, except for Monday. Children aged 5-12, retirees and people with disabilities of the third group receive a 50-percent discount. Children up to 5 years old get

in free, as well as people with handicaps of the first and second group and children from large families and foster homes.

Issekeshiev's page also includes information about building the new railway station. According to inform.kz, the station is under construction and compliant with all requirements, taking into account the most modern and advanced technologies.

The mayor also supports public actions. The news about Yarkokross, the festival of paints which brings a tonne of emotions and healthy rest and, of course, a huge amount of multi-colored paint, was listed on his account page. He noted more than 1,200 people of all ages participated in the event hosted in the city's central park.

Information regarding the second Eurasia Cup of "What? Where? When?" – the popular intellectual game held in the capital July 23–24, was among his posts, too.

"These days the strongest players from Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, the Netherlands, Estonia, Israel, the Czech Republic, Germany, Turkmenistan and other different cities competed in various intellectual disciplines," he said.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

The demand for foreign medical services remains fairly high, Kazakh TV reports. Experts forecast international tourism to grow 20 percent this year. According to the International Association for International Tourism, Kazakh residents seek treatment in hospitals in Israel, Germany, Switzerland, Turkey and China. "According to the World Health Organisation annual bulletin on international tourism, Kazakhs spent \$208 million on medical tourism in 2015," said Aiya Zholanova, general manager of the International Medical Centre. Experts have noted another trend – the shift of medical tourism towards the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The price range has moved into a more prosperous side in these countries. For example, cardiac and neurosurgical treatments, among others, used to be more in demand in China and Singapore. Now, South Korea is moving into the lead. Asia is becoming more and more popular due to lower costs when compared with treatment in the United States, Switzerland and Germany. Experts also claim that their foreign colleagues are always open to cooperation with Kazakhstan's physicians. New joint medical clinics for treating complex diseases are opening across Kazakhstan and there are rehabilitation centres equipped with advanced foreign medical technologies.

The payment for copyright has grown in Kazakhstan. According to the department that handles copyright affairs, the volume of payment has doubled over the past four years. In 2011, the total amount of remuneration was 267 million tenge (US\$750,000), whereas in 2015 it reached 800 million tenge (\$2.2 million). According to experts, it was caused by improvement in copyright legislation, as Kazakhstan adopts the experience of OECD countries. Thus, a limit on spending for copyright societies was introduced last year. The Abyroi copyright society is one of the oldest in Kazakhstan. About 70 percent of Kazakh actors have joined the national association. About 33.4 million tenge (\$94,000) was paid to the national authors this year. "The payments were scanty when we started in 2010. The fees amounted to about 50 million tenge (\$140,000). Now the charges have increased almost five times, up to 250 million tenge (\$703,000)," said Azamat Tleuzhanov, director general of Abyroi society of authors. International ratings confirm that copyright in Kazakhstan is well advanced. Five years ago, the country was rated 116th among indices for the protection of intellectual property competitiveness; currently it ranks 70th. A package of new amendments to copyright legislation is being prepared and will be submitted for consideration to Parliament this fall.

Kazakh traditional dishes and crafts were presented at the festival of Turkic national sports in the Turkish town of Bursa. Some 16 tents were installed, all richly decorated in a traditional style. The Turkic nations tried to show their culture and traditions. Festival guests were interested in the history, culture, and tourism destinations of Kazakhstan. Many appreciated the national goods presented at the exhibition. Silver jewellery and hats won special admiration. Moreover, many visitors tasted Kazakh cuisine for the first time. "Visitors to the festival of national Turkic sports watched with pleasure competitions of Kazakh national games. Interested guests were offered master classes on horse riding and archery," Mukhammed Aidyn, Bursa resident, said. One participant in the traditional games, Emrebek Aru, added, "Our aim is to attract more people into archery and to interest them in the sport. And our efforts are not in vain. For example, there were only a few people engaged in it just two years ago, but now their number has exceeded a few hundred. We want to attract more people. Such festivals help revive and promote some of the forgotten traditions and customs." The organisers are planning to hold a national sports festival every year and turn it into a popular folk festival.

Washington C5+1 Ministerial Meeting Launches Five Projects Worth \$15 Million



By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov took part in the second meeting of foreign ministers of Central Asia and the United States in the C5+1 format in Washington, D.C., Aug. 3. The group discussed regional security, economic connectivity, humanitarian issues, environmental issues and climate change.

The foreign ministers stressed the importance of developing the transport, logistics and energy

potential of Central Asia, as well as improving border infrastructure and strengthening regional security in the context of international efforts to stabilise the situation in Afghanistan.

The six ministers agreed to launch five projects related to these goals, which the U.S. plans to support with up to \$15 million. These projects aim to strengthen existing links between the Central Asian states and enhance their capacity. The projects are intended to support small businesses, help enhance the competitiveness of local producers,

reduce intra-regional trade barriers, fight international terrorism, develop alternative energy sources and enhance energy efficiency in general, as well as coordinate national efforts to implement the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The delegations emphasised their willingness to cooperate with interested international partners to successfully reach their collective goals.

In his remarks at the meeting, Idrissov noted that the C5+1 dialogue platform could become a major force for strengthening co-

operation between Central Asia and the U.S. He also stressed that the region should become a place where the interests of key countries coincide, not clash, the Kazakh Foreign Ministry reported.

The foreign ministers agreed to continue regular contacts at various levels, including meetings within the framework of already existing working groups.

On the sidelines of the forum, Idrissov and Kerry discussed strengthening cooperation between Kazakhstan and the U.S. in key areas.

On the same day, Idrissov met U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz to discuss cooperation between the two countries in energy security, the development of clean and renewable energy sources and the participation of the U.S. in EXPO 2017.

EXPO 2017, which will be held in Astana next year, was one of the main themes of Idrissov's address to American business representatives at an event organised at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The business representatives showed great interest in the expansion of commercial contacts between the two countries.

Idrissov specifically highlighted the value of the future legacy of EXPO 2017. According to him, the new Astana International Financial Centre, which will eventually be housed in infrastructure created for the expo, will serve as the main economic hub of the region, as well as the centre for green technology transfer under the auspices of the UN, a programme initiated by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev at the 70th session of the General Assembly.

The ministers expressed their gratitude to the U.S. for hosting the meeting in the C5+1 format. The meeting marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the U.S.

Moscow Hosts Street Photo Exhibition Dedicated to Kazakhstan



Staff Report

The Kazakh Embassy to Russia and the National Geographic Russia magazine organised a Kazakhstan – Land of the Great Steppe street photo exhibition, reported the press service of the magazine.

According to the press statement, the exhibition, opened as of July 21, stationed itself in the centre of the Russian capital, on Nickolskaya Street next to the Square of Revolution metro station. The exposition showcases more than 60 photos of picturesque natural landscapes of Kazakhstan, as well as significant coming events, such as the Winter Universiade in Almaty and EXPO in Astana, both to be held in 2017.

The exhibited photos have been created by the chief photographer of National Geographic Russia, Andrey Kamenev, who spend a month travelling the country.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Editor-in-Chief of the magazine Andrey Palamarchuk noted that the month-long exhibition is also dedicated to the recently presented first issue of National Geographic Kazakhstan translated in the Kazakh language. He also emphasised that the exhibition is mostly focused on the coming EXPO 2017.

"The Future Energy exhibition topic is an up-to-date issue important for humanity and it also corresponds with the policy of the magazine, as our mission is to take care of the planet and inspire our readers to think about the common future of the world around us," explained Palamarchuk.

Minister-Counsellor of the Kazakh Embassy to Russia Marat Syzdykov said the Kazakh landscape is a unique complex, which incorporates natural wonders of Europe and Asia. He also expressed his high hopes that the exhibition will attract more people to visit Kazakhstan.

The head Deputy of the Marketing, Public Relations and Tourism Department of the Astana EXPO 2017 National Company Dzhamilya Nurkalyieva thanked National Geographic Russia and the Kazakh Embassy for the exhibition's organisation and invited all to come to Astana in 2017 for the EXPO, announcing that tickets are already available to purchase.

The opening speeches were followed by a concert programme, prepared by the Chairman of the Kazakh Cultural Autonomy of Moscow, Damilya Tasmaganbetova.

The photo exhibition will be open until August 24.

Kazakhstan Fights Online Terrorist Propaganda

Staff Report

Kazakhstan recently blocked 94 suspicious websites for spreading extremism and terrorism propaganda messages, reported the press service of the Astana Prosecutor General's Office.

Since the beginning of the current year, the Yessil district court in Astana has issued 18 rulings concerning illegal content and products placed on foreign internet platforms and it was decided to terminate the further distribution of this content on the territory of the country.

The press service stated that all claims have been brought by the State Control Committee for Communications and Mass Media of the Ministry for Information and Communications of Kazakhstan.

According to the press announcement, upon the thorough review of civil cases 94 websites appeared to contain information supporting terrorism, extremism and separatism in all possible forms, which can undermine national security. All these internet platforms are now blocked.

Meanwhile, the court in Aktobe



made an order to arrest in absentia a local resident and lawyer, who is currently fighting in Syria. The court granted the request issued by the Kazakh special services.

According to the court order, the copy of which is now forwarded to the agency, a 31-year-old lawyer went to Syria in May 2015 following a round through Turkey. The investigation established that he, as an adherent of radical Islam was admitted to the so called ISIS, a terrorist organisation prohibited on the territory of Kazakhstan and dozens of other countries, upon

his arrival in Syria. He also went through military training and took part in fighting against governmental troops.

Since May 2016, he has regularly got in touch with his family members in social media, and told them in detail about the everyday life. He also shared his intention to become a shahid and die as a martyr.

According to the court, his messages also contained signs of social and religious hatred, as well as calls for the seizure of power and violent change of the constitutional system of Kazakhstan.

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Sincerely,
Roman Vassilenko
Editor-in-Chief
The Astana Times

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Kazakhstan Temir Zholy Starts Final Stage of Transformation Programme

By Zhazira Dyussembekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ), the national railway company, announced the start of projects within the business transformation programme for 2016-2019 and its plans to finish establishing a national infrastructure operator by the end of 2017 during special July 29 information day, according to company's press release.

The transformation is divided into several stages.

"This is the key final stage of the transformation programme, which is the result of the painstaking two-year joint work of the transformation team and the employees of the company," said Vice President for Development Yerkin Zhusanbayev.

KTZ began implementing its development strategy last year. In that time the company has worked on a process model and strategic key performance indicators, as well as its efficiency and new IT architecture. Each aspect led to the creation of specific projects that the company will execute during the next three years.



Introducing the changes started with the application of the new organisational structure through a phased transition, according to the press release. The cargo carrier was also formed last month.

The company is aiming to become an international transport

and logistics holding and the next step towards improvement is the introduction of new and improved processes to increase efficiency and customer focus.

"Conceptual relaunch of the key systems will allow KTZ to go on a global service delivery

model and will help to increase the company's revenues," said Zhusanbayev.

Earlier this year, he also announced the number of subsidiaries and affiliated companies will be reduced from 97 to 41 and the company will focus on

three main activities related to the product supply chain in the target market segments with the greatest growth potential – the services of the main rail network, multimodal logistics and rail freight transport, according to Tengrinews.kz.

KTZ's transformation programme started in 2014 along with transformation of other Kazakh national companies, such as Kazpost, KazMunaiGas and Kazatomprom. The modification involves deep analysis and re-engineering of business processes, the elimination of unproductive units, development and supply of services and technology in demand, according to the KTZ website.

The key direction of the transformation is a change in the corporate culture, as well as the development of human capital, in line with the long-term strategic objectives of the company through continuous learning and improvement. Creating the environment to maximise human potential will increase the value of the company and change the internal culture and efficiency of processes, noted KTZ.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev met Aug. 3 with National Bank Chairman Daniyar Akishev, reported the Akorda press service. Akishev spoke about the work being implemented to control inflation in the country. In turn, the President insisted on continuing the effective awareness-raising measures over the situation with the slipping rate of tenge. "The decision on the introduction of a free-floating exchange rate was correct. Now, however, there was a definite surge and its reasons should be explained to people," said Nazarbayev. Akishev noted, "In the first six months of this year the price of oil rose from US\$27 to \$52 per barrel, but in July it fell by 15 percent from \$52 to \$42. There was a similar situation in all developing, raw materials exporting states. Their national currencies strengthened as Kazakhstan's; after that, there was a 2-3 percent decrease. Tenge in nominal terms in July weakened 4.2 percent; we believe that this is a normal adjustment. Currently, the situation has stabilised. We don't expect that in the future the rate will in any way fluctuate."

Deposits to the Single Accumulative Pension Fund of Kazakhstan (SAPF) are decreasing every year, according to statements published on the National Bank of Kazakhstan website. As of June 1, pension deposits amounted to 4.5 trillion tenge (\$12.7 billion), an increase of 4.3 percent during the past five months, stated the National Bank report. A minor slowdown was caused by the closing of individual pension accounts with zero balances and merger of the same investors' pension accounts. The number of deposit accounts on voluntary fees has been reduced due to the migration of people from Kazakhstan, as well as the closing of accounts with zero balances.

Experts of the Kazakhstan Institute of Industry Development explained in detail how the Productivity 2020 state programme works and who is eligible for state support. Thanks to the support, for example, a cement plant managed to fully install equipment and set up production. The plant now provides building materials to EXPO sites and in the future plans to become the main supplier of concrete for construction of Astana's monorail transport infrastructure. The government support measures helped another refinery near Astana. In total, more than 30 enterprises received financial assistance from the state last year as part of the Productivity 2020 programme, with the total amount of allocated funds reaching nearly 170 million tenge (\$480,000). The programme will continue for three more years, meaning dozens of companies have an opportunity to lay the foundation for further development.

Vietnam and the Zhambyl region intend to expand cooperation, as a joint Kazakh-Vietnamese sportswear manufacturing venture will be launched in Taraz in the near future, reported Kazakh TV. The announcement was made during a visit to the region of the delegation headed by Vietnamese Ambassador to Kazakhstan Doan Thi Xuan Hien. He met with representatives of government and business entities and became acquainted with investment projects in the agriculture, chemical industry and construction materials production spheres. "We want to strengthen the economic and trade relationship with your region. The volume of trade between our countries is still low. I brought Vietnamese entrepreneurs here; they got acquainted with the products of the Zhambyl producers. We also demonstrated Vietnamese products. I am sure that trade turnover will increase between the parties after this meeting," said the ambassador.

National Bank and Experts Explain Tenge Weakening by Falling Ruble, Internal Reasons

By Yerbolat Uatkhonov

ASTANA – Trades on the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange (KASE) showed a weakening of the tenge, as the U.S. dollar exchange rate reached 350.2 tenge per \$1 earlier this week. The main factor is the fall in oil prices, although movement of budgetary funds, tax payment periods and the dedollarisation process are also considered to be involved.

"Currently we have a free-floating exchange rate, which suggests daily fluctuations depending on a number of factors. First of all, the oil price and exchange rates of states which are main trade partners. At that, the tenge exchange rate is also influenced by internal factors such as expectations of market participants, movement of budgetary funds, tax payment periods and a trend towards dedollarisation of the economy in the past few

months," said National Bank monetary operations and asset management deputy director Adil Mukhamedzhanov, according to Kazpravda.kz.

He noted oil prices decreased in July due to the growth of the oil supply, publication of reports about sufficient oil reserves and the increasing number of wells in the U.S.

"In recent years, [Russia's] ruble showed a decrease in sensitivity to changes in oil prices. However, the value of the ruble relative to the U.S. dollar fell when oil prices fell," he added, reported Kapital.

Independent oil and gas analyst Olzhas Baidildinov noted there is a direct connection between the ruble exchange rate and oil prices.

"The oil price increase makes the ruble stronger. The oil price fall makes it weaker. In Kazakhstan, the situation is different. Usually we can observe significant correlation when the oil price falls. At

that, oil price growth doesn't make Kazakhstan national currency stronger," he said.

Baidildinov is sure that small and medium-sized businesses and even large enterprises are interested in determining minimum and maximum exchange rate levels.

"If the National Bank declares that the lowest level is 330 tenge per \$1 and the highest is 360 tenge per \$1, everybody will work in more comfortable conditions and develop their own business," he added.

"Maybe the National Bank aims to provide maximum support for exporters and help the government to increase the tenge in payments to its budget, which hasn't been revised (\$30 per oil barrel and 360 tenge per \$1) in spite of the fact that the oil price increased by 50 percent within six months," said Kazkommerts Securities assets management head Aivar Baikenov.

Kazakhstan Becomes First Central Asian Country on OECD Competition Committee

Staff Report

The antimonopoly body of Kazakhstan has been accepted as a new member of the Competition Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), reported the press service of the Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan.

The organisation includes 35 member states, most of which

ed that, given global trends, it is vital for Kazakhstan to become a member of this organisation, as it influences the global economy. The contemporary goal of Kazakhstan is to comply with the main principles and standards of the OECD in competition matters, which means the creation of better conditions for competition on domestic commodity markets. Furthermore, it strengthens the general competitiveness of the country as part of the Eurasian

The Ministry of Economy noted that, given global trends, it is vital for Kazakhstan to become a member of this organisation, as it influences the global economy.

are European countries, including Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, as well as the U.S., Japan and Australia. The economies of the OECD members account for about 60 percent of the world gross domestic product (GDP). It should be highlighted that Kazakhstan is the first country in Central Asia to become a member of the OECD Competition Committee.

According to the press statement, Kazakhstan's accession to the OECD Competition Committee opens up possibilities to learn from the best world practices and implement them to strengthen the integration process with the most developed countries of the world. The unlimited access to the existing OECD research and analytical materials will allow the state to avoid errors and speeding up the process of antimonopoly regulation reforms.

The Ministry of Economy not-

Economic Union (EAEU) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The ministry in its announcement emphasised that at the present stage the competition policy of Kazakhstan shows its commitments to the principles of free market and strives to minimise governmental interference. The contributed innovations in the legislation will also allow improving market efficiency. As one of the main outcomes of the biennial cycle of work, the country expects a transition from state price regulation to the market price formation with the introduction of antitrust tools, such as the suppression of disorders associated with the establishment of too high or too low monopoly prices, the fight against cartels and the suppression of vertical agreements.

Kazakh National Bank Issues Commemorative Coins



Staff Report

On July 29, the Kazakh National Bank issued new special 500 tenge (US\$1.43) coins made of gold and silver, as well as 100 tenge (US\$0.29) coins made of nickel silver. The coins are part of a series dedicated to Abulhair Khan.

All coins have identical front

and back sides, while the gold and silver ones show a portrait of Khan

The front side of the coins represents the national coat of arms, the number 500 for gold and silver coins and 100 for nickel silver coins, as well as the word tenge. National ornaments are presented on the right and left sides and Kazakhstan Republic is written in Kazakh and Russian circumferen-

tially. The bank's logo is situated on the top of the coin.

The reverse side of the coins partly represents Abulhair Khan's portrait designed for a 50-tenge banknote issued in 1993 and currently removed from operation. The name of the ruler, the year of the coin 2016 and some graphic designs are written circumferentially. The upper part of the golden coins showcase the Au 999 lettering and Ag 925 on the silver coins. This indicates the material the coins are made from and their proof.

All images and lettering on both sides of the coins are textured.

The total number of golden coins with 21.87 mm in diameter is 1,000 pieces. Silver coins 38.61 mm in diameter total 3,000 pieces and 100,000 coins made of nickel silver and with 31 mm in diameter were issued by the bank.

The commemorative coins of 500 and 100 tenge can be used as normal currency throughout the country.



BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Astana's branch of the Nur Otan Party and the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs will join efforts to support local business, reported Kazakh TV. A memorandum was signed last week in the hope of helping to protect the interests of entrepreneurs and enhance the competitiveness of national business, creating favourable legal and economic conditions for its management. "We aimed to achieve a 50 percent share of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in GDP by 2050. In particular, we are going to increase this share from 25 percent to 30 percent by 2021. We viewed it by the regions; Astana has a million people and 288,000 people work in SMEs, which is almost 30 percent. That puts the capital ahead of all other cities," said Nur Otan Astana branch Deputy Chairman Edil Mamytkov.

Eight major investment plans are to be implemented in the Taldykorgan industrial zone in the next few years with the assistance of strategic foreign partners. Three of the projects in the energy sector are the construction of the Kerbulak counter regulating hydroelectric generating station at Ili River, the wind farm in Chilik and development of the energy potential of the Shelek region. Three additional companies – a soy plant, meat plant and bakeries – were created in the zone. "It's a total of 600 hectares; it is a very large area. There are plans to create about 7,500 jobs. Also, about 40 production facilities are scheduled to open," said Marzhan Murat, head of the entrepreneurship and industrial-innovative development department.

Consumer lending is in demand again in the country, according to ranking.kz. The volume of new loans provided to residents rose to 167 billion tenge (US\$470 million) in May, which is 22 percent higher compared to May 2015. The average consumer loans in the previous four months were at 15 percent per month and slower compared to the same period last year. A reduction was observed during the entire previous year. Banks issued 1.8 trillion tenge (US\$5 billion) in 2015, 22 percent more than in 2014.

Culinary tourism is gaining popularity in East Kazakhstan. Citizens come to the open air zhailau (meadows) to enjoy the fresh mare's milk and breathe the fresh mountain air. The Katon-Karagai is developing the local tourism. According to travellers, it's worth overcoming the long distance to taste the kumis. Farmers say the secret to the drink's popularity is in the local nature. Horses graze in meadows among coniferous forests, resulting in a milk yield that is big, delicious and rich in vitamins. "Kumis is very sour. This is the real kumis. The sour kumis improves health and cures all diseases," Katon-Karagai resident Nurailym Dautkhanova told the local media. Approximately 72 million tenge (US\$202,000) was allocated to support kumis production in the district. In the last five years, the number of farms engaged in beverage production has increased to 54. This year, there are plans to produce about three tonnes of the drink in the region.

Retail sales showed an increase of 23.7 percent in nominal and 0.3 percent in real terms in the first half of the year, reported Kazakh TV. The first half of the year saw a 24 percent increase, the highest over the previous year in monetary terms. Almaty showed the most significant share of total retail sales, recording 29 percent from January-June. Astana had an 11 percent share. The share of the East Kazakhstan, Karaganda and South Kazakhstan regions was 24 percent. In general terms, the joint share of these regions was 72 percent. The remaining 28 percent was divided among the other regions. The shares of Almaty and Astana have remained virtually unchanged in the past five years, maintaining the dominant position.

Why Buying Housing with Samruk Kazyna's Real Estate Fund Makes More Sense

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – For the 25-year-old nation, the idea of renting is so alien that residents easily get dragged – as it first might look from the foreigner's point of view – into insane mortgage rates. Some second-tier banks are giving mortgages with annual interest rates at as high as 16.5 percent and a 20-30 percent down payment. Since 1991, consumers have been overpaying triple the price of the apartment's actual cost. That does not stop Kazakhs, however, from signing agreements with banks.

The 17-million population has a different approach when it comes to purchasing versus renting. The nation that prefers its traditional values regards family and stability as the top priority and the housing question, no doubt, is by far the most discussed in the lives of the majority of Kazakh citizens. Having one's own apartment at whatever the cost still supersedes the idea of renting because "it will be yours eventually," most people argue.

The state's management has launched numerous campaigns to provide Kazakh citizens with affordable housing as "[home] is the solid foundation of personal life and the climate in the family; no well-being or productive work is



Timur Kaldybaev

possible without it," President Nursultan Nazarbayev once said.

In an interview with Samruk Kazyna Real Estate Fund Marketing and Development Managing Director and board member Timur Kaldybaev, The Astana Times wanted to learn what tools are being used to facilitate apartment purchases for Kazakhstan citizens.

The real estate fund has been providing affordable housing options as part of the Kazakhstan Regional Development 2020 state programme. The fund currently has 12 projects in Aktobe, Almaty, Astana, Atyrau, Karaganda, Kyzylorda, Shymkent, Taraz, Ust-Kamenogorsk and Almaty region.

"As part of the Regional Development 2020 programme, there are two ways to purchase housing: rent with the option to purchase or buy it out. This type of housing is more affordable than what the market has to offer and the rent-to-own tool makes it even more accessible for [ordinary people]," said Kaldybaev.

Launched in 2014, the Regional Development 2020 programme is hoping to provide tens of thousands of Kazakhs with affordable housing without the over-the-top mortgage rates. Several national companies have also been involved to initiate similar schemes, like the Baiterek Holding and its subsidiary, Kazakhstan Mortgage Company.

"The differences between rent-to-own and the mortgage is that via a mortgage the housing is acquired on the open market at the market price. On top of that, the banks charge their own interest rates and plus since 2012 they ask for the down payment. The banks' appraisals underestimate the real housing value, therefore the mortgage becomes unreasonable. The rent-to-own is also a long-term renting option with the right to buy-out but with no down payment and the prices are not based on the market value of property, but purely on the cost of construction. This price is fixed and overseen by a government decree. These factors

make the rent-to-own option more affordable and accessible by 30-50 percent," said Kaldybaev.

The fund is playing out all the aces for its potential consumers to a point where "people have a hard time believing our transparent programmes," he added. Some apartments are offered but have no demand, as sometimes people do not have the correct information; hence the fund is being as transparent as possible. All bids are placed online and can be easily monitored by the bidders themselves.

"The fund is the creditor. People sign agreements with the right to buy out in 15 years with the monthly fee and a guaranteed payment amounting to three-month's rent. There is no down payment, but anyone could make a 50-percent down payment if he or she wishes so, thus reducing the amount of monthly payments," said Kaldybaev.

When purchasing property directly in Aktau, Almaty, Astana, Atyrau and their suburbs for housing constructed since 2012, the price of one square metre will amount to no more than 180,000 tenge (US\$513). In other regions of the country, the same square metre will cost no more than 144,000 tenge (US\$410). When buying a home directly, it is also possible to get a mortgage at second-tier banks.

In case of rent-to-own, for 15-

year rent-to-own mortgages payment in the same cities and suburbs, the monthly payment will be about 1,600 tenge (US\$4.50) and 1,300 tenge (US\$3.70) per square metre in the regions.

In both cases, payments are subject to change in subsequent years based on the cost of construction.

One thing people must understand, said Kaldybaev, is this is not free housing under this Program but affordable housing for the underprivileged and applicants must prove their financial status to qualify.

"The Akimats (city administrations) have those lists of people waiting for houses, the underprivileged families and those individuals have priority. In the first place, housing determined for realisation through akimats is allocated by local authorities among the people on the waiting list. If one of them refuses the offers, then remaining apartments are suggested to individuals, who do not have housing on our web site www.fnsk.kz," he said.

The funny part is "in fact, only 30 percent of applicants actually show up to continue the paperwork," he added.

The fund participates in launch of other projects in view of EXPO 2017.

"We are financing the [construction of the] 'Green Quarter' according to 'green standards,'" said Kaldybaev. "This project is being carried out by Samruk Kazyna Development together with private construction companies and foreign partners who work according to the design of the projects of energy-efficient and environmental friendly construction (LEED).

New GPS Security System Made in Kazakhstan Draws International Attention



Staff Report

The Mongoose GPS-security system, invented by Kazakh citizen Evgeny Shcherbatov has received attention in the U.S., and an order from the Autism Society San Francisco, reported

the press service of the National Agency for Technological Development (NATD).

The invention has been ordered by 600 Kazakh citizens and the Kazakh organisation Kazpost to track parcels.

The newly created gadget was sponsored by the National

Agency for Technological Development, which allocated 17.7 million tenge (US\$51,000) and covered 90 percent of the cost of the tracker. The total cost of the project was 18.8 million tenge (US\$53,000).

The inventor of the Mongoose tracker created the device after losing track of his child.

According to the agency's representatives, the GPS-tracker has a solid and easy to carry construction. It can also operate under water and is energy-efficient, as its charge can last up to 20 days. The Mongoose can be used any place in the world with a mobile connection. It features high accuracy and transmits the coordinates even in shopping malls and basements in contrast to similar GPS-systems. Besides, the gadget has a simple interface and also suitable for people with disabilities.

The tracker set also includes a full-featured application that allows a user to track the exact location of a child or loved one.

Government Launches Satellite Navigation Software

Staff Report

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's state bodies are now using satellite navigation software to better manage logistics, according to the press service of the National Agency for Technological Development.

National company Kazakhstan Gharysh Sapary has developed a monitoring and control system to track moving objects. The technology was developed with grant funds in the amount of 18,729,937 tenge (US\$53,195) and for company's own funds in the amount of 1,032,037 tenge (US\$2,931).

The system already has clients, including government organisations, such as the National Me-

thodical Centre of Phytosanitary Diagnostics and Projections and Department of the Military Police of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan.

The system provides software for control of vehicles. The service is provided to the end user along with turnkey installation of the hardware and configuration of navigation equipment to ensure access to the system. After that, the user can browse online the necessary information through his own terminal. Any personal computer with internet access can be used. The subscription fee is charged at the same time every month and provides a variety of service plans for each type of vehicle.

Now Kazakhstan Gharysh Sa-

pany aims to increase the annual production of industrial prototypes from 10,000 to 100,000 units.

According to the organisation, the competing systems to provide services for the location of moving objects have several disadvantages. In particular, the impossibility of localisation in the national language, difficulties in connecting to navigation equipment of previously unknown producers and the absence of clearly-established technology to provide all services from installation to maintenance.

In the near future, satellite navigation systems as well as complete solutions based on them will be implemented in all sectors of the economy.

Pavlodar Plant Signs 300 Million Euro Deal for Aluminium Supply

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The Eurasian Resources Group (ERG), a leading diversified natural resources company, and VTB Group have entered into a strategically important deal in the amount of 300 million euros to finance a six-year aluminium supply.

SOBOTKA: "This deal is the first long-term financing of the Kazakhstan Electrolysis Plant ensuring the stability of the enterprise and guaranteed markets products throughout the term of the agreement. We are the only aluminium producer producing the metal of the highest grade in Kazakhstan."

According to the ERG Communications Department, VTB Capital has issued an advance payment for aluminium supply totalling 660,000 tonnes over the life of the loan to the Kazakhstan Electrolysis Plant (KEP) located in Pavlodar. VTB Capital has already signed long-term contracts for the implementation of this metal with end users, reported In-

form.kz. The partners have developed a hedge strategy against falling aluminium prices and the KEP will set the selling price of aluminium in a particular corridor, fixing it at the level not lower than the boundaries of the corridor to stabilise cash flows.

"This deal is the first long-term financing of the Kazakhstan Electrolysis Plant ensuring the stability of the enterprise and guaranteed markets products throughout the term of the agreement. We are the only aluminium producer producing the metal of the highest grade in Kazakhstan," said CEO of Eurasian Resources Group Benedict Sobotka.

According to head of the bank's Credit Department, Senior

Vice President of VTB Bank Vitaly Buzoverya, operations in the commodities market is one of the priorities of the company.

"The deal will further strengthen our position in the commodities segment. Our work strategy in this market involves expanding the range of goods and services provided by VTB customers," she said.

KEP's production capacity accounts to 250,000 tonnes of aluminium per year. The company is listed on the London Mercantile Exchange brand. Its production technology is characterised by high innovation and an environmentally friendly approach. With these indicators, the plant is included in the world's top ten aluminium giants among 200 companies.

A reduction in specific consumption of electricity for electrolytic aluminium by 1.4 percent below the standard value and 2.7 percent less than the project value was achieved at the KEP since the energy management system ISO 50001 series was launched in 2014 and due to the work of energy saving from the Aksu power station. This indicator is one of the best in the world.

Overall, the energy consumption for production of one tonne of primary aluminium for the first nine years of the company's work was reduced threefold. The plant also produces its own anodes used in aluminium production, which gives an additional opportunity to reduce the cost of metal.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Consistent Efforts Needed to Tackle Terrorism

It is a sign of how dangerous our world seems to have become that every time we look at the daily news, we are relieved if we learn there have been no major new terrorist attacks. It has been estimated, for example, that in Europe alone the last two months have seen attacks every 84 hours.

And just in case the frequency of these attacks loses their ability to shock, the extremists sink to ever new depths of depravity. In the last few weeks, we have witnessed children slaughtered while watching a firework display in Nice and the bombing of peaceful protestors in Kabul, shoppers in Baghdad and air passengers in Istanbul. We have seen, too, mass shootings at a nightclub in Orlando and a café in Dhaka, not to mention the hospital bombings in Quetta.

Churches, mosques, the holiest sites, and hospitals are no longer places of sanctuary but deliberate targets. In an attack of individual savagery, an 85-year-old priest had his throat cut while conducting a service in a Normandy church. There seems no limit to the barbarity of those behind these attacks.

While violence globally is on the rise, Kazakhstan has also seen its own acts of terrorism. The attacks in Aktope seem to have been carried out by our own nationals but encouraged and ordered, even if indirectly, from abroad. Radicalisation also appears to have played a part in the murderous criminal assault on law enforcement officers in Almaty more recently.

This showed that the threat from terrorism is serious even for a country with an international reputation for having built a stable and tolerant society with people from many different backgrounds living in peace together. This success makes it easy to forget that Kazakhstan is located in a region where violent extremism has a solid presence.

The frequency and ferocity of all these attacks across the world has a purpose. They are designed to spread a climate of fear and increase tensions and divisions in both individual societies and the international community as a whole. It is why we must be steadfast in our response to refuse to allow the extremists to drive us apart.

We must also remember that, despite what our enemy wants us to believe, these attacks are not launched from a position of strength. The radical hate-filled groups behind them find themselves, in fact, under growing pressure.

They are losing territory fast in Iraq and Syria where once they seemed unstoppable. In Libya, too, they are in retreat. International action is cutting off the funding they need to pay their fighters and weapons. Against this background, the increased attacks can be seen as an attempt to hide failure and to maintain relevance to the weak and disenchanted who are their potential recruits.

But as the daily news tragically underlines, we can't sit around and expect the threat, ideology and appeal of violent extremism simply to fade away. We have to do more both individually and collectively to counter it.

Security services, for example, have to be given the resources to keep citizens safe. Barriers to the sharing of intelligence between countries must be removed.

We have to recognise as well how adept extremists are at exploiting divisions and resentment. They thrive in areas of conflict as the Middle East and North Africa show. International efforts to settle violent disputes must be redoubled.

The extremists feed, too, on the despair brought by grinding poverty and loss of hope. It would be foolish, of course, to believe that tackling unfairness and disadvantage in our world would end recruitment to these barbarous groups. But a concerted attempt to remove these grievances, as well as being the right step in itself, would undoubtedly reduce the attractiveness of their warped ideology.

There must be increased attempts as well to foster understanding between faiths and focus on the values they have in common. This has been a major priority for Kazakhstan for many years, which has also backed calls within the global Muslim community of the need to heal divisions in our ranks.

Achieving all these goals needs concerted political leadership. It is why President Nazarbayev urged the United Nations to take the lead. Only the UN has the global authority to bring countries together to agree and deliver a comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy and coalition. Kazakhstan must use its position on the UN Security Council to argue this case forcefully.

Defeating violent extremism will take time and effort. But with determined global leadership, we can squeeze the life out of this menace to the benefit of all our safety so the daily news reflects a world at greater peace.

Capital Circus Manager Explains Process Behind Performances

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

ASTANA – Last December, the Capital Circus marked its 10th anniversary. In its short life, it has become the leading circus in the country. This comes as no surprise, as founding members of the Capital Circus include key performers from the old Almaty Circus.

The Capital Circus participates in the international Echo of Asia festival, which annually brings together masters of the circus arts from all around the world. Deputy Director of the Capital Circus Vladislav Bernadskiy explained in an interview the difficult but interesting life of circus artists.



Vladislav Bernadskiy

We will continue this practice: currently we are working on new acts for our artists to perform in China.

Each circus has its unique feature. What is yours?

It is that our circus hosts all the international events in Kazakhstan that promote our national circus art at the international level. We invite colleagues from neighbouring and distant foreign countries; we try to arrange tours of our artists abroad. Currently, our artists are on tours in America, Indonesia and China, and they will soon go to Spain and then to Italy.

Part of this unique feature is also the opportunity for Kazakh artists to perform abroad, which is ensured through the international events we hold. The staff of the Capital Circus was formed from the old Almaty Circus. Those artists have done a great job, and we are grateful for that. New artists who come to us and become real professionals, proving their master skills by performing in international arenas, continue this work.

You regularly host the best representatives of international circus arts. Tell us more about this cooperation.

We closely cooperate with circuses of the post-Soviet area, including the Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Turkmen circuses. This year, we've started to work closely with a Hungarian circus whose director attended the Echo of Asia festival. We plan to include an act in the international Hungarian circus programme this September. It will be our first step to access the European market. We need this to exchange experience and artists.

It should be noted that we have been very closely cooperating with China for five years already. Today, about half of our circus troupe is on tour in China. This cooperation has a long-term foundation. Artists of the Capital Circus perform in China and win their prestigious awards.

some to join us. Usually, they have their own acts. When they come to the circus, they work with our directors and we start to develop performances, sew costumes and bring their acts to perfection.

Who trains them?

They are already trained in college, where our circus luminaries work as teachers; they specialise in such areas as gymnastics, acrobatics and clownery. Today we have some problems with animal training, but our artists try to emulate the experiences of their colleagues, so this genre is also being developed. There are exotic acts with lions in our repertoire; there are also performing camels, horses, ponies and dogs. We include two other animal acts into the rehearsal programme; they include monkeys and bears. When these acts are ready, we can create a comprehensive circus animal programme to go on tours both in Kazakhstan and abroad.

Do circuses work to attract new artists, like football and hockey teams try to recruit new players?

Of course. This starts from the moment of graduation. Our representatives and our colleagues from the Almaty and Shymkent circuses attend each graduation. The task of each circus is to get the best students. There is competition, but it is carried out through friendly negotiations. Each circus proposes its conditions, and the students, choosing the most appropriate format, decide where they want to work. Speaking of proposed conditions, we offer housing, which is a key factor – we have a residence hall. Moreover, we provide conditions for rehearsals, including director's assistance.

Let's go back to animals; they are also circus artists. What kind of animals do you have in your circus, and how often do you need to replace them?

The difference between circus and other types of art is that there is no opportunity to change acts frequently. The circus art is based, first of all, on physical conditions and physiological peculiarities. That is why for the act to be highly professional, an artist must prepare it for many years. Then the professionalism is noted by other circuses, and the artist starts to perform this act around the world. Thus, it is difficult to prepare another act and it takes years.

The same concerns trained animals. As you noted correctly, animals are also artists. That is why animals are replaced in advance.

Each animal trainer understands his or her animals; they are like children to them. They almost live together. An animal trainer can usually sense when an animal should no longer be used in an act, and starts to train another animal in advance for replacement. This transition must be carried out smoothly, because it is impossible to replace an animal quickly.

The circus arts can be very dangerous. Have you had any incidents or accidents over the last decade in the Capital Circus?

Thank God, this has not happened to us. We have not experienced serious incidents like this. However, worldwide, circus artists die every year. This includes animal trainers, who work with predators; it includes gymnasts and acrobats, performing tricks without any safety devices. They fall, break limbs, become disabled. Unfortunately, this is commonplace. Each artist from the very beginning must be ready for these possible consequences.

Tell us about the timetable of a circus artist. Do they have vacations or days off?

They have almost no days off. Each artist has a personal rehearsal schedule. Artists have rehearsal up to three times a day; they always work and bring their skills to perfection. The only time to rest is on vacation. They go on vacation annually between tours.

What does the payment system of artists look like? Do they receive a salary every month or honoraria?

Our artists receive salaries set by the state. During tours, of course, artists receive honoraria, but they cover only travel costs.

Does this mean circus artists here are really following their vocation?

Yes, it does. There is no financial benefit, only the fulfillment of the sincere desire to be a circus artist.

Has anyone tried to lure your artists away with better financial offers?

It makes no sense. One can invite an artist to perform, organise tours, the artist can perform freely and then go back to the circus. This practice exists. We have artists who interest us as visiting performers, but that doesn't mean we are interested in them as regular employees. We have our own artists.

What is the most important quality a circus artist needs?

First of all, it is passion for the circus arts. Each circus artist, actually, is first a fan of the circus, and a person who devotes himself or herself to the art. This is common among all artists. Not everyone can become a circus artist – the desire must lie deep in the soul. That is why the circus is a unique art.

KAZAKHSTAN. 25 YEARS OF NUCLEAR RESPONSIBILITY.

From the horrors of 40 years of nuclear weapons testing to today's call to eliminate the threat of nuclear terrorism, Kazakhstan's 25 year journey from Soviet-era survivor to champion of nuclear responsibility is as remarkable as it is inspiring.

On August 29, 1991, President Nursultan Nazarbayev decreed the immediate closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site, after the city and its people suffered more than 450 nuclear tests conducted there by the former Soviet Union. Since then the President has called on the world's leaders to follow Kazakhstan's example as a leader in global nuclear responsibility.

On August 29, 2012, President Nazarbayev put forward another initiative, The ATOM Project (Abolish Testing. Our Mission.), to galvanise global citizens to take resolute action toward a more peaceful future—one that is safe for all. Honour the memory of victims of nuclear testing in Kazakhstan and elsewhere around the world by joining us in our quest for a nuclear weapons free world!

SUPPORT THE ATOM PROJECT BY SIGNING THE PETITION AT THEATOMPROJECT.ORG. LET'S LOOK FORWARD TO 25 YEARS OF PEACE AND PROGRESS.

theATOMProject.org

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OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Actor Explains Challenge of Playing the President, His Love of Movies

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

Actor Nurlan Alimzhanov, who played Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in the epic about the President's life and has won Kazakhstan's Zhas Tulpar award, discussed his cinema career and plans for the future with *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* daily.

Alimzhanov wanted to become an actor since childhood, he said, having fallen in love with the art in his first theatrical role in "Marriage Proposal," based on a piece by his father, Bayangali Alimzhanov.

In his second year at the Zhurgenov Academy in Almaty, Alimzhanov began to work at the Kazakh Youth Theatre, and took film roles and performed original songs. He would also play Ded Moroz, a traditional character embodying



Nurlan Alimzhanov

winter and the passage of the old year, at New Year corporate events, where he could get \$50 for an evening. At that time, it was huge money for a poor student from a village.

Eventually, after switching between theatre, TV, cinema and music, Alimzhanov decided to focus on film. "I come from Kenashy village in

Kokshetau oblast. In our village, Indian and American movies were very popular. Bruce Lee, Jean-Claude Van Damme and Mithun Chakraborty were our idols. Trying to be like them, I started practicing taekwondo, especially after watching 'Double Impact' with Van Damme, I can seriously say that he was my teacher," Alimzhanov said.

"I took naturally to the role in the epic, 'The Way of the Leader.' After the success of the first part, 'The Sky of My Childhood,' it was decided to shoot the subsequent sections. There was no question of who would play the young Nazarbayev. At the beginning of my career, I never thought that I could play the role of the President. It was destiny. I felt enormous responsibility," the actor admitted.

According to Alimzhanov, from the beginning, he understood that if

he concentrated on playing a president, the character would not work. Instead, he focused on embodying the worker who didn't dream of becoming such a leader, but had a great thirst for knowledge and great determination.

"In the film, I just walk, step by step, to the top, which Nazarbayev did. In order to do this, I communicated with his friends and read everything I could find on him, especially memories of the President and his classmates," Alimzhanov said.

Shooting on the second part of the film lasted nine months and required travel to Moscow, Ukraine, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Belarus. Most of the movie was filmed in Temirtau, in Karaganda oblast. Director Rustem Abdrashev and production designer Sabit Kurmanbekova recreated the image of the city in the mid-1950s and 1960s, turning Temirtau into

one big set. After playing the role of Nazarbayev the steel worker, a job he held for nine years, Alimzhanov realised by what hard labour these workers earn their bread.

Before this pivotal role, Alimzhanov played the lead in a dozen other films.

"To perform well, I have to do a lot to work on myself, such as listen, watch, read, travel and meet different people. My first film was 'Sin of Sholpan' by Bolat Sharip, based on Magzhan Zhumabayev's story. Then I did 'Bakysy,' directed by Sergei Bodrov and Gulshad Omarova. The role of one of the brothers in the series 'Agaiyndar' by Akan Satayev brought me popularity," the actor said.

In addition to his impressive appearance, tall, broad-shouldered Alimzhanov is a master of Kazakh literary language.

"My father gave me a taste for reading. ... For me, literature, in terms of spiritual development, is more important than cinema. I love rereading Kazakh writers, such as Abai, Mukhtar Auezov, Gabit Musrepov, Sabit Mukanov and my father, of course. From Russia, I like Gogol and Dostoevsky. The book by British historian and traveller John Man, 'Leadership Secrets of Genghis Khan,' has become my table-book," Alimzhanov said.

"Also, I am a cinema addict. I collect licensed disks, and do not miss a single movie, domestic or foreign. When friends suggest playing billiards, going to a restaurant or something else, I say 'Let's go to the movies.' In the cinema, my soul relaxes. I learn from watching other actors. This is my hobby," he added.

"In Kazakhstan, there are a lot of good directors and more as yet unplayed historical roles, like Abylai Khan, Saken Seifullin and the leaders of the Alash Movement. In my heart, I cherish a dream to play at least some of them. Although no one has offered me such a role yet, I am preparing myself for them."

Independence of Regions Key to Kazakh Economic Stability and Future

By Yekaterina Berkutova

In July and August 2016, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov has been checking on facilities throughout the country related to the Nurlu Zhol infrastructure development programme.

Effective management at the regional level is the key condition for successful implementation of this programme. Moreover, given both declining macroeconomic indicators and future global economic projects in Kazakhstan, implementation of all provisions of the Nurlu Zhol programme plays a decisive role in the economic development of the nation. It is important to ensure that budget resources are used with maximum efficiency to increase business activity, upgrade infrastructure and enterprises and to address social regional problems.



A large number of programmes are being implemented in the regions, for instance, under the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019 and the Regional Development Programme 2020. Together, they were designed to improve the situation in the re-

gions. The fact that the state pays special attention to the Nurlu Zhol programme is attributable to the strategic importance of infrastructure development for the economic growth of Kazakhstan. In this area, Nurlu Zhol, as noted by Kazakh and Chinese analysts, corresponds to China's Silk Road Economic Belt project, the operational stage of which is considered by many participating countries as a substantial component of national economic development.

Kazakhstan is no exception. Moreover, in the conditions of volatile world commodity prices, to which the economy of Kazakhstan is sensitive, development of transport and logistics infrastructure does not only help to create new jobs for citizens of the country, but also facilitates enhancement of interconnectivity between its regions. In the future, the latter must raise addi-

tional funds for the nation's and region's economies both through internal and external sources. This is very important, considering the fact that the majority of Kazakhstan's regions are recipients of the national budget.

An important aspect is the problem of effective management and strategic planning at the local level. Indeed, the quality of regional management always raises questions, but local administrations know the problems and needs of the regions better. That is why they design developmental programmes for their territories for a five-year period (upon agreement with the authorised agency on public planning). It is a part of the developmental strategy of Kazakhstan, when small, but consistent steps are taken to ensure more independent local authorities.

Therefore, central authorities implement a set of measures aimed

at improving the effectiveness of the regional management in general and skills of local administration officials in particular. A telling example is cooperation of the nation's government with authorised institutions of the European Union within the project Kazakhstan's Regional Development.

The project is mainly focused on three pilot regions – Mangistau, Kyzylorda, and East Kazakhstan. The project is being implemented in multiple directions, including such objectives as support in drafting strategies, legislation and developmental programmes, work on planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment of regional developmental strategies and assistance in creating methods on how to engage citizens in decision making. It is important that one of the project objectives is to exchange experience between pilot and non-pilot regions. As a re-

sult, all regions of Kazakhstan are covered and involved in the implementation of this project.

This cooperation can become a basis for building horizontal ties between local administrations, creating efficiency networks, also known as learning networks or experience sharing groups.

Thus, it is evident that the state takes comprehensive steps to achieve the strategic target of the regional policy – to increase independence of the regions and, in future, the role of local administrations. However, before giving this independence, central authorities must be confident that the regions can effectively distribute budget funds, fulfil social obligations and expand the tax base of the region to incentivise entrepreneurship. To this very end, the government, in "manual control mode", creates an algorithm to implement the strategic Nurlu Zhol programme and simultaneously facilitates understanding of the European managerial experience.

The author is an expert of the Institute of World Economy and Politics under the Foundation of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

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EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

EAEU Members States Work on Creation of Common Drugs Market

Staff Report

In order to establish a common market in drugs of the Eurasian Economic Union planned for 2016-2018, it was decided to develop 67 new regulations. The corresponding list of regulations has been approved by the member of the Board for Technical Regulation of the Eurasian Economic Commission Valery Koreshkov, reported the press service of the commission.

The medicines' regulation encompasses three groups of issues: production and quality; requirements for alternative medicine; and preclinical and clinical studies of drugs.

The regulation list for 2016-

2018 was prepared on the basis of proposals made by authorities from the Eurasian Economic Union member states and approved by the Eurasian Economic Commission working group on development of common approaches to regulate the drug market.

Each of the projects of the defined acts has a responsible state, the authority of which shall submit the first version of the draft act to the commission at a stated time. The document will then be forwarded to the Working Group on Medicines for further consideration and after its approval will be presented to the commission for the final adoption.

The first three documents out of the ones to be developed in 2016, including the draft guidance on

validation of drugs manufacturing, the project requirements for water usage in drugs production and the project requirements for stability study of drugs and pharmaceutical substances were presented by Belarus in the second quarter of the current year. The proposed regulations are under consideration of the working group now.

At the coming meeting of the working group on drugs August 25-26 in Almaty, Kazakhstan will present its drafts for consideration. The state should prepare dossiers on medicines management (placebo and active control) for clinical trials and the requirements for quality indicators of pharmaceuticals with modified release.

ATOM Project Calls for Moment of Silence on August 29, 25th Anniversary of Closure of Nuclear Test Site



Karipbek Kuyukov

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The ATOM Project (Abolish Testing: Our Mission) is calling for a moment of silence on August 29, the UN International Day against Nuclear Tests, to honour all victims of nuclear weapons testing. On this day Kazakhstan and the international community will mark the 25th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site.

"We are calling for people around the world to observe 11:05 a.m. their local time as a moment of silence," ATOM Project Honorary Ambassador Karipbek Kuyukov said.

"That time was chosen because the clock hands show a V, which stands for victory. This moment is meant to signify a victory of common sense over fear and a victory for global efforts towards a nuclear-weapons-free world," added Kuyukov, a second generation survivor of nuclear weapons tests and who has overcome the challenge of being born without arms to become a renowned artist. He paints with his teeth and feet.

Marking the 25th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, Kazakhstan also will be hosting a major conference in Astana focusing on further steps towards a world free from the

threat of nuclear annihilation. The Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) are co-organising the event.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who signed the historic decree shutting down the Semipalatinsk test site in 1991, will address the conference that will gather leading parliamentarians, prominent political leaders, diplomats and disarmament experts, as well as religious leaders and civil society representatives from around the world to discuss further steps towards global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

More than 450 Soviet nuclear weapon tests were conducted at the Semipalatinsk site from 1949 to 1991.

That period has inflicted great suffering on the Kazakh people and environment. Tests negatively affected the health of more than 1.5 million Kazakh citizens including many who, to this day, in the first and the second generations, suffer early death, lifelong debilitating illness and horrific birth defects.

Following the closure of the Semipalatinsk site, Kazakhstan soon also renounced what was then the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal and has since become a world leader in the fight to permanently end nuclear weapons testing and, ultimately, to build a nuclear weapons free world.

On August 29 four years ago, President Nazarbayev addressed a major international parliamentary conference in Astana and launched The ATOM Project as a way to generate global popular support for a permanent end to nuclear weapons testing and, ultimately, the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The ATOM Project is an international global awareness and petition campaign designed to unify support for an end to nuclear weapons testing and world free from nuclear weapons. More than 260,000 people from over 100 countries have signed the petition.

Examination of Aktobe Burial Mound Reveals New Foundings of Sarmatian Period



Staff Report

The Halyk Kazynasy Research Studies Institute of the Kazakh National Museum is now executing archaeological research on more than a dozen sites across the country which belong to different periods of time.

During the current research

of the 6th-5th century BC burial complex Tortoba located in Kobda district in Aktobe region, archaeologists found intact tombs of Sarmatian warriors.

"The research studies of the Tortoba site, constructed to honour representatives of Sarmatian nobility, began in 2011. During the past five years, we have found seven burial sites and two sites meant for special

rituals. All of the foundings belong to different time periods. During additional excavations of the burial ground, which represents an earthen mound of a total diameter of 50 metres and a height of 4.7 metres, new tombs of Sarmatian soldiers have been discovered," said the head of exhibition Akan Ongaruly.

The discovered tombs for soldiers were erected hundreds of years ago after the main site was constructed. The warriors were buried with full ammunition – archaeologists found bows and quivers with arrows as well as spears with iron arrowheads, sabers and daggers. The burial mound of the soldier found on the edge of the site revealed a quiver containing 184 arrows with bronze arrowheads.

Apart from weapons, the archaeologists also found traces of felt underlays, food and dishes. The ribs of a horse were also found preserved on one of the wooden plates located next to a soldier.

Canadian Ambassador Seeks to Broaden Bilateral Relationship

Continued from Page A1

"Our largest investor in Kazakhstan is Chemical – one of the world's largest uranium companies and they have a very strong partnership with KazAtomProm where they are mining the largest deposit of uranium in Kazakhstan together. Two months ago, they signed a new restructuring agreement which will increase the rate of uranium production that they are going to produce," Steil notes.

The ambassador stresses this long-term 30-year agreement sets a solid footing for the countries' nuclear cooperation.

"All of the framework is there and we have the opportunity now I think to exchange more processing technology and nuclear fuel generation technology. We are excited about that," he added.

A few months ago, the Kazakhstan-Canada business council was launched. It is a private sector-led organisation that provides advice to companies and governments about ways of doing and promoting business between the two countries in mining, gas and agriculture fields.

Kazakhstan was recently elected as a non-permanent member of United Nations Security Council. The ambassador states that "the platform that the country has put forward is similar to what Canada



Ambassador of Canada to Kazakhstan Shawn Steil.

would put forward," referring to nuclear, energy, water and food security on which both countries have similar points of view.

"Now we are going to see much stronger cooperation on multilateral issues because of that shared platform. I think we have a lot to learn from Kazakhstan on how to run a campaign successfully, to get the seat on the UN Security Council," Steil stresses.

He tells about what it means for countries like Kazakhstan and Canada that do not have strong military powers but have powerful neighbours and wish to play a role in international affairs.

"We can't have an influence by ourselves without military and economic power to do it. We do have influence as a middle power, to provide a consensus, to breach the differences between other powers and to provide our negotiating power," he explains.

According to Ambassador Steil, it can be seen that President Nursultan Nazarbayev has taken steps to position Kazakhstan to play that useful, moderating role in its own neighborhood.

The ambassador believes that kind of approach to international affairs is important at the present time, emphasising that there has to

be a renewed emphasis on negotiation and multilateralism.

As he noted, Canada has a strong history of playing that role and Kazakhstan has the same commitment to that as well.

"We went from high point of bilateral trade I think in 2013-2014, almost 6 billion dollars in trade. A lot of that was oil and gas," the ambassador shared.

It was oil purchased from Kazakhstan for refineries in Canada, which is strange, according to Steil, because Canada produces a lot of its own oil. It became their greatest source of trade because of shipping, another economic reasons.

"The latest statistics I have of 2015 where it's dropped down significantly but still fairly solid, \$117 million worth of Canadian exports and 524,000 dollars of imports from Kazakhstan to Canada," he says.

Steil assures that even if overall the statistics look like the trade dropped, a growth is still seen in agricultural machinery or machinery for the oil and gas and mining industry, consulting services, construction and construction materials.

"[Trade in] agricultural products, like cattle, genetics and meat is still increasing. We are relatively positive about that even though the numbers have dropped," the ambassador continued.



One of Kuyukov's works: Dead Zone.

It also can be seen that the investment is increasing with a large stock of Canadian direct investment in Kazakhstan, \$4 billion, that continues to increase.

For the remainder of his term overall, Steil would like to see a broader bilateral relationship.

This includes broadening countries' active engagement in specific sectors at the commercial level into areas such as space, broadening cooperation in fields such as education and doing more on governing issues.

The ambassador said that a focus was also made on building exchanges between government officials and researchers about improving government services. A lot of Canadian ideas and practices can be seen used in Kazakhstan currently.

"I want to see you fully support that. But I think more broadly we'd like to see more students and researches engaged and to that end we decided to host a conference on comparative studies essentially between Canada and Kazakhstan," Steil said.

The first conference will be held Sept. 1 by the Library of the First President. Researchers and students were invited to submit their research papers and a dozen of submissions were received from all over the country and from abroad.

To celebrate the shared love of the two countries for winter sports, athletics and hockey, a friendly hockey match has been held every year for the last few years. Nearly 4,000 spectators came to see Canada versus Kazakhstan big friendly match at the Barys arena last March.

"By the time I arrived to Astana in 2014, the city was quite well developed, the architecture is stunning, the city is well organised, clean, easy to get around and that surprised me a little bit. ... I didn't imagine that the city could have grown so quickly and so well, so that was a surprise," Steil notes.

Multilingualism, popularity of hockey, climate are among the similarities between the two countries. He believes that there is a similar approach to hospitality and treating one's guests between the Kazakhs and the Canadians.

According to the ambassador, farmers come from Canada to Kazakhstan to do business or exchanges with Kazakhstan's farmers.

Steil stressed that respect for diversity and multiculturalism also makes the two countries similar.

"We are both multicultural countries with variety of religions, and great respect for different ethnicities and religions. These are points that are really strong of the Canadian national identity and I see that same identity with Kazakhstan people," he noted.

Steil commented that the level of welcome he and his family have had since they arrived in Astana and Kazakhstan has been quite tremendous.

"I have such a fond admiration for the people of Kazakhstan because of how open they have been to us, how welcome we've been made to feel being here as family and diplomats kind of show how close we can be as two countries. I am grateful for that and it inspires me to work harder every day," he concluded.

Nation&Capital

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Famous 'We Will Rock You' Musical to Be Performed during EXPO 2017 Exhibition

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CAPITAL

Capital's Hotel Scene Develops, Awaits for EXPO Tourists

B8

Couple in Poland Wear Kazakh National Costumes for Wedding



By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Agnieszka Slomian and Tomasz Mazurek wore Kazakh national costumes for their wedding in Poland out of respect for the country that has become native to them.

“A wedding by a lake in Trzebinia, a town in Lesser Poland. The proposal was done at the Shymbulak tract a year before. Two elements – mountain and water. A symbol of the Kazakh steppe... A fairy tale!” noted Slomian’s Facebook post of a signed wedding photo, reported inform.kz.

Knowing how much his fiancée loves Kazakhstan, Mazurek decided to offer his hand and heart last year in the Almaty mountains.

They were doing research as part of the “Polonia in Kazakhstan: Past, Present and Future” project and travelled almost the entire country, the story noted. Polonia, as known in the modern Polish language, is the Polish Diaspora abroad.

“We were examining the state of Polonia organisations in Kazakhstan through the prism of past and present in the context of their development in the future. We were in cities and villages where these organisations presently work and were conducting an interview with heads of Polish ethno-cultural centres, Polish language lecturers and Polish members of the clergy,” said Slomian in her interview with Kazinform.

Both were also conducting ques-

tionnaires on the Polish population, which offered respondents the chance to answer questions concerning their ethnic self-identification, culture knowledge, traditions of the Polish nation and involvement with the work of Polish centres.

Nearly every Pole in Kazakhstan knows Slomian, which started when she came to study in Almaty in 2008. She lived with a Kazakh family, was working on her Master’s degree thesis about Kazakh traditions and ceremonies and writing stories about a Kazakh wedding, noted the agency.

Slomian is currently working on her doctoral thesis on ethno-cultural organisations and most of it is dedicated to non-profit organisations in Kazakhstan. As part of her work, Slomian has organised

and implemented various projects concerning the country and also heads the Institute of Eastern Initiatives in Krakov.

Her fiancé became interested in Kazakhstan and later began travelling with her.

“I’m in love with Kazakh culture; that’s why I very much wanted my wedding dress to be a Kazakh one. Our wedding was in Trzebinia, between Katowice (a city in southwestern Poland) where I come from and Krakov where Tomasz lives. It’s a pity that our Kazakh friends whom we invited could not come here due to an economic situation,” said Slomian, according to inform.kz.

Kazakhstan’s Ambassador in Poland Altay Abibullayev congratulated the newlyweds on his Twitter account.

Annoyed by Borat Questions, Kazakh Student Creates Award-Winning Film



Anton Alfimenko

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – “Welcome to Almaty,” a three-minute, 27-second short film by Almaty-born Anton Alfimenko, 20, received a Best Travel Film nomination in April at the Global Short Film Awards festival in New York. The next month, it also picked up the BNU Film Awards in the Best Cinematography category.

“The whole idea was that any questions or references I would get back from the people around me were related to the film one way or another, so instead of just getting mad at it, I just made something that I could show instead,” said Alfimen-

ko, who received his BA (Hons) in Animation and Visual Effects at the High Wycombe campus of Buckinghamshire New University, in an interview with The Astana Times.

“I always wanted to make a video about my city, where I was born and raised. It’s a special place for me and the biggest push I got to make it was people asking questions about my city, about where I came from,” he said.

Although it has been a decade since the feature “Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan” was released, on Nov. 6, 2006, Alfimenko admitted his classmates constantly asked ques-

tions about the title character. That inspired him to make the film.

“When I moved to the U.K. I found myself answering so many questions about Borat, because people knew little or nothing about Kazakhstan. The weirdest question was ‘do you have shops?’ That led me to film a little movie that would showcase the place I came from in the best way possible,” he said.

When asked what he would actually tell Sasha Baron Cohen, the comedian who starred as Borat, Alfimenko said the film really humoured him.

“I mean, I understand clearly why people back home don’t like that movie and stuff, but after stud-

ying in the U.K. for a few years and adjusting to the humour here, for me there is nothing wrong with it. There would be nothing I would want to say, because it’s clearly just making fun. I hadn’t seen it before I came to the U.K. and only saw it after a year here, and to be honest, for me it’s just a really funny film that I enjoyed watching. So if you’re that mad at someone for making fun of your country, do something about, don’t just talk,” he added.

The Kazakh student admitted the fame came unexpectedly.

“It’s the first film festival I’ve won, so it’s a great experience. It also came out of the blue, with the festival itself taking place in New York and the awards in Cannes. It’s all been a bit of a whirlwind. It’s special. To win it with something that I put so much soul and effort into is even better. Well, I just graduated from the university and am going into a full time job as a motion graphics artist. Though given that my goal is to make feature films, filmmaking is something I’ll concentrate all my free time on and just see what’s going to happen,” he said.

“We are extremely impressed with Anton’s commitment and talent,” said course leader Rob Penhaligon. “He has produced some of this year’s best work and almost certainly has a bright future in the industry. We are thrilled he has won this award.”

To watch Alfimenko’s award-winning short film go to: www.antonalfy.com.

Kazakh Filmmakers to Produce Movie Dedicated to WWII Soldiers’ Courage

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The creators of the British – Kazakh feature film with the working title “Flags over Berlin” announced a teaser will be released in September. The three-minute trailer, entirely shot in London, will feature scenes from the upcoming film.

The Astana Times interviewed screenplay originator, producer and head of scriptwriting team Dauren Toleukhanov to learn about the production and reason for creating the patriotic film.

Based on actual events, the motion picture tells the story of Kazakh soldiers Rakhimzhan Koshkarbayev and Gregory Bulatov, who stormed Reichstag in April 30, 1945 as part of the Red Army’s 150th Infantry Division. They raised the first red flag over Reichstag on that day as a symbol of the Soviet Union’s victory over Nazi Germany. Due to the interests of the Communist party, however, the country chose to praise soldiers Meliton Kantaria and Mikhail Yegorov, who entered the building later.

Continued on Page B3

Entrepreneurs Make Online Platform that Creates Events with Few Clicks

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Young entrepreneurs from Semei have devised perhaps one of the most essential online services for Kazakhs who celebrate weddings, baby births and other traditional events like no other nation. With more than 18,000 users, ToiDriver allows arranging any event, concert or celebration and any service from ordering a make-up artist to a big show with just a few clicks.

Zhandos Tursumbayev, founder and director of the company that

created the ToiDriver mobile app and TV entertainment projects, talked about his business in an interview with The Astana Times. He noted how the \$30,000 app, that has the largest base of artists, photographers, restaurants and important services, was created, how it works and the project’s goals.

The idea to create a free app connecting artists and customers was linked to Tursumbayev’s trip to Ekibastuz last year for his brother’s wedding. He wanted to pay for a host as a gift, but could not find any contacts on the Internet.

Continued on Page B4

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

FAT SHEEP RESTAURANT

August 11 at 8 p.m. Charles Turner, Jazz concert

ASTANA OPERA

August 12 at 7 p.m. Bach’s Tunes, concert

August 17 at 7 p.m. Music Forever, concert

ASTANA ARENA

August 13 at 4 p.m. FC Astana vs. Irtysh, football match

August 18 at 8 p.m. FC Astana vs. BATE, Belarus, UEFA Europa League match football match

PALACE OF PEACE AND HARMONY

July 13 - August 21 St. Petersburg’s Wax exhibition from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Jaxaliyeva: Never Too Late to Find Your Passion

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Twenty-six-year-old Kazakh golfer Jamila Jaxaliyeva was quickly named “truly one a kind” after her successful tournament performance at the 2015 Ladies European Tour. Yet she sees her mission as promoting the game of golf and becoming a sports ambassador in her own country.

The Almaty-born Jaxaliyeva was introduced to golf later than most pros. At 15 she began playing under the guidance of her father Magzhan Jaxaliyev, an engineer by occupation.

She was pursuing a degree in mathematics at the University of Geneva when in 2012 she decided to focus entirely on sports. Her ultimate goal was to become a member of the top tier professional tour and have a chance at competing in the Olympics.

“I was still an amateur at that time and felt like it was an extremely tough balance, both academics and athletics at a high level. I left the studies with a heavy heart but was excited to embark on my golf journey together with my father as a coach and my mother as a caddy. The first intermediate purpose was to play at the high-level amateur competitions and become a better player,” said Jaxaliyeva in an exclusive interview with The Astana Times.

She qualified that year for the match plays of the British Ladies Amateur, one of the most prestigious amateur tournaments, and recorded several strong top-3 finishes in Canada.

“It was important to gain my tour card on the LPGA Symetra Tour for 2014, which I eventually accomplished. My first year of competing on the professional tour did not turn out to be the way I hoped. I had to keep away



Jamila Jaxaliyeva

from my clubs for a couple of months leading up to the season because I had to take care of my father. He was not able to travel with me for the next two years, which was a huge setback,” she said.

“In 2015, I decided to set up my main base in Kazakhstan again and start playing more events on the Ladies European Tour. My dad was finally able to travel with me and we recorded a third-place finish in Portugal and made the cut in a high ranked event in China. I finally gained a spot in the Rolex Women’s World Rankings and felt like I had a really good chance of qualifying for the Olympic Games. I started the 2016 season solidly on the Australian tour, but put too much pressure on myself in the big events. I was burnt out and did not perform good enough to get those few extra points needed for the games in Rio de Janeiro and unfortunately missed out on the qualification,” she added.

Golf is a very complex sport involving an entire array of variables, said Jaxaliyeva. It can be played by anyone on an amateur

level, regardless of physical abilities and talents, but to become a professional there are a few things to seek.

“It is necessary to have a solid base in the swing mechanics. If you have major swing flaws, it will be a tough road up to the highest level of golf. Good technique is by far not enough. You need to have the dedication to practice for many hours a day until your body develops feel and touch for every kind of shot. The most important aspect in professional golf, though, is

the mind. It takes a healthy central nervous system, confidence, toughness and ability to concentrate to become the best in the world,” she said.

Jaxaliyeva intends to play in the United States until September to keep her LPGA Symetra Tour Card for the 2017 season. She then plans to return to Europe and Asia to retain her European Tour card for the next season.

“I feel more motivated than ever to go for the win this year after having failed the Olympic

qualifying process. My long-term goal would be to develop golf in Kazakhstan and all throughout the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) region. I would like to become an ambassador for the sport and inspire others to start golf,” she said.

She also noted the benefits of golf, as people have a completely wrong image of the sport which she aims to change.

“Golf is particularly great for juniors. It engages them physically, mentally and socially and

teaches them great values. By the way, golf is also a great way to lose weight and prevent cardiac illnesses. One round of golf lasts five hours and can burn over 1,000 calories. Kazakhstan has a lot of gorgeous golf courses that are open for everyone. Almaty has three courses: Zhailau, Nurtau and Kyzyl Tu, a great and affordable golf club. Furthermore, there are courses in Astana, Kostanai and Shymkent and I am urging everyone to go and hit some balls,” said Jaxaliyeva.



Polish Village in Kazakhstan – Unique Place of Ethnic Friendship

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Yasnaya Polyana is a unique centre of strengthening friendship between Kazakhstan peoples, as the village is distinguished by the fact that 80 percent of its habitants are ethnic Poles. The locals, who recently celebrated the village’s 80th anniversary, say they feel and appreciate the atmosphere of peace and harmony that prevails in the state.

North Kazakhstan region Akim (Governor) Yerik Sultanov congratulated the villagers on the anniversary and made a generous gift – a sports complex with gyms, massage rooms, sauna, billiard room and health centre. The last one also has a beauty salon which is very important for the women, who formerly had to go to Taiynsha district centre, reported Liter.

Yasnaya Polyana was founded in 1936, when Poles and Germans from Ukraine were forcefully moved to the Kazakh steppes.

“In 1936 when we came here, there was no village here. There was only a hammered peg and a

tent with the number ‘5’. We were welcomed by locals who weren’t rich, but were hospitable. We did not lose the spirit. We started to work and the locals helped us to overcome difficulties,” said resident Kazimir Polyanskiy, an eyewitness to the events.

“Our people faced challenges, but fate turned in its favour. Kazakhs were near and we together with them experienced difficulties. Thanks to our President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his support, we are developing; we live in peace and harmony,” said Taiynsha-Astyk General Director Anatoliy Rafalskiy.

A special photo exhibition dedicated to the history of Yasnaya Polyana gave visitors an opportunity to see all the stages of its development. Locals wore beautiful and bright national costumes with embroidery and welcomed guests to the Polish ethnographic town.

The residents, great patriots of their village, organised a parade of workers and agricultural equipment. The first Victory tractors, the pride of Soviet agricultural engineering, up-to-date equipment

with GPS navigation, cars and bikes passed on the main street.

Journalist, publisher and Polish Cultural Centre Chairman Oleg Chervinskiy spoke of his grandfather, Emmanuil Ochkovskiy.


“They had to start living in new conditions. First of all, Poles started to dig wells and produce clay. They used the clay to build tiny houses where they lived. They arrived in Kazakhstan in October and only such constructions gave them the opportunity to survive.”

“Polish Zelyoniy Gai village is situated close to Kazakh Zharkain village. My grandfather told me that Kazakhs came to Poles to meet them. In spite of the fact that Kazakhs starved, they brought bread and kurt (Kazakh national dairy product). The food was so important for starved and dead tired Poles,” he said.


In the 1930s, when entire ethnic groups were forcefully moved to Kazakhstan, numerous villages were founded in North Kazakhstan region. Each one established during those tragic times is celebrating its own 80th anniversary this year.



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CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Famous 'We Will Rock You' Musical to Be Performed during EXPO 2017 Exhibition

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – EXPO 2017 guests have a chance to become one of the first audiences of the Kazakh version of the popular “We Will Rock on You” musical that has already been staged in 15 countries.

The premiere will take place in the Palace of Peace and Harmony next summer. Famous British film producer Edward Simons was invited to help arrange the project. The best vocalists of Kazakhstan, including the first graduates of the new Artist of the Musical department of the Zhurgenov Kazakh Academy of Arts and of the National University of Arts in Astana will perform the parts in the musical.

“We believe that the staging of a worldwide musical in our capital will contribute to the success of cultural and entertainment events in the upcoming exhibi-



tion EXPO 2017 and will not require additional expenditures from the state budget,” said Ka-

zakh Deputy Minister of Culture and Sports Galym Akhmediyarov at a briefing at the Cen-

tral Communication Service in Astana.

According to British impre-

sario and producer of concerts of the legendary music groups, such as Queen, Live Aid, A Trib-

ute to Freddie Mercury, Three Tenors, the musical will perform throughout next summer and will be one of the highlights of the cultural programme of Astana.

“If Freddie Mercury knew that Astana will show a musical based on his songs, he would say that it is real magic. The plot of the musical takes place in the future, in a world where everyone wears the same clothes, listens to the same music, and they have no desires and aspirations except as one group of people. We can see that Kazakhstan is becoming a global player in the international media. The musical that will be held at the same time as EXPO will have a great success. We are pleased with an opportunity to show the creativity of the Queen in Kazakhstan,” emphasised Simons.

Kazakhstan has never staged such a large-scale musical. If it is successful, the British side claims it will produce the “Mama Mia” musical in 2018.

“We are going to hold a casting for the main roles in September. Two or three actors will be selected among our famous artists. The contest is open now,” said President of Kazakh Auendery Askhat Maemirov.

Kazakh Filmmakers to Produce Movie Dedicated to WWII Soldiers' Courage

Continued from Page B1

The authors affirm “the truth will come out” and white spots in the history of the World War II will be revealed.

“This is a film about heroism, friendship and the brave hearts of ordinary soldiers who defended their motherland. There is also a storyline with famous historical figures including Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, Marshal Georgy Zhukov and Nazi SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny. We do not want to turn the film into a simple action-thriller. We aim to raise serious questions in the film; for example, the question of a Clash of Civilisations and clash of ideas,” said Toleukhanov.

The cross-genre motion picture will be interesting for different target audiences. On one hand, it is a spy detective movie; on the other, an action film because the setting is the storming of Berlin with epic battle scenes, tanks and heavy artillery. And, there is a love story, of course.

The creators are negotiating with several production companies in Belarus, Germany, Russia and Ukraine. They also held a round of talks with famous Kazakh director, producer and screenwriter Timur Bekmambetov,



Dauren Toleukhanov

as they were interested in his production experience.

“The events of those days will be shown through the eyes of the British war correspondent attached to the 150th Infantry Division of the Red Army who stormed Berlin. Journalist Mark Spencer is a fictional character based on various real persons’ biographies such as Ian Fleming, creator of the James Bond spy novels,” said Toleukhanov.

The film crew will collaborate with Berlin Crystal Bear winner and world-class cameraman Kev Robertson, who was a director of photography for dozens of feature films, documentaries, music videos and commercials.

“We discussed the future of the national film industry with co-chair-

man of the Kazakh Union of Cinematographers and Kazakhfilm Studios general producer Akhat Ibrayev,” said Toleukhanov. “We agreed that it is high time to make a patriotic film, a film demonstrating to the whole world the contribution of Kazakh people to the victory. Koshkarbayev and his deeds have not received adequate coverage and recognition in neighbouring countries yet.”

“I’d been looking in the archives for all the information related to these events. I’d read all the memoirs and countless online articles of eyewitnesses of those events. I learnt a lot of details related to the story about Koshkarbayev and Bulatov. Koshkarbayev’s father was declared an enemy of the people and had to serve time in prison. His mother died when he was a little child. He grew up in an orphanage and was deprived of paternal and maternal care. He headed a unit and had a lot of medals by the time he stormed Reichstag,” he added.

The 21-year-old Koshkarbayev was taller and stronger than Bulatov, who was only 19, so Bulatov climbed on Koshkarbayev’s shoulders to install the flag. Fifteen people from the 150th division received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union from the

storming of Berlin. Koshkarbayev and Bulatov were awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

“We are now preparing to release a book. The book is in the form of a graphic novel and the graphics are very similar to the graphic novel ‘Sin City’ by Frank Miller. We plan to publish the book in the U.S. or in the U.K. and raise money through a crowdfunding website,” said Toleukhanov.

The film is currently at the pre-production stage.

“The synopsis is ready. We are fine-tuning the dialogue in the script. We have produced a teaser to help the potential investors, co-producers and executive producers more clearly understand the main idea of the film and we also tried to convey the spirit of the film. I have been working on the screenplay together with talented and ambitious professionals including playwrights Zarina Kadylbek, Aidye Aidarbekov, Isaac Carroll and co-producer and director of our teaser Laura Bazarbayeva. We are grateful to generous contribution from private sector including such notable companies as Kazakhtelecom which is about to become a partner in the production,” he said.

Deer Velvet Antlers Treat Wide Array of Health Conditions

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Velvet antlers are deer antlers during their early growth with a tubular and cartilage structure, filled with blood and covered by thin, velvet skin and fur. People use deer velvet as medicine for a wide range of physical and mental conditions and to boost health and the immune system as a whole.

“Before the revolution, (marals) red deers were shot and deer velvet was prepared, taken away to other countries for selling. Back then, deer velvet needed to be boiled and canned. Its bouillon turned out to have quit powerful effects,” Director of the Maralyonok medical centre specialising in velvet antler treatment Askar Kabanbayev who has 30 years of deer farming experience shared in his exclusive interview with The Astana Times.

Deer farming for extracting velvet antlers, meat and fur emerged many years ago and is widely spreading in Altai. Deer are kept at a special fold before their antlers are cut down while alive or killed. Antlers are then processed in a traditional way of air drying with boiling to prevent microbial and parasitic contamination, vacuum drying at low temperatures, vacuum drying or other methods.

The velvet antler is collected on ranches in Siberia, China, New Zealand and other countries and sold to markets in East Asia, where it is used for holistic medicine, with South Korea being the primary consumer, as noted by deerfarmer.co.nz. In traditional eastern healing approaches (China, Korea) velvet antler is broadly used for preserving strength and youth. Velvet antlers are among the top used potions there and are comparable only to ginseng.

According to WebMD, deer velvet can be used to treat high cholesterol, high blood pressure, migraines, muscle aches and pains, asthma, indigestion, weak bones, headache, liver and kidney disorders, cold hands and feet, soreness and weakness in the lower back and knees, chronic skin ulcers and overactive bladder. Promoting youthfulness, sharpening thinking skills, protecting the liver from toxins and increasing the number of red blood cells are other applications deer velvet can be used for.

In herbal combinations, deer velvet is used to improve athletic performance, eyesight and hear-

ing, to reduce stress and to treat arthritis, anaemia, women’s reproductive disorders, to increase blood circulation to the brain and to delay or reduce signs of ageing such as tissue, bone and muscle degeneration and declining mental skills, WebMD states.

“Over here people usually come with cardiovascular, respiratory, motor conditions, to boost the immune system, potency. Everyone has some place that hurts. Some just want to prevent something serious to happen and eagerly await for the season opening,” Kabanbayev explains.

Alcohol and water extraction released from deer velvet antlers is used as a restorative medicine. Medication produced from an antler velvet of a red deer was registered in the Soviet Union in 1970 and is sold under Pantokrin brand name. This drug can be applied in a combined therapy for asthenia (overstrain), arterial hypotension and related conditions.

“In the research process, it was discovered that deer velvet and deer blood contains all types of amino acids, vital micro and macro elements. Some health conditions occur when a body has a deficiency so enriching it with these substances means nervous and other systems of the body become stronger and if a malfunction is there, the body restores itself,” Kabanbayev says. “Rejuvenation occurs as well, only not like making you look ten years younger but when an ageing process slows down.”

The price to receive such treatment at the Maralyonok centre depends on living conditions and is 14,000-25,000 tenge (US\$41-73). Treatment and meals are the same regardless of the room type. However, deer velvet bouillon quality and general service quality may differ in other medical centres.

“We have the largest livestock of red deer and therefore the richest bouillon. While other centres have one phyto sauna, we have ten. All food products are ecologically clean. Get down an airplane, get in a car, get to Maralyonok in two hours and you are already taking a deer velvet bath,” Kabanbayev adds.

Maralyonok is a highland facility (about 1,300 metres above sea level) located on an ecologically clean area at the edge of a pine forest, 120 kilometres away from Ust Kamenogorsk. Other health sanatoriums offer velvet antler treatment outside of East Kazakhstan but this region is where the medicine actually comes from.

Manhattan's Lexington Ave. W Hotel Unveils De Luxe Suite with Yurt

By Natalya Kan

ASTANA – Glamping or ‘glamour camping’ (the movement of camping for people who really don’t like to camp) has come to the middle of Manhattan with the “Extreme Wow Outdoor Glamping Suite.”

“The suite is a hotel room with a terrace designed by Laurel & Wolf and decked out with astro-

turf, a yurt and some fancy lights,” curbed.com reports.

According to a statement from interior designers involved with the project, “the walls of the yurt make it quiet enough to sleep in under the stars (and in the middle of New York City traffic), but given that there’s a full bedroom just steps away, it’s more of a gathering place for guests to socialise, decorated with cushions

for lounging and hanging chandeliers. The outside deck has been covered with a soy-based artificial grass, and there are hanging cocoon chairs and couches draped with bright throws and pillows in a kaleidoscope of colours. A fire pit with decorative logs, hanging twinkling lights, and candles and lanterns set the mood.”

Rates hover between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a night, based on timing.

Citizens of New York and tourists take yurt photos and share on social networks and despite high prices, the hotel owners expect the attraction to be popular.

Sleeping under the open sky on the 17th floor, the Outdoor Glamping Suite will be available for guests to book from July 13 through November.

“The idea was to create the space sprung from W Hotels participation in music festivals like Coachella, where the hotel company would sponsor yurt-like spaces for people to come in and enjoy,” said Pablo-Andres Lopez, the marketing manager for W New York.

“It’s beautiful to see the contrast of the rustic design with the background of the skyline behind it,” said Lopez. “Glamping is trendy, but where else can you do it in the middle of midtown?”

The yurt has been gaining popularity recently. For example, at Google X office, located in Mountain View, California, Tilek Mamutov has established a yurt which is used as the room for meetings. And in the United Kingdom some people reportedly began to arrange wedding ceremonies in yurts.



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Young Entrepreneurs Make Online Platform that Creates Events with Few Clicks

Continued from Page B1

“Meanwhile, a descent host who was probably waiting for work somewhere couldn’t find me either. Event agencies in small towns didn’t turn out to be very active, too. I then realised that there was simply no platform in Kazakhstan where we both could meet,” he said.

Tursumbayev shared his idea for the app with his now partner and ToiDriver’s commercial director Duman Moldakhanov. Working together with several young men who studied in the United States through the Bolashak programme, they completed the technical tasks and began coding. The programmers, designers and managers have become a small team.

“We had hundreds of changes, had dozens of meetings and discussions over the four, five months-time that went into creating the app,” noted the entrepreneur.

ToiDriver was officially launched April 5. Users can search and post bookings on the website. The app is available for download on Google Play and the App Store and the interface is user-friendly. There is also an Instagram account.

Most importantly, one can save money by arranging an event and negotiating directly with service providers, avoiding middlemen who do not always know their work and often overcharge.



Photo credit: specialists.nur.kz

“I don’t like this army of mediators who earn a lot of money for nothing. Not all have services. Too many second-rate agencies today don’t even know or understand what they are offering. A person simply opens a small business in a small office and says the services he offers cost 10 percent when they do not actually take that amount,” said Tursumbayev.

He added such business owners charge 10 percent for each

dance, each decoration and each extra service they offer. The individual items accumulate, often resulting in close to 40 percent surcharge and causing people to overpay.

By contrast, ToiDriver customers can set their own prices, a distinctive feature of the app. Within seconds, all service providers see the order once a customer specifies the location, date, service and price. Artists receive an order via push notifications

and whoever is free for that time period and interested can call the customer.

ToiDriver will also soon have a standards system that will allow the user to press a spam button if, for example, a tamada (wedding host) gives one price but quotes a different price on the phone, said Tursumbayev. A certain number of spams will throw him off the system.

Because of numerous customer requests, another company plan

includes opening an event management agency in the capital in several weeks.

“We get so many calls per day and get asked to arrange all event matters by ourselves for extra payment. There were too many such requests and I said ‘okay, let us pick a director and a manager.’ A symbolic payment will be there, too, and we will be arranging everything for whoever is in Astana,” said Tursumbayev.

If the idea generates good demand, similar agencies will be opened in other cities, he added. The agency will not charge fees as expensive as others and will offer only verified services and contacts, which will help eliminate outdated information.

“I believe competition is an important goal. Quality and best price will be where the competition is,” he said.

More than 8,000 of the registered users are service providers, artists etc., greater than any platform in the country’s history.

Artists generally have many orders in the app. Tursumbayev noted while there are good tamadas who do better without advertising or their service is cheaper and has more quality than those who have good advertising, the latter receive more orders as a result.

“I myself conduct events, too. I know hosts who do not have very strong advertising and who therefore have less chance of receiving orders from customers.

However, they can now be found through the platform,” he said.

Although it would be too early to talk about an entire nation of users, he added there are enough and the current 18,000 is not the highest number because many more have downloaded the app and use it without registration. The app has open access to all information and works in all the country’s major cities.

“One can’t change Kazakhs, they will always be celebrating. ... Nobody celebrates the way a Kazakh person usually does, even if that would mean giving the last of what one has. It needs getting used to and giving a good show at a good cost,” said Tursumbayev.

ToiDriver plans to become the first IT project launched in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and to add Russia. The latter would be a huge step and require significant work, he added, as Russia is ten times bigger in population than Kazakhstan. The company is still looking for investors, even though it has a certain amount of its own capital.

“We have not thought about a payoff yet. We understand it is business, of course. We invested in it and we have to regain our investment with profit. But first of all, we are very excited that it all went on. People like it and the system works,” he said.

10-Year-Old Amir Makhmet Sets New Record for Non-Stop Push-Ups

Staff Report

World record holder among children and four times champion of Kazakhstan’s Record Book for push-ups and the longest time in an abdominal position Amir Makhmet recently set a new record with a 1,000 push-ups in one go.

This time, the top of the Bolektau Mountain was the place of this sports event. Young athlete Makhmet dedicated his record performance in support of Kazakh athletes competing at the Olympic games in Rio.

The record was introduced to the Book of Kazakhstan Records by Kuandyk Kudaibergenov.

Makhmet set his first record at the opening of the Street Workout summer season organised by the Bar Bars team as part of the Children’s



Amir Makhmet

Day celebration June 1, 2015. He did 450 push-ups then.

Makhmet set his second record with 50 push-ups in 30 seconds at the Street Workout Championship in the Akmola region. Then, he celebrated the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate by doing an equal number of

push-ups and breaking his previous record in September 2015.

Makhmet broke his fourth world record among children after planking for 60 minutes and dedicated that record to the world champion in professional boxing Gennady Golovkin on the eve of his fight with Dominic Wade.

Makhmet is a representative of the well-known sports dynasty of Makhmetovs. His uncle Aidar Makhmetov is the Honoured Master of Sports of Kazakhstan, a three-time world champion in karate and MMA, three-time European champion in jiu-jitsu. His grandfather Alimzhan Makhmetov has athletic titles in six sports. His other uncle Azat Makhmetov is the champion of Kazakhstan and a member of the national boxing team and successfully defends the honour of the boxing club Astana Arlans.

Online Resource for Farmers Launches in Kazakhstan

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The National Chamber of Entrepreneurs Atameken held a presentation of the Farmers.kz website with options available for the convenience of farmers July 29-31 in the capital. The centre also held a seminar to educate lecturers in accordance with the developed training programmes on establishing close cooperation between the experts and lecturers in 25 agribusiness priority areas identified by the Ministry of Agriculture, according to an association statement.

“Our goal is to provide trainings for 10,000 farmers until the end of the year and give them modern solutions, innovative technologies, the use of which will increase the efficiency of their businesses during the workshops. We are launching www.farmers.kz portal to provide consultations 24 hours and

seven days a week. There will be various options specially created for the needs of the agricultural producers, including training programmes,” said head of the Centre for Agro Competencies of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs Atameken Toleutai Rakhimbekov.

He stressed that the educational programme and professional and qualified lecturers are key aspects of effective workshops.

“We have prepared instructions and a template for the development of training programmes for seminars. We distributed and explained this information to the experts. We divided the curriculum into three parts, including technology and innovative solutions for the entrepreneur, the economic efficiency of the implementation of the proposed technology (summary calculations and profitability) and the state support mechanisms, including the prospects for the creation

of cooperatives of agricultural producers in the possible directions of agribusiness,” he added.

Earlier, the centre invited 25 Kazakh and 25 foreign experts for the joint development of programmes. The topics of seminars and training programmes were developed based on the agricultural producers’ interests.

In general, 97 programmes were introduced including 50 in animal husbandry and 47 in crop production. The international experts who will talk about the extension service system in the field of agriculture in their countries and share their experience will also participate in the classes.

The Centre for Agro Competencies was established June 16, 2016 by the Congress of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs Atameken to implement the task of the Ministry of Agriculture for the dissemination of knowledge among agribusiness entities.

Online Service Benefits From Being First on the Market



By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – In a recent interview with The Astana Times, Avia.kz co-founder and development director Alexey Li talked about the evolution of the Almaty-based online service for airplane tickets, customers’ travel preferences, popular destinations and flight costs before and after tege devaluation.

Avia.kz allows travellers to independently pick a convenient flight and time, book a ticket and make a payment without having to wait in line.

The company is celebrating its third anniversary this year. During this period, Avia.kz has shown steady growth and become the largest company in the online travel agency segment in the country.

“Only one month – September of last year – we had a decline in turnover, but due to obvious reasons. This doesn’t mean we settled down and just went with the flow. We managed to offer the market an in-demand product at one time and developing it in accordance with trends and demands is our task now,” said Li.

The company believes in the potential of creating a mobile app. By using the website, one can also take out an insurance policy, purchase rail tickets and book a hotel. This,

according to the director, “saves users’ time and they value it.”

More than 15,000 flight tickets are purchased via the online service every month. With the onset of summer, the company has doubled the sales, selling in excess of 30,000 tickets monthly.

“Numbers speak for us. ... Speaking in clear language, we fill about three airplanes daily. According to our estimates, the market share of Avia.kz amounts to 60 percent,” said Li.

He added being one of the first online flight ticket booking services in Kazakhstan played a big role in the service becoming popular among customers. The company was in time to form its own client base.

From the very beginning the greatest demand was for domestic flights and little has changed, according to Li. Almaty–Astana and Astana–Atyrau are the most popular routes.

“It is interesting how purchasing behaviour of people changes due to growing competition. When the choice was available only between direct ticket sales by an airline company or an air ticket office, a decision was made in favour of the cheapest option. Today, we already can’t compete on a price level. Service is important here; the experience that a customer receives by interacting with the company and not the 300-500 tenge (US\$80-1.40) difference,” he said.

Kazakhstan residents frequently flew and continue to fly to Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Kiev, mostly for work, said Li. Barcelona, London and New York were popular vacation spots last summer, with Istanbul being at the top of the high demand destinations.

“We have not observed a sales slowdown on flight tickets in our statistics section. People in Kazakhstan simply began opening new destinations for themselves. Probably everyone noticed how Georgia is popular this year. No need for any figures even; scrolling down a Facebook feed is enough,” he added.

Azerbaijan has also become a more preferable destination. Dubai was previously thought to be mainly a wintertime destination, but is now in demand all year round.

Li indicated ticket pricing depends directly on the dollar rate. Thus, last year’s devaluation and exchange rate jumps affected the process.

If, on average, an international flight was 74,277 tenge (US\$210.90) and a domestic flight 20,680 tenge (US\$58.70) last July, this year the price changed to 108,214 tenge (US\$307.30) for international and 27,822 tenge (US\$79) for domestic flights.

“However we are not comparing specific destinations, but only an average bill,” he noted.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Homemade Preserves Keep Their Place on Pantry Shelves



Altynsara Shayakhmetova

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – As the winter gets closer, many housewives in Kazakhstan start making preserves with vegetables and berries. Pickled vegetables and homemade jams became part of traditional cuisine many years ago.

“It is a great pleasure to open a jar of pickled vegetables, which has vitamins and the smell of fresh vegetables, during a cold winter. In my opinion, homemade [preserves] are much better than the ones in stores. Summer is prepar-

ing season for us. I have been doing this for ages, since we always had a garden in our house. My mother taught me and I want to pass my knowledge to my children,” said Altynsara Shayakhmetova, a housewife living in Astana with her children and grandchildren.

Why do people keep making what they could buy in stores? Making preserves takes a lot of work and patience. It was understandable, in Soviet times, for people to try to keep vegetables and fruits for the winter. But now, with cans and jars and imported

goods available year round on store shelves, why continue the practice?

“I think homemade preserves are the best, I see a lot of differences between homemade preserves and the ones from the stores. They add a lot of vinegar; it can be felt when you eat it. And when you make jars by yourself, you know exactly what you are adding and it is all natural,” said Shayakhmetova, stressing that organic processes are the most important thing.

According to her, recipes differ in each family as they are passed from older generations to younger ones. Her family loves pickles the most, especially sweet pickled cucumbers. She said they take a lot of work and are made following a special recipe. “My grandchildren love them: they have already opened a few jars, ahead of winter,” said Shayakhmetova, smiling. “I have to say I make preserves for my family, not to save money or something else. And I also enjoy the process, it is part of my life.”

Sauerkraut is very popular as well, but it is usually prepared in the fall.

For preserve-makers, much of the summer season goes to making jams. Traditional jam is made by boiling berries or fruit with sugar. The Russian word for jam, “varenye,” literally means “product of boiling.” Unlike Western jams, Russian-style jams have a more liquid consistency, though, of course, recipes vary. Strawberry and raspberry jams are very popular. Russian jams contain a lot of sugar – sometimes a one-to-one ratio of fruit to sugar – but the sugar helps preserve the fruit, jam-makers say.

Raspberry jam is not only popular for its taste, but for the widespread belief in its healing powers.

Jam can also be made from currants, lemons, apples, sea buckthorn, plums and even watermelons.

Along with pickled vegetables and jam, compotes are also very popular. Compotes are homemade fruit beverages. They can be made from one type of fruit or berries, or mixed.

Filming of Comedy About Men in a World of Women Begins in Astana



Photo from a film set

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Filming of the feature-length comedy “Vse iz-za Muzhikova” (“All Because of Men”), a story about a world of women and the three guys who are left in it, has begun in the capital of Kazakhstan.

The story unfolds in Astana. Three young men are given a chance to enter the world of women, a world where women stand tall and have all of their whims gratified and wishes fulfilled, Tengrinews.kz reports.

“However, doubts arise as to whether a life where only girls live and everything is set according to feminine principles is that perfect. Will the main characters want to become the idols of millions of women or will they try to return to a regular life?” the authors ask with the film, according to the news agency.

The creators of the successful “Nichego Lichnogo” (“Nothing Personal”) series are doing the filming and the Bernays company the film production. Shooting on “Vse iz-za Muzhikova” will be completed by about the middle of August and the creators plan to bring the film to theatres next year.

“Creating a feminine setting was the hardest thing in this film. We had to keep an eye out to make sure no men wandered into a scene, look for dozens of feminine models of cars, recolor walls to pink and a lot more,” producer Aleksander Suslov shared, Tengrinews writes.

The project’s authors promise a lot of humour, romance and unexpected twists.

The Kazakh and Russian specialists known for “Kukhnya” (“Kitchen/Cuisine”), “Interny” (“Interns”), “Univer” (“University”), “Anzhelika” and other series

are involved in creating this film, the report adds.

Kazakhstan’s prominent actors Tauekel Muslim, Murat Bisembin, Zhaniya Dzhurinskaya, Saya Orazgaliyeva, Daniyar Alshinov and others are participating. Viktor Bormotov is the film director.

Khabar news agency employee Natalya Naumova plays a strict but fair traffic cop, according to Express-k.kz.

The creators stress that they want to show how hard it is for women to live in the modern world and how important it is to support them. Another film on the same topic, “Eh, Muzhiki” (“Hey, Men”), was filmed in Kazakhstan.

Women and men switch roles and men learn how to do manicures, go to fitness clubs and create culinary masterpieces. Women learn to fight, drink beer with friends and communicate with traffic policemen effectively.

African Band Spreading Beats and Vibe in Kazakhstan

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The African band Kilimanjaro is becoming popular in Kazakhstan for its originality, dedication and, as one of its members said, “consistency, stability, hard work and the good leadership!”

The idea for a group began for Serge Matondo, 30, from Democratic Republic of Congo, while studying at People’s Friendship University of Russia. He liked to sing in his spare time, he told The Astana Times.

“Singing has always been a part of me and it all started as a hobby at the university. I moved to Russia when I was about 20 years old and it has been almost 11 years altogether, including my stay in Russia and Kazakhstan,” he said.

The band was originally formed in Russia. Fabrice Munganga, 31, half South African, half Congolese, and Djei Imarah Churchill, 27, who played football in Kazakhstan in 2006-2007, joined Matondo.

“Before Russia, I lived in Capetown doing reggae music,” said Munganga. “When the band started, I was still in Africa and then they called me to join the group. I said ok and then I moved to Russia.”

Imarah Churchill was teaching arts in India when he learned about the proposal.

“I lived in India and that’s when my manager called and offered to work in Kazakhstan. So I came back to Kazakhstan and met Serge. He showed me how it was done and I followed.”

“We called ourselves Kilimanjaro as it is the highest peak on the African continent,” said Matondo. “Our band has a virtue: because



we were raised back in Africa to be perfectionists, anything we set our minds to we try to perfect – we either do it well or do not even start doing it. We were thinking about how to name our band and we decided to call ourselves Kilimanjaro – to be always at the height of our performance,” he said.

In Kazakhstan, Kilimanjaro not only had to familiarize itself with dining customs, but also had to learn to please its audience by what the band does best – singing. The repertoire includes retro hits by Boney M, songs like “Daddy Cool,” “Rasputin,” “Doctor Alban” and “Haddaway,” songs by famous Russian singers and even Kazakh songs.

“We can sing any popular song in Kazakh,” said Matondo. “This is how we are learning Kazakh. I thought it

would be hard to learn, especially when you hear it for the first time and I thought it was really hard.”

He also shared some of the difficulties of the trade and helpful aspects of the business.

“We are an official company that pays taxes and provides jobs in Kazakhstan; otherwise, working with the city Akimat (administration) or some national companies would have been impossible. But it so happens in our line of work we have to deal with copyright issues when the authors of some songs called us and questioned us about our copyrights. These songs are a part of us when we take them. We pick them first and we fall in love with them, so when we sing them people feel these songs (pointing to his heart). Some people in Kazakhstan are very kind; they have

no problems when we call and ask to sing their songs. But not all.”

Although the band keeps getting booking requests from Russia where they originated, the members admitted they have warm feelings about specifically working in Kazakhstan.

“When I first arrived in Kazakhstan, I personally liked the atmosphere,” noted Matondo. “The more time I spend in Kazakhstan and it might sound strange (smiling), but the more I feel at home. There are so many similarities between our countries and this depends on the people, I guess. We didn’t plan on staying permanently in Kazakhstan. But this ‘people’s vibe’ was really what made us stay and set up our headquarters in Kazakhstan despite travelling around Russia for over five years.”

What “really caught my eye in Kazakhstan,” he added, is the respect for older people. “That level of admiration is equally important in Africa.”

“What struck me here in Kazakhstan is, for instance, if a young man is in a situation where he has to drink with older people. He would pour his alcoholic drink in a cup of tea, because he is not supposed to be drinking it among older people. We can tell from being at so many ceremonies and events that younger people watch themselves among the elders and older people. If they want to continue to have fun into the night, they do it separately from the elders,” he said.

Munganga added he realised the similarities among the Kazakh, Congolese and South African cultures.

“Small things like the way the food is distributed across the table, the way they share respect – it’s the

“The upbringing and hospitality is beyond human comprehension,” noted Imarah Churchill. “It gives me the privilege to see how they value humans, no matter the colour of the skin, no matter where you come from. And I noticed people in Kazakhstan are inquisitive. They always ask where I am from, what I do – not everybody wants to ask these questions. Most people don’t have that mindset. In terms of customs and traditions, they have taken the utmost and highest [value] and I love the homely part of it. And especially when they come together and unite to eat at the table.”

“If we didn’t feel the interconnection with the people I think our stay here wouldn’t have lasted for so long,” said the trio. “What we feel inside us goes out to our crowds. Once we had a little misunderstanding before going onto the stage and people could feel it. Their reaction was different. So

KILIMANJARO: “If we didn’t feel the interconnection with the people I think our stay here wouldn’t have lasted for so long. What we feel inside us goes out to our crowds. Once we had a little misunderstanding before going onto the stage and people could feel it. Their reaction was different. So our business is very specific and we don’t have masks; people see everything, they can’t be fooled.”

same as in my homeland. Although our countries are thousands of kilometres from one another, we have these similarities because we all from one mother Earth – one soul. We all come from the same mother,” he said.

our business is very specific and we don’t have masks; people see everything, they can’t be fooled.”

The band is soon planning to release its own songs in Kazakh and is eager to continue its adventure in cultural explorations.

TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Thailand Confirms Participation in EXPO 2017

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA - Thailand and Kazakhstan reached an initial agreement on Thailand's participation in EXPO 2017 in Astana, the Kazakh Foreign Ministry reported yesterday.

The agreement came during Aug. 8-9 meetings in Thailand between EXPO 2017 Commissioner Rapol Zhoshybayev and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Commissioner of Thailand National Section in EXPO 2017 Areepong Bhoocha-oom. The sides agreed to arrange a visit by Bhoocha-oom to Astana on Aug. 19 to sign an agreement concerning Thailand's participation in EXPO 2017.

Zhoshybayev briefed Bhoocha-oom about the work held to attract international participants and preparation progress for the world exhibition. In turn, Bhoocha-oom confirmed the participation of Thailand and assured that the Southeast Asian nation will present its best technologies in the sphere of green energy at the event. Thailand aims to increase the share of renewable and alter-

native energy sources in its energy production up to 25 percent by 2021. The country has rich experience in the development and use of biomass and wants to keep its leading role in the Asia-Pacific Region in terms of generating energy from biomass.

The sides also expressed confidence that in the year of the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and Thailand, the upcoming exhibition will deepen bilateral relations.

Zhoshybayev also met with Thai energy industry, tourism and business leaders who expressed interest in presenting their capabilities during EXPO 2017. The sides considered opportunities to expand cooperation with Thai tour operators and attract local tourists to the exhibition.

Thailand became the 96th country to officially confirm participation in EXPO 2017. The estimated area of Thailand's pavilion is 734 square metres. The Kingdom participated in all recent EXPO exhibitions, including Hanover 2000, Aichi 2005, Zaragoza 2008, Shanghai 2010, Yeosu 2012 and Milan 2015.

Zhoshybayev and Bhoocha-oom also discussed bilateral economic and energy cooperation.

Zhoshybayev also met in Bangkok with UN Under-Secretary General – United Nations ESCAP (the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) Executive Secretary Shamshad Akhtar.

Zhoshybayev and Akhtar discussed ESCAP's participation in the exhibition and ways to cooperate in the field of green economy. Akhtar proposed holding a special side event for ESCAP during EXPO 2017, which would include the presentation of an Asia-Pacific Energy website, a sustainable energy programme and green development online trainings. She emphasised the significance of the initiative put forward by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev during the 70th UN General Assembly on the establishment of an International Centre on the Development of Green Technologies and Investment Projects. Akhtar expressed ESCAP's willingness to help establish such a centre in Astana.



EXPO 2017 Commissioner Rapol Zhoshybayev (R) meets Permanent Secretary of the Thailand Ministry of Energy Areepong Bhoocha-oom.

Turkey to Take Part in EXPO 2017

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Turkey will present the country's best developments in the field of alternative energy sources at EXPO 2017 in Astana, announced the official web site of the national company Astana

EXPO 2017 Aug. 5. Chairman of the Board Akhmetzhan Yessimov and Commissioner of the Turkish section of the exhibition and Deputy Minister of Economy of Turkey Tarik Sonmez signed a relevant agreement in Ankara on that day.

During the meeting, Yessimov stressed that Turkey had supported

the candidacy of Kazakhstan to hold the international exhibition, as well as noted that the brotherly country is among the most important countries participating in EXPO 2017.

"The pavilion of Turkey will be one of the biggest pavilions of EXPO 2017. I am sure that Turkey will demonstrate its best innovations in the sphere of renewable energy sources at the exhibition," Yessimov said.

Antalya is holding EXPO 2016 in which Kazakhstan takes an active part. Yessimov noted that Turkey's experience is valuable for Kazakhstan.

In turn, Sonmez assured that Turkey will demonstrate its best achievements in the field of renewable energy sources.

Currently, 96 countries have officially confirmed their participation in EXPO 2017. Of those, 62 have signed a participation agreement.



Photo credit: expo2017.astana.com

Nine Tourism Projects to Be Constructed in Mangystau Region

By Natalya Kan

ASTANA – The Mangystau Region coordination council has approved nine projects in the tourism industry for 658 million tenge (US\$1.85 million), reported lada.kz. In total, 900 million tenge (US\$2.54 million) has been allocated to execute the programme.

The projects, which will support participants and business people involved in the regional tourism programme, were approved at the beginning of the year, said Mangystau Region entrepreneurship and trade department manager Venera Mussatpayeva.

"There were lots of projects offered, but the budget is limited; therefore, not each project was approved. We had a bid. First of all, members of the regional coordination council paid attention if the project could be realised on the seashore; it will attract both local and foreign tourists. And if it is just a restaurant, it won't get the approval," she added. The most interesting ideas were authorized, including a kitchen on wheels serving fast food, reconstructing a building into a hotel for newlyweds and an ethnic-style restaurant at the seashore; ice cream production; sea tours and excursions; car and boat leases; completing con-

struction of a wellness complex and an aqua park at the seashore.

To finance the programme and support tourism entrepreneurship, 600 million tenge (US\$1.9 million) has been allocated from the Lady fund and 300 million tenge (US\$845,000) from the local budget. The programme provides extending credit to entrepreneurs at an annual interest rate of 7.8 percent.

"The main condition for approval of any project is the creation of new workplaces," said Mussatpayeva.

"In the regional coordination council which considers projects, more than 70 percent are occupied by entrepreneurs. Non-state officials decide on approving various projects. At least three government employees shall be part of a recommendation: two deputy mayors of the area and the chief of the department of innovative development. All others are representatives of the business community. These people are competent because they – as nobody else – are able to read business plans and see which projects will collapse and which will be realised to the fullest. At first, they shall determine if the project is interesting for tourism development of our region," she added.



Korgalzhyn Reserve Getaway: Breathtaking Scenery, Birdwatching and Wildlife



By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – If weekend trips to the Burabai resort have become routine and you're seeking new thrills and adventures, perhaps going to the Korgalzhyn State Nature Reserve could do it for you thanks to its splendid scenery and famous birdwatching.

"The place is known for its bird migration waves, I was told," said Arthur Smailov, who had just recently travelled to the place, which is about 130 kilometres south-west of Astana, with his entire family. "There are breathtaking views over there with nu-

merous lakes, vast steppes and unimaginable clouds. It feels almost like you're on a different planet, the peace and quiet tempt to just forget all and move there and stay there to live."

The reserve, established in 1968, is now part of the UNESCO heritage list. It hosts some 5,432 square kilometres of lakes, steppes and semi deserts. The biggest lake being Lake Tengiz.

"They say May is the best season to visit the reserve because that's when the birds are nesting but we think it was still worth the time, the reserve is not just about the birds," Smailov said smiling. "There is a museum there also, and

it is also about birds mostly, but the scenery and the atmosphere make you feel you're in wonderland. It's good to be with nature one-on-one from time to time."

The reserve hosts some 42 species of animals, giving both home and shelter to wolves, saiga antelopes, bobak marmots and over 300 bird species, including such rare types as the Dalmatian pelican, northernmost pink flamingos and mute swan.

The best time to travel is from May to September; the Korgalzhyn village is about 45 kilometres from the reserve and is a great start to the adventure, numerous online testimonies and reviews state.



SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Astana Eliminated from UEFA Champions League Qualification

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – FC Astana was eliminated from the UEFA Champions League third qualifying round following a 1:2 defeat in the dying minutes of their return leg match against Celtic in Glasgow Aug. 3. A week earlier, the clubs drew 1:1 in Kazakhstan.

This was not a Kazakh club's first encounter with Celtic. In 2013, in the playoff round of the Champions League, FC Shakhter Karaganda sensationally beat Celtic 2:0 at Astana Arena. In the return game, however, the Kazakh club allowed three goals and lost on aggregate.

Celtic's second visit to the Kazakh capital again caused great interest and saw more than 29,000 spectators gather at Astana Arena July 27. Driven by the crowd, the home team immediately launched a number of promising attacks and were the first to score, with a header by Yuri Logvinenko in the 29th minute. The visiting Scots managed to tie in minute 78, but Astana players left confident, feeling they'd played the better game.

"We played well. Of course, some things in our game need to be improved: I mean using our chances; we had difficulty with that tonight. Indeed, we deserved to win but we were punished for one mistake, and its price was high. We are in for a difficult match in Scotland, and we will try to give all we have to win there," Astana coach Stanimir Stoilov concluded at the post match press conference.



ruled offside. Toward the end of regular time the Scots regained confidence and greatly improved their control of the ball. In stoppage time, Astana's Igor Shitov fouled Moussa Dembele in the penalty area and was punished with a yellow card, his second, and sent off the pitch. Celtic's 20-year-old French striker then converted the penalty and sent the home crowd into raucous celebration over their 2:1 victory.

"I congratulate our rivals [on their progress into the next round]. We played well and gave all we had [to win this match]. This was a tough match. Of course, it is a shame to miss a goal in the last minutes. Ibraimi? I think he has not yet gained his optimal form. I decided to wait until the pace of the game would lessen, so that Agim [would have a better] chance," commented Stoilov after the game.

FC Astana's campaign to reach the UEFA Champions League for the second time has thus come to an end. Now, the team will try to impress in the Europa League, the continent's second strongest international club competition. In the playoff round, the Kazakh champion will play Belarusian side BATE. In the last decade, BATE has played regularly in the UEFA Champions League against the likes of Barcelona and Bayern Munich, giving the upcoming post-Soviet confrontation something interesting to offer FC Astana fans.

The first match will be played Aug. 18 in Astana. The return leg will take place Aug. 25 in Barysau (Borisov).

Ahead of the match in Glasgow, however, Astana's chances seemed poor. The Scottish champion traditionally plays much better at home than away, and Astana would enter the game missing one of its key players, Serbian midfielder Nemanja Maksimovic, due to illness.

Early in the match, the Kazakhs tried to pressure their hosts at Celtic Park. The Scots quickly levelled the game but for a long time could not create truly threatening chances. Only in the 24th minute did Leigh Griffiths, who saved his team in the first match, try again to be a hero and from a distance almost hit the top corner of Kazakhstan's net.

The Celtic players' attempts to score grew sharper closer to the interval, and at the 45th minute their activity was rewarded when the referee punished Astana for a foul by Abzal Beysbekov in the

penalty box. Griffiths did not miss his chance, and the penalty made it 1:0.

The second half began with more attacks by Celtic. Griffiths burst into the penalty area again and sent the ball toward the near top corner of the goal, but missed. A few minutes later, Celtic created more chaos in the visitors' penalty box but the shot from an acute angle was saved this time by keeper Nenad Eric. Stoilov made his first substitution, replacing Azat Nurgaliyev, who did not have his best night in Glasgow, with Agim Ibraimi. This move paid off: In the 62nd minute, Celtic goalkeeper Craig Gordon stepped too far forward and the 28-year-old Macedonian striker sent the ball into an empty net from a long range to tie the match.

A little later, Astana's Colombian midfielder Roger Cañas headed the ball into Celtic's net, but the referee

Kazakh Judokas, Weightlifter Win Nation's First Medals at Rio Olympics

Continued from Page A1

Perhaps this is part of a human destiny. I was destined to satisfy myself with silver today. This is an excellent result for me. But, I am not complacent and will continue to train to win gold in four years. I am grateful to all the fans. It is a victory of our country, our people," Smetov said after the competition.

Galbadrakh brought Team Kazakhstan its second medal in Rio. In the bout for the bronze medal, she defeated Dayares Mestre Alvarez of Cuba.

"To win a medal at the Olympics – it was my long-time dream, and I am glad that it finally came true. Of course, I am very happy that I managed to bring a medal to Kazakhstan. Unfortunately, a mistake I made in the quarter-final against my rival from Japan did not allow me to show a better result. I wish the national



team of Kazakhstan continues to achieve good results at these Olympics," commented Galbadrakh on her performance.

In weightlifting Kharki, who competed in the up to 62 kilograms weight category, lifted 135 kilograms in snatch and 170 kg in clean and jerk. With the combined result of 305 kg he was placed third behind

Oscar Figueroa of Colombia and Eko Yuli Irawan of Indonesia with, accordingly, 318 kg and 312 kg.

"Of course, I am very glad that I achieved such a result at the Olympics. I think I had a decent performance. This is a result that became possible through daily trainings for many years, I try to do everything I can to progress, to move forward,"

– Kharki said following his success. Another Kazakh weightlifter Arli Chantei finished fourth among men in weight category up to 56 kilograms a day earlier, while in other sports cyclist Andrey Zeits and swimmer Dmitry Balandin, both placed eighth, respectively in Men's Road Race and Men's 100 metres breaststroke competitions.

Kazakhstan at Olympic Games in Rio

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

RIO DE JANEIRO – On Aug. 5, a delegation of athletes and officials of Kazakhstan took part in the opening ceremony of the Summer Olympic Games at the legendary stadium Maracana, once the world's largest, in Rio de Janeiro. The nation's flag was carried by taekwondo fighter Ruslan Zhaparov.

A day before, Kazakhstan's flag was raised in the Olympic Village in a colourful ceremony, along with flags of Spain, Turkey, the Seychelles Islands and Chad.

Mario Cilento, head of the Rio Olympics Organising Committee's international relations, attended the ceremony and wished the athletes the best successes in fair competition. After the anthem of the Olympic Games was played, it was Kazakhstan's flag that was first hoisted on the flagpole.

"All the 104 athletes who have won licenses for the games are already heroes to us. They have earned the love of their country. I will not make

predictions on how many medals we may win but we will be looking forward [to them]. Have you noticed that among the five countries whose flags were raised today, Kazakhstan's was the first? I hope this is a good sign for the future," said Saken MUSAIBEKOV, the country's Vice-Minister for Culture and Sports.

According to Chairman of the Sports and Physical Education Committee of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Culture and Sports Elsiyar Kanagatov, athletes are provided with all the necessary conditions for living and training in the Olympic Village.

"The Olympic Village has already begun its work, and our staff has already engaged into the organising work. After arriving here our athletes almost immediately can continue their trainings and preparations for competitions," he said.

The Summer Olympic Games in 2016 are being held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil Aug. 5 to 21. Events involving Kazakh athletes are transmitted live on public TV channels Kazakhstan, Khabar and Kazsport.

Togyzkumalak Players Meet in Germany for European Championships

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Players from more than 10 countries of the ancient Kazakh boardgame Togyzkumalak converged on Schweinfurt, Germany July 23 and 24 for the European Togyzkumalak championships.

Togyzkumalak (from the Kazakh language – "nine pebbles") is played on a board consisting of two rows of nine holes. The number nine has a high significance in the folk beliefs and mythology of Central Asian peoples. It was considered auspicious. There are also two parallel furrows called kazans (boilers) between these rows in the middle of the board to store the captures. The players own the kazan on the other half of the board. The holes are usually made in such a way that it is evident whether the contents are odd or even.

"Togyzkumalak is one of the valuable contributions of the Kazakh people in world culture. This is not only an intellectual competition and cultural event, but also an opportunity to promote the national cultural heritage. This is one of the main objectives of the [International Federation for Togyzkumalak] since its inception," said Federation President Alikhan Baimenov.

In this year's competition, the national team of Kazakhstan helped male and female players from countries, including Germany, France, Greece, Switzerland, Spain, Russia

and the Czech Republic hone their skills.

Historically, the game was played in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, among the Kyrgyz in north-eastern Afghanistan (Wakhan), parts of Russia (Altai, Khakassia, Sakha, Tartaria, Tuva), by the Kazakh minority in western Mongolia (Bayan Ölgii) and in north-western China (near Urumchi in Dzungaria). Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the game has gained popularity in Central Asia and more than 200,000 people play the game in Kazakhstan.

The federation was founded in 2008 and has staged three world championships since 2009. The most recent international competition attracted players from 25 countries.

In recent years, the Kazakh government has also supported the development of Togyzkumalak. The Chinese government has also expressed a desire to support the holding of the Asian Championship on Togyzkumalak.

The opening ceremony of this year's championship was attended by Baimenov, Chairman of the Committee for Sports and Physical Education of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan Elsiyar Kanagatov and Mayor of Schweinfurt City Karl-Heinz Kauczok. Federation officials also discussed during the competition ways to boost the game's popularity worldwide.

Shymkent Couple Wins 2016 Super Sprint Triathlon Astana

By Zhazira Dyussebekova



ASTANA – Around 200 people took part in the Super Sprint Triathlon Astana 2016 in the capital's Central Park on July 31, according to the akimat's (city administration) press service. Married couple from Shymkent Aleksander and Anastasiya Avtushko won both in men and women categories.

The tournament included three parts – 350 metres swimming in the Yessil River, 20 kilometres bicycle ride and running 2.5 kilometres.

The winner among men, Aleksander finished in 54 minutes and 48 seconds. Anastasiya took 1 hour and minutes to complete all the distances. Both are professional triathlon athletes.

"We have been engaged in triathlon for a long time. I have been [doing it] since 2002 and my wife since 2008. It was at a time when I was a child, unconsciously, friends called in, and then I found out what kind of sport it was and I liked it. Three types in one – very interesting, varied. Everything went very

good, well organised. The weather is cool today, we brought it from the south," said Avtushko.

According to a press release, participants had to be at least 18 years old and there were several categories for winners. The time of each contestant was being tracked with a special individual chip.

"I have been through all of that and I understand it is the kind of sport that requires both physical and tactical preparedness. It turned out that it is not easy to swim 350 metres. I have tried it myself, it is very difficult. I think that the sports festival went really good today, with perfect weather and a good mood. One hundred and forty-seven participants are amateurs and the other 27 are professional athletes in triathlon. I think it's a great achievement and I want to thank everyone who came and participated," said head of Astana Sport and Physical Culture Department Berik Marzhikpayev.

It was the first triathlon tournament in the capital and it is planned that it will be organised every year, said the press release.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2016

Capital's Hotel Scene Develops, Awaits for EXPO Tourists



Talan Towers



Abu Dhabi Plaza

By Zhazira Dyussembekova

ASTANA – EXPO 2017 organisers announced recently that 24 hotels and four hostels will be constructed to accommodate visitors for next year's three months long event.

"We have worked hard to ensure that they will have places to stay. Now, there are about 30,000 hotel rooms; in addition 5,000 more rooms will be introduced by 2017," said the head of Business and Industry De-

partment of Astana city Malika Bekturova.

"We are also considering the option of placing guests near the exhibition site. We have the land, which previously was planned to be a botanical garden. Unfortunately, there will not be a botanical garden, and we are planning to make a summer town [camp] with about 10,000 places," said head of the Tourist Information Department of the Astana Convention Bureau Rasul Ilimbayev, according to profi.travel.

Some big players in the accommodations industry have been entering the capital prior to the expo.

On June 18, 2013, the foundation of the Talan Towers was laid. Since then, the Verna Capital group of companies has built two towers. A major part of construction has been completed. One of the towers will host famous The Ritz-Carlton Hotel and a business centre will be located in the other. The whole complex is the first green construction in Kazakhstan, which uses energy-

saving technologies and meets the LEED international standards. The project was created by American company SOM (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP). According to the plan, the lower three floors will be a shopping gallery.

According to Director General of Verna Capital Yerlan Ospanov, it is a significant project totalling \$350 million.

Another giant complex, the completion of which was planned for the end of this year is Abu Dhabi

Plaza, which promises to be the tallest building in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Construction began in 2010 on the 510,000-square-metre building. The project was created by Foster and Partners. In February of this year, the construction site caught fire but no one was hurt. Construction continues 24 hours a day. The complex will host a hotel, business centre, entertainment centres, shopping mall and amenities.

Astana already offers major hotels, such as Marriott, Hilton, Rix-

os, Ibis and Radisson. Also, there are number of hotels, which do not belong to well-known, worldwide chains but offer a high-level of accommodation, such as Duman, Hotel Grand Park Yessil, Monaco, Beijing Palace Soluxe Hotel and others.

It is also expected that Kempinski, St. Regis and Four Seasons will enter the market by the next year.

In addition to high-level hotels, EXPO visitors will have the option to stay in hostels or rent local apartments.

Discover Astana with Panoramic Hop-on, Hop-off Bus Tours



By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Astana Sightseeing Tours Co. has introduced double-decker buses equipped with sound systems in four languages – Kazakh, Russian, English and Chinese. A special closed route measuring more than 20 kilometers has been developed along the left bank of the Yessil River. i-news.kz

"Our project was launched on June 27 with the support of the akimat (city administration) and Astana Convention Bureau, when the first tour was made. Initially, we planned to introduce tours on the right bank of Astana as there are many attractions and interesting buildings, but due to the load on the transport system we postponed this route," said project administrator Larissa Vostrova in an interview with The Astana Times.

The tours last 90 minutes and tickets are valid for 24 hours with hop-on, hop-off service. A passenger can get off the bus at any time to visit a museum or see the sights, then return to a tour bus at any of the specialised bus shelters. Tourists can contact the operator (+7 776 116 7675) and get the necessary information about the nearest tour. The phone number is indicated on the ticket and flyer.

"The tours start in three places,

at the Khan Shatyr Shopping Mall, Duman Entertainment Centre and the Baiterek Monument, at 10 a.m. The tickets also can be purchased in these places, as the bus stops there. The ticket distributors with red vests and caps can be found near the Baiterek Monument and Duman Centre. The online purchase will be launched in the near future. On weekdays the buses travel from 10 a.m.-8 p.m. and on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, we offer evening tours until 11 p.m.," she said.

Tickets cost 3,000 tenge (US\$9) for adults, 2,000 tenge (US\$6) for students and pensioners, 1,000 tenge (US\$3) for children 6-14 and free for youngsters under five. People with physical challenges and journalists with official ID also can travel for free.

The interval between buses is 30-35 minutes. A passenger gets a ticket and can travel the entire tour with an audio guide, which eventually will be available in up to eight languages.

"As the evenings are becoming colder, we offer plaid blankets for our guests. We also provide services for wedding catering. The wedding tours in our buses are now gaining popularity. There are a lot of tourists and visitors from Russia who are interested in the city's development and architecture," said Vostrova.

The company signed a contract with Astana LRT integrated transport system and plans to use the GPS navigation system and launch the app.

"We saw the largest number of passengers, over 240 people, on Astana Day. We have around 50-70 passengers per day and 150-170 people on weekends. We intend to expand our services and cooperate with the hotels to organise meeting guests at the airport. We also want to promote domestic tourism and provide services in Burabay and the East Kazakhstan region. At this stage, our task is to work out the service to perfection and build a solid reputation. The foreign visitors should feel comfortable and enjoy their stay in our amazing city," she added.

For those who prefer walking, audio-guided tours are offered along Nurzhol Boulevard on the left bank. Visitors can explore the sights and attractions on the most picturesque avenue of the capital and see musical fountains and sculptures. A refundable deposit of 5,000 tenge (US\$14) is required to rent equipment. Audio guide rental places are located near Khan Shatyr Mall and the House of Ministries. Tours are available in Kazakh, Russian, English and Chinese from 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

Gammy Rope Park Opens in Astana's Central Park

By Natalya Kan

ASTANA – Gammy Adventure Rope Park is the spot for thrill seekers – a new type of entertainment with various routes and levels of complexity for adults and children. The park has interesting courses from one to two-and-a-half metres above the ground where anyone would feel like a real climber.

"Nobody will leave the complex unsatisfied," said patrons.

About 1,000 visitor certificates have been sold on one discount service website in just a few days. Most visitors have positive comments both about the park and its employees. The only issue mentioned was the weather, so guests better pick a good day for their trip. After visiting the park people keep coming back again and again, said online reviews.

Gammy is a remarkable place for sports activities, leisure and family fun. It features lots of attractions like the trampoline with safety net and for those who seek more adventure, a trolley-fast descent on a ropeway. The park is available for corporate events or children's holidays, and entertainment programmes can create a festive atmosphere. The attentive

personnel are always ready to help visitors and will answer any questions. Staff members also speak various languages, which helps foreign guests to feel comfortable.

Astana currently has four Gammy complexes, two of which are in Central Park. The smaller version is located near the Cheerful Chain; the bigger one is on the Yessil River bank behind the park administration building. The largest facility with the trolley is in Zheruyik Park at the intersection of Momysuly and Zhumabayev streets. Another centre specifically designed for students has opened near the Kazakhstan Sports Complex.

The centres are open 11 a.m.-8 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m.-8 p.m. weekends. The price for the one-metre high and 60-metre long green rope route for children 4 years and up is 700 tenge (US\$2). The blue rope route, measuring three-five metres high and 68 metres long, is 1,000 tenge (US\$2.90) for kids up to 12. The three-and-a-half-metre high red rope route for adults and children 12 and up is 1,200 tenge (US\$3.50). Regulars can purchase seasonal passes. There are age restrictions for children up to 14, who are only allowed if accompanied by parents or with the consent of their guardians.

Visitors willing to take multiple

rides without removing their equipment will receive instant discounts. Discounts are also available for large families and those celebrating their birthdays, however, they will need to confirm their status and date of birth with proper documentation and identification cards.

Safety is above all, the Gammy management outlines on its website. People ride and go through all routes with special equipment to ensure safety throughout the whole stay. The ropes and routes can handle up to four tonnes of weight. In case someone is unable to complete the course, Gammy instructors will carry out rescue efforts by means of special trigger equipment. Helmets are required to avoid head injuries.

Gammy is a popular Russian network of rope complexes that is spreading fast. Centres have opened in such Russian cities as Kirov, Orenburg, Samara, Sterlitamak, Tolyatti and Ufa. The company opened its first park outside Russia last year in the Kazakh capital and has built four additional complexes.

For more details, visit <http://astana.gammy-park.ru>, <https://www.instagram.com/GammyParkAstana/> or <https://new.vk.com/GammyParkAstana> or call +7 701 3294692.



File photograph