

Nazarbayev's State Visit to Poland: Cooperation in Trade, Logistics and Agriculture Tops Agenda



President Nursultan Nazarbayev greeted by Polish President Andrzej Duda on Aug. 22 in Warsaw.

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

President Nursultan Nazarbayev met Aug. 22 in Warsaw with Polish President Andrzej Duda and other top officials as he began the first ever state visit by a Kazakh head of state to Poland.

The two leaders discussed cooperation in trade, economic, investment, agriculture, transit and transport, as well as in the cultural and humanitarian spheres. They also discussed international issues and implementing joint projects, the Akorda press service reported.

"We discussed political and economic issues. More than 100 Kazakhstan businessmen came to Poland to take part in the business forum to take place tomorrow. It is planned to sign bilateral economic contracts to the amount of \$1 billion," Nazarbayev said during a joint press conference with his Polish counterpart following the talks.

Nazarbayev thanked Duda for the invitation and warm reception, noting progress in bilateral relations and the potential for additional cooperation. The Kazakh leader reminded that almost 40,000 ethnic Poles live in Kazakhstan, creating a "bridges of friendship" between the two states.

"Eighty years have passed since their deportation to Kazakhstan. According to our Constitution and legislation, they have the same rights and freedoms as the other 130 ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan in peace and harmony. The state renders support to all of them," Nazarbayev added.

In turn, Duda said the Kazakh President's visit is evidence of the strengthening of bilateral relations and that the two countries have common interests in deepening cooperation in the transport, logistics, oil and gas sectors.

Also, Duda noted that Poland

will participate in EXPO 2017 and said he will attend the event.

Nazarbayev also pointed out the fact that Kazakhstan is building up its industrial potential.

"During the past five years, around 1,000 new industrial enterprises have been commissioned. I invite Polish business people to take part in their work. There are all the prerequisites for this. For example, as of next year, a visa-free regime is planned to be introduced for citizens of our countries, and an opportunity for establishing direct air links is being explored. Today, our mutual trade amounts to \$1.1 billion. Certainly, this is far from the existing potential," he said.

Following the talks, the presidents adopted an extensive declaration on economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Poland. The declaration concerns cooperation in energy, transport, space research, science, technology, fi-

nance, environmental protection and agriculture.

The two countries' agriculture ministries also signed an agreement on cooperation.

Representatives from the two countries also signed an agreement on the readmission of persons and a framework agreement between the Development Bank of Kazakhstan and the National Economy Bank of Poland.

Later, Nazarbayev and Duda were scheduled to take part in a Polish-Kazakh business forum on Aug. 23.

During his visit, Nazarbayev also met with Prime Minister Beata Szydlo and Senate Speaker Stanislaw Karczewski.

Poland exports mainly machinery and chemicals, including pharmaceuticals, to Kazakhstan. The main Polish imports from Kazakhstan are mineral products (including petroleum products), according to www.president.pl.

Astana to Host Major Nuclear Disarmament Conference

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – The Kazakh capital will host the international conference "Building a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World," dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site and commemorating UN International Day against Nuclear Tests at the Palace of Independence Aug. 29, the Senate of the Parliament announced.

The Kazakh Senate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) have co-organised the conference.

It will be addressed by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and will bring together parliamentarians, representatives of international organisations, civil activists, scholars, mayors and media from around the world.

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Kazakhstan Led by Example on Nuclear Disarmament

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – "Building a Nuclear Weapon Free World", the international conference to be held Aug. 29, has attracted senior figures from nations that possess nuclear weapons, as well as non-nuclear states. The conference will bring together parliamentarians, representatives of international organisations, civil activists, scholars, as well as mayors and media from around the world.

Alyn Ware, Global Coordina-

tor of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and recipient of the 2009 Right Livelihood Award (Alternative Nobel Peace Prize), is one of the busy organisers. Among his other duties at the conference, he will moderate the panel session "Nuclear test ban and the role of the United Nations in achieving nuclear disarmament." The Astana Times asked him several questions related to the current global situation in terms of nuclear disarmament.

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Nation Wins Record Number of Medals in Rio

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

RIO DE JANEIRO – Kazakhstan won the most medals in its history at the XXXI Summer Olympics in Rio, which ended Aug. 21. Kazakh athletes claimed 17 medals - three gold, five silver, and nine bronze. This result allowed Kazakhstan to reach 22nd place in the medal tally among 206 countries.

Three new Olympic champions from Kazakhstan are weightlifter Nijat Rahimov, swimmer Dmitry Balandin and boxer Daniyar Yeleusinov.

Judoka Yeldos Smetov, weightlifter Zhazira Zhapparkul, wrestler Guzel Manyurova, boxers Vasily Levit and Adilbek Niyazymbetov all won silver.

Another judoka Otgontsetseg Gal-

badrah, weightlifters Farkhad Khar-ki, Karina Goricheva and Alexander Zaichikov, track and field athlete Olga Rypakova, wrestlers Elmira Syzdykova and Yekaterina Larionova, boxers Ivan Dychko and Dariga Shakimova claimed bronze medals.

As The Astana Times reported earlier, as the competitions opened on Aug. 6, judokas Smetov and Galbadrah won the nation's first two medals of the Rio Olympics, a silver and bronze respectively.

Kazakh sports fans had high hopes for winning medals in weightlifting, but the doping scandal which shook the national team before Rio, and dismissal of its four leaders significantly reduced its chances.

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Kazakhstan's Rio 2016 gold medalists Daniyar Yeleusinov (Top) Dmitry Balandin (bottom left) and Nijat Rahimov.

Nazarbayev, Putin Discuss Mutual Ties in Sochi

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev met with Russian President Vladimir Putin Aug. 16 in Sochi, Russia. The sides talked about a wide range of bilateral cooperation issues and exchanged views on the most pressing issues of the regional and international agenda, reported the Akorda press service.

Nazarbayev and Putin discussed preparations for the meetings planned within the framework of the upcoming G20 summit in China, as well as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Council of Heads of State and Kazakh-Russian interregional cooperation forum.

Nazarbayev thanked his colleague for the invitation to Sochi and noted Putin's efforts on developing Russian regions. He expressed satisfaction with the progress in bilateral cooperation and stressed Kazakhstan's desire to further the advancement.

"I think our relations are exemplary both in political and economic terms. Over the years 6,000 joint Kazakh-Russian enterprises were created which have become a real embodiment of our integration. I have high hopes for the upcoming Kazakh-Russian interregional cooperation forum. I know this will be a significant meeting. There are a lot of projects being prepared."



"Our governments must cooperate and help each other in difficult times. The Kazakh-Russian relations based on the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance and the Treaty on Good-Neighbourliness and Alliance in the 21st century remain stable. I am glad that relationships between Russia and Turkey are warming," said Nazarbayev.

In turn, Putin thanked Nazarbayev for the successful efforts in re-establishing Russian-Turkish relations.

"We are sincerely committed to the restoration of wide-ranging relations with a friendly Turkey, with

which we had a unique relationship of cooperation and interaction over the previous years. The recent visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Russia confirmed our mutual intention to work on recovery, as well as development of our bilateral ties. Thank you very much for this," he said.

Putin also drew attention to the successful development in all areas of the strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and Russia.

"Of course we face difficulties, especially in the field of economy. In conditions of world instability, we observed the decline in commodity

markets and currency fluctuations. However, in the physical volume it is not so significant – 7 percent. I am confident that we can certainly overcome it with the help of created cooperation mechanisms, which work effectively," he added.

Earlier, Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov visited Sochi Aug. 12, where he met with the heads of the Armenian, Belarusian, Kyrgyz and Russian governments to discuss strengthening the Eurasian Economic Union's (EAEU) legal framework. He also had a bilateral meeting with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

President Extends Moratorium on Controversial Land Code Amendments by Five Years

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan decided Aug. 18 to extend for five years a recently imposed moratorium on the implementation of controversial amendments to its land law.

“Since the introduction of a moratorium on certain provisions of the Land Code, the [land reform] commission carried out serious activities such as holding meetings in all regions of the country in order to listen to the views of citizens. It should be noted that people have made good offers such as establishing the size limits of the leased areas, methods of their use and measures to be taken in an inefficient use of land. Thus, all have come to the general conclusion that it was necessary to preserve a leasing term up to 49 years. However, it is necessary to learn international practice to give an appropriate explanation to the population that requires additional time. Therefore, I accept the commission’s proposal to extend the moratorium for another five years,” President Nursultan Nazarbayev said on Aug. 18.

The amendments sparked pro-



Photo credit: akorda.kz

tests around the country earlier this spring by citizens concerned the amendments would allow foreign entities to purchase too much Kazakh land. A moratorium on the implementation of the amendments was declared as a result of those protests.

The decision to extend that moratorium by five years was announced following a meeting be-

tween President Nazarbayev and top officials at the Akorda presidential residence, including Prime Minister Karim Massimov, head of the Presidential Administration Adilbek Dzhabysbekov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture Askar Myrzakmetov, Secretary of the Security Council of Kazakhstan Nurlan Yermekbayev and Minister of National

Economy Kuandyk Bishimbayev.

Nazarbayev noted that the amendments were initially meant to raise funds in the agro-industrial sector.

“Nearly 40 percent of the population lives in villages and 20 percent works there. The rise of agriculture entails the development of many industries. All farmers know how much effort the government is

making to assist the industry. Substantial funds are invested in the agriculture sector every year that are not always paid off. The reason is a low labour productivity in agriculture that requires additional funds,” emphasised the President.

“We have created a special website for the citizens and opened call centers that have received over 13,000 calls. We also provided meetings with 67,000 people,” said Myrzakmetov describing the work of the land reform commission.

He also highlighted a need to address the interests and needs of the population in the pastures and grasslands and to set clear rules and mechanisms of land use for individual housing construction.

In addition, the meeting also addressed socio-economic development and implementation of government programmes.

“The economic development of the country is under great pressure as a result of the processes occurring in the world. The current financial and economic crisis and the transition to a new paradigm of the digital economy require completely new approaches. We need to find them by using resources that the country has,” said Nazarbayev.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Four members of a radical group which was plotting a string of terrorist attacks were detained in the Almaty region on Aug. 18, the press service of the Kazakh National Security Committee announced Aug. 22. According to the Committee, the components for making improvised explosive devices and extremist religious materials, which these groups had kept at their residences and at specially prepared hideouts, “have been seized from the detained members of the group, which includes Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan nationals.” The Committee said it foiled plans by the militants to target the Committee’s own employees and offices, as well as police detachments and military units. The militants, who were not identified, also planned a second stage of attacks at crowded venues. Authorities are investigating the suspects and will report further developments, the press service said.

Yellow Level of Terrorist Alert Prolonged

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – On Aug. 14, the Anti-Terrorist Centre of Kazakhstan announced the extension of a moderate yellow level of terrorist alert across

the country until Jan.15, 2017, the National Security Committee (KNB) press service reported.

According to the statement, the chairman of the KNB made this decision in accordance with the Decree of the President of Kazakhstan

of Aug. 9, 2013 “On approval of the rules of organisation and functioning of the state system of information monitoring and alerting the public about the threat of terrorist act.”

The alert follows the Aug. 11 death of police officer Zhalgas

Keldibayev, who had been in the intensive care since being injured during a July attack in Almaty. Keldibayev, 24, had worked at the patrol division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs since 2014.

On July 18, a gunman attacked

police officers in Almaty. The attack led to the death of four police officers, one officer of the Border Guards and one civilian on the spot. Five police officers and two civilians were also hospitalised. The highest red level of terrorist alert was imposed in the city for one day. When the attacker was arrested, the level of threat was lowered to yellow.

Preparations for the large-scale ethno-cultural festival Uly Dala Eli (Kazakh for “Land of the Great Steppe”) are well underway in the Pavlodar region, reported Kazakh TV. The two-day event, dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s independence, will include various competitions, fairs and exhibitions of applied arts. The festival will be attended by guests from across the country and from abroad. The peak of the festival will showcase birds of prey and stunt performers acting as ancient warrior-nomads. The competitions in national sports are expected to be spectacular.

Diplomatic Corps Briefed on Upcoming Events, Tax Novelties

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov briefed the foreign diplomatic corps Aug. 17 about a number of important Kazakh foreign policy initiatives, including hosting Building a Nuclear Weapons Free World, the international conference slated Aug. 29 in the capital. The event is dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site closing.

Idrissov noted the international significance of the anniversary of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s historic decree to close the largest nuclear test site in the world. He maintained a number of prominent figures of the anti-nu-

clear movement, senior representatives of foreign states and international organisations will take part in this exceptional event. More than 150 delegates from around the world are expected to join the conference to discuss the feasibility of achieving progress towards a total ban of nuclear weapons in general and their tests in particular.

“Kazakhstan has every right to be called a champion in the field of nuclear disarmament. Moreover, we are going to further promote our peace initiatives during our non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council during 2017-2018,” said the Foreign Minister.

He added Nazarbayev plans

to pay working visits to Serbia, China, Japan, South Korea, Azerbaijan, Armenia, South Arabia and Jordan.

Idrissov also invited Ministry of Finance State Revenue Committee Chairman Daulet Yergozhin to the meeting to comment on recent amendments to the country’s tax legislation.

Yergozhin stressed the amendments will not affect foreign businesses. The new norms of the legislation will open the possibility for greater transparency of foreign financial flows in Kazakhstan for Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries and other international partners.

Regarding the tax laws, Idrissov noted issues of fiscal responsibility, financial transparency and targeted budget spending are central in modern Kazakhstan’s efforts to reform the public system of financial control in the framework of implementing OECD standards and in accordance with international obligations in the fields of human rights and democracy.

“The adopted rules not only meet the international practice but also the key directions of the 100 concrete steps programme within the five institutional reforms implemented at the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, since we are talking about the rule of law and transparency of the state and society.”

“This is an important step towards achieving our strategic goal by 2050. We go through steps to fit the requirements of the OECD. Prime Minister Karim Massimov pays personal attention to investment. Accountability and transparency are the premises of these amendments to the Kazakh tax legislation,” he said.

Kazakhstan ratified the OECD Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters in 2014. According to the document, the country must be ready to respond to any requests from OECD member states regarding all activities of the nation’s foreign investors.

“Kazakhstan cares about foreign businesses in the country. We are ready to create favourable conditions for them and the state revenue committee is open to active work with the diplomatic corps and foreign business in Kazakhstan in the case of questions on the implementation of the law,” said Idrissov to conclude the briefing.

Saiga population monitoring is being conducted in western Kazakhstan, as environmental police and forestry and hunting regional inspectorate experts are examining their habitat. Experts take photos of the animals and enter time data and the direction of their migration. This year, hunt inspectors have not detected mass destruction, noting this spring the number of saiga reached 70,000. Thanks to the efforts of the Kazakh Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, the Uralsk saiga population is being monitored in the territories of Kaztalovsk, Zhanibeks, Taskalinsk and Bokey Orda District. The work is being coordinated with the environmental police, as well as the forestry territorial inspection.

Kazakhstan’s Armed Forces Team Ranked Second at 2016 International Army Games

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Kazakhstan’s armed forces team ranked second among 120 teams from 19 states in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America at the 2016 International Army Games held in Alabino, near Moscow, according to the Aug. 14 report on the Ministry of Defence website. Russia took first place and China was third.

“The present army games were unprecedented for the country. Kazakh military personnel participated in 21 competitions out of 23, giving way only to the game’s organising team and the Chinese team on the number of involvements. This all-time reach demonstrated new possibilities of the Kazakh army today,” said the message.

This year’s army games were distinguished with special content and scale and became a new symbol of international cooperation, experience exchange and pledge of peace and solidarity, said Min-



Photo credit: Kazakh Ministry of Defence

ister of Defence Imangali Tasmagambetov.

“We do not simply view these games as competitions. For us, their gist unfolds in a unique fusion of competitive spirit and military brotherhood. Their comparison to the Olympic Games is completely justified,” he added on the website.

Dozens of hours were spent

training, hundreds of kilometres travelled, obstacles crossed and targets defeated. More than 600 military men defended the honour of the country’s armed forces on 19 military firing ranges across Russia, on ground, sky and sea, noted the article.

Military pilots, sailors (Navy men), paratroopers, drivers, tank-

men, marines, engineers, canine specialists, military doctors and chefs fought for the prestige and recognition of the Kazakh army in the international arena.

The first two contests, masters of artillery fire and sniper border line, were conducted on Kazakh land and proved unique for the country. The report noted the best snipers and artillerymen from 12 countries fought for the winner’s title. For the first time, competition levels were held at night and the firing done with Kazakh-produced night vision equipment.

Kazakhs were able to observe the fight, best moments, victory of their military men and award ceremony in real time. The ministry had an online broadcast of the games on its website, with 204,000 views over seven days. Users from Belarus, Canada, China, Kazakhstan, Japan, Russia, the U.K., the U.S. and other foreign countries watched the competitions.

A poll was conducted among the

leaders and judges of all the teams while summing up contest results in Kazakhstan. The judges noted the high level of evaluation and an interest in further involvement in the contests.

“You demonstrated professionalism of the highest standard. Huge work on preparing and conducting this event was done and I would like to express my gratitude for that. We wish economic development, peace and stability to Kazakhstan,” said Zimbabwe team representative Lieutenant General Mangisi, according to the ministry report.

The military firing range will become the battle centre for military professionals in five contests. A rally for armoured vehicles, special competition for military women and multidiscipline contest using an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) drone will be added to the games, it added. Kazakhstan will host the masters of artillery fire, sniper border line and artillerymen competitions.

The annual August meeting held in Astana brought together teachers from throughout the country. It was the biggest in history, gathering nearly 2,000 people in plenary sessions via an online broadcast.

Deputy Prime Minister Dariga Nazarbayeva talked about improving the efficiency of education, while Minister of Education and Science Erlan Sagadiyev told his colleagues about upcoming reforms. Implementing educational system renewal will start Sept. 1. In the last 25 years, approximately 1,500 new schools, 450 kindergartens and more than 2,000 private pre-schools have been built. There are currently about 3 million students and 350,000 teachers in the country.

Nineteen-year-old Dinara Saduakassova became the under-20 world chess champion, her sister Ainur Utesheva announced via a public Facebook post. Saduakassova reconfirmed her status as a grand master, which she initially gained in 2012 as a 16 year old. She has won numerous international tournaments and was named the best sportswoman in 2013, according to The Sport Review.

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EXTERNAL
NEWS IN BRIEF

A South Korean company is planning to start producing “clean energy” in Kazakhstan, Kazakh TV reports. Now the company is studying the investment climate and energy potential of Kazakhstan. Similar projects exist in nine other countries where the company has invested already. South Korea has become one of the leading players in the global renewable energy market over the past few years. However, clean consumption in the country is undeveloped. According to the news agency, the share of green electricity is only a little more than 1 percent. Experts attribute this to a lack of places to establish solar and wind power. This is one reason Korean companies are expanding into foreign markets. According to Kim Jong Ho, president of a power plant, Kazakhstan has a very large territory; about 40 times greater than the territory of South Korea. He noted the country is costly to maintain. Therefore, Korean investors believe Kazakhstan will be interested in increasing the number of solar power plants.

North Kazakhstan region manufacturers presented food products to their Russian partners at the Kurgan Agricultural Fair, Kazakh TV reports. The quality is worth the price, their consumers say. In just one day, domestic producers sold 10 million tenge (US\$29,530) worth of goods. “I was very pleased to get to this fair,” said Nadezhda Tyunina, Kurgan resident. “We have a lot of branches, shops of products made in Kazakhstan. I always buy tea, different sweets and cakes. I like them. We are happy that we have such fairs.” Georgy Tselykh, director of a dairy factory in Petropavlovsk, commented that since June the company has been delivering products to 11 stores three times a week. “Now the volume of orders is increasing. In addition, the leadership of cross border regions signed a memorandum of cooperation. The document is aimed at the development of business, tourism and agriculture.” This year, according to Tselykh, the trade turnover between North Kazakhstan and Russia amounted to more than 30 billion tenge (US\$88.6 million).

HBO has released a four-minute video about Kazakh middleweight boxing champion Genady ‘GGG’ Golovkin, vesti.kz reports. The short film is called Golovkin’s Greatest Hits and it takes a look at some of the best moments in his fights. Meanwhile, Golovkin is preparing for a fight against Kell Brook that will take place Sept. 10 in London. Tickets to the fight sold out in 12 minutes, it was announced earlier.

Kazakh Minister of Defence Imangali Tasmagambetov and Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman reached an agreement on joint production of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) on Aug. 22. “This project will be implemented in Astana at the aviation technical centre, which has all the necessary capacity and human resources for the organisation of assembly manufacture and service of the UAVs with the condition that appropriate technology will be received and professionals will be trained,” said Tasmagambetov during the meeting, according to the Ministry of Defence’s press office. In addition, an agreement was reached on training the Kazakh military at an Israeli centre of UAV operators. “We value our historical ties and your state, as the most striking example, which was able to achieve tolerance in such a large scale where all religions and nationalities exist peacefully. We dream of a Middle East having this understanding of tolerance. ...When it comes to the military-technical cooperation, we more than welcome it and will try our best to realise our plans,” said Lieberman.

Kazakh, EAEU Government Heads Seek Stronger EAEU Legal Framework

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov met Aug. 12 in Sochi, Russia with the heads of the governments of Russia, Belarus, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan to discuss strengthening the Eurasian Economic Union’s (EAEU) legal framework.

“In particular, we have almost agreed on a draft of the Customs Code of the Union. There were one or two minor issues that I am sure we will be able to settle to have had this document accepted,” said Massimov at a press conference after the meeting.

“The progress is obvious, and there is no doubt that all works with the document will be completed this autumn,” said Prime Minister of Belarus Andrei Kobyakov. The next Intergovernmental Commission meeting will take place in Minsk.

The meeting focused on the traceability of products and the functioning of a common market



EAEU heads of government meet in Sochi, Russia on Aug. 12.

of medical drugs, oil and products.

“I would like to say that the introduction of this new practice will help us change the business climate. For instance, streamlining

accounting systems used by economic operators and the improvement of the mechanism of tracing goods are needed. Therefore, the governments should think how to

reduce possible negative impacts and prepare business for innovations,” highlighted Kobyakov.

Meeting participants noted the importance of a speedy approval

of the common principles and rules within the EAEU. Unifying the requirements for pharmaceutical products will allow participants to enter to the markets of third countries, said head of the government of Armenia Hovik Abrahamyan. The prime ministers also discussed regulations concerning the import and circulation of goods on the EAEU’s territory in light of Kazakhstan’s accession to the WTO.

“We discussed technical aspects of this topic. This document is crucial because it provides transparency among our countries,” added Kobyakov.

Participants also agreed to explore unified railway tariffs between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

In addition, the heads of the governments reviewed an agreement on a common capital market that was adopted a few days ago at a Eurasian Economic Commission meeting in Moscow. The document allows lifting foreign exchange restrictions on certain banking transactions. This applies to opening bank accounts, raising and disbursing loans, paying for goods and services and purchasing real estate. The agreement will come into force in Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia in late 2017 and early 2018 and in Belarus in 2020.

Photo credit: pm.kz

FM Idrissov: Kazakhstan Welcomes Improved Russian-Turkish Relations

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakhstan welcomes the recently improved relations between its two close strategic partners Russia and Turkey, Kazakh Minister

of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov said Aug. 10.

“The meeting in St. Petersburg [between President Vladimir Putin and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan] is a development in a very good direction; we welcome this scenario. For

our country, Russia and Turkey are important and close strategic partners. We are encouraged in many ways by the improvement of relations between our two close friends,” Idrissov said.

The warming of relations between

the two countries has been observed since President Erdogan sent a letter to President Putin, noted Idrissov. Earlier, it was reported that Kazakh diplomats helped Turkey prepare a letter to Russia. Furthermore, a key role in reconciliation was played by

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, it was revealed by Turkish sources.

“In some ways, Nazarbayev used the fact that Kazakhstan has good relations with both Russia and Turkey in order to contribute to the improvement of the situation between Russia and Turkey [which] worsened after the incident with the aircraft,” Idrissov said.

On Aug. 9, Erdogan met with Putin in St. Petersburg for the first time since Turkey shot down a Russian military jet over Syria Nov. 24, 2015.

UNDP, Kazakhstan and JICA to Jointly Assist Afghanistan

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative to Kazakhstan Norimasa Shimomura have signed Promoting Kazakhstan’s ODA Cooperation with Afghanistan, a project financed by the Japanese government through the UNDP-Japan Partnership Fund.

“We are happy that the first pilot project has been done successfully. Kazakhstan has already allocated \$40 million to Afghanistan. We are training Afghan students in Kazakh universities,” said Idrissov at a signing ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Astana on Aug. 19.

As the initial project, it will help Kazakhstan strengthen its ability to administer its future official de-



Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov and UNDP Resident Representative to Kazakhstan Norimasa Shimomura ink the agreement on Promoting Kazakhstan’s ODA Cooperation with Afghanistan.

velopment aid (ODA). The most important task of this activity, however, is to make a fair contribution to Afghanistan’s further development by expanding the economic independence and rights of Afghan women.

KazAID, Kazakhstan’s fledgling official ODA, is the first pro-

gramme among the Central Asian states and one that will begin with a neighbourhood focus. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is expected to provide an opportunity to Kazakhstan to adopt best ODA practices.

“Many reform efforts in Kazakhstan are done in the context

of our ambition to join the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Official development assistance is a very important part of OECD,” said the Kazakh minister.

Creation of KazAID in the first years of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) signifies Kazakhstan’s serious commitment to contribute towards this international agenda, he added. The nation has already provided humanitarian and development assistance to countries in Central Asia, Latin America and the Pacific.

Promoting Kazakhstan’s ODA Cooperation with Afghanistan is aimed at improving the economic independence of Afghan women. In particular, Kazakhstan will share its experience in the fields of public administration, health and education.

“The basis for this project is the joint statement signed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his visit to Kazakhstan in October last year and President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. I hope that implementation of the project will be a good opportunity for Japan to contribute actively to the measures undertaken by Kazakhstan for stabilising the situation in the re-

gion,” said Japanese Ambassador to Kazakhstan Ichiro Kawabata.

“Kazakhstan, Japan and UNDP in Afghanistan provide a complex range of support to promote gender equality in the country, including providing policy support and capacity development to the ministry of women’s affairs. We need this support,” added Afghan Ambassador to Kazakhstan Mohammad Farooq Baraki.

In December 2014, JICA invited seven officials from the Kazakh government to learn about the experience of Japan’s ODA system and its history in Tokyo.

UNDP has helped the international community to build and share solutions to the challenges of democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment and women’s empowerment. Kazakhstan is capable of providing consistent assistance to other nations, thus strengthening its position as a leading country in Central Asia.

“The project symbolises the country’s serious commitment to promoting peace and security,” said Shimomura.

Astana to Host Major Nuclear Disarmament Conference

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The event will include a plenary session and four panel sessions: “Security without nuclear weapons or war: Manifesto ‘The World. The 21st Century’”; “A nuclear test ban and the role of the UN in achieving nuclear disarmament”; “National prohibition and nuclear-weapon-free zones. Geography of a sustainable world”; “Initiatives and campaigns – legislators, religious leaders and civil society”.

Conference participants will commemorate victims of nuclear tests, consider current disarmament issues and make proposals on how to strengthen international security.

According to Speaker of the Kazakh Senate Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the 25th anniversary since the closure of the Semipalatinsk Test Site is a date of global significance.

“President Nursultan Nazarbayev is recognised as a leader of the global antinuclear movement. His decision on the full closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site is the first and the only such case in the disarmament history of the world. The idea of complete nuclear disarmament underpins the Manifesto, ‘The World. The 21st Century.’ The anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk Test Site is the best opportunity for the entire world community to consider the paramount importance of establishing sustainable peace on the planet and to propose new common solutions to security problems,” he said on the eve of the event.

On Dec. 2, 2009, at Kazakhstan’s initiative, the UN unanimously declared Aug. 29 the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

“For nearly a decade as UN Secretary-General, I have witnessed many of the worst problems in

the world, as well as our collective ability to respond in ways that at times seemed impossible. Our ambitious new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change have demonstrated the power of political will to break long-standing deadlocks. On this International Day against Nuclear Tests, I call on the world to summon a sense of solidarity commensurate with the urgent need to end the dangerous impasse on this issue.” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a special message on this year’s International Day against Nuclear Tests.

In his message, made public by the UN shortly prior to the date, Ban Ki-moon said, “Today marks a quarter of a century since the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site in Kazakhstan, ground zero for more than 450 nuclear tests. The victims there are joined by oth-

ers scattered across Central Asia, North Africa, North America and the South Pacific.”

He continued, “A prohibition on all nuclear testing will end this poisonous legacy. It will boost momentum for other disarmament measures by showing that multilateral cooperation is possible, and it will build confidence for other regional security measures, including a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. When I visited Semipalatinsk in 2010, I saw the toxic damage – but I also witnessed the resolve of the victims and survivors. I share their determination to strive for a world free of nuclear weapons.”

The UN Secretary General went on to urge Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation member states to act now.

“Those states whose ratification is required to bring the treaty into

force should not wait for others. Even one ratification can act as a circuit breaker. All states that have not done so should sign and ratify because every ratification strengthens the norm of universality and shines a harsher spotlight on the countries that fail to act,” he said.

Kazakhstan knows well those catastrophic human consequences. The Soviet nuclear weapons tests at the Semipalatinsk site, caused illnesses and premature death to an estimated 1.5 million people and contaminated a huge area.

The Manifesto “The World. The 21st Century,” which was released by Nazarbayev earlier this year, is another contribution to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and to an end to war. The main idea of the manifesto is to prevent war by utilising common security and international law approaches such as diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

Gov’t Discusses Proposals to Improve Attracting Investments

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov announced Aug. 10 proposals to improve work with foreign investors.

Speaking at a government meeting on the issue, Idrissov suggested creating a pool of investment projects.

“There are a lot of projects and most of them are sector-specific. Therefore, while working with investors, sometimes we face a lack of concreteness. Also, the state bodies have different positions, which lead to difficulties in monitoring the projects. I propose to create a single pool of large investment projects, which would be passed through all related bodies

and approved at the investment headquarters under your leadership,” Idrissov said, addressing Prime Minister Karim Massimov.

Secondly, Idrissov proposed using a more targeted approach to choosing foreign investors.

“We try to spread all the projects and find investors worldwide. Although we know that there is a concept of country specialisation. Therefore, we offer to introduce a country-targeted approach through the decision of the investment headquarters. That means that if we need high-precision products, we know which countries specialise in those products. It will allow us to target certain projects only in the [appropriate] countries, while excluding countries that are not involved,” Idrissov said.

In addition, Idrissov noted that it

is necessary to develop a unified export and import policy, because marketing is a key issue for investors.

“We have no profound analysis of the export and import policies. In our view, it is a serious obstacle in working with investors. The reason is that any investor before investing money thinks where his products will be sold at the final stage. Our country does not have such market analysis. We believe that the relevant ministries need to seriously work on the development of clear and standard export and import policies,” Idrissov concluded.

In turn, Massimov instructed the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry for Investments and Development to prepare a wider meeting of the investment headquarters shortly in order to make a general decision.

15 million Tonnes of Gas Supplied via Central Asia – China Pipeline

Staff Report

ASTANA – The Central Asia – China gas pipeline was used to transport 15.1 million tonnes of natural gas in the first seven months of 2016.

The Khorgos Immigrant and Quarantine Office in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region reports that this volume is 23.3 percent more than in comparing period of time in 2015.

The Central Asia – China gas pipeline begins at the border of Turkmeni-

stan and Uzbekistan and connects Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and crosses the Chinese border at the Khorgos checkpoint. It is 1,830 kilometres. As of today, A, B, and C lines of the pipeline have been put into operation.

In total, about 108.8 million tonnes of natural gas has been transported to China during the working period of the pipeline since December 2009.

As the Xinhua Agency reports, total throughput capacity of the pipeline will eventually reach 55 billion cubic metres per year.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

The North Kazakhstan region is leading the country in terms of business subsidies, Kazinform reports. Goods and services worth 50.5 billion tenge (US\$149 million) were produced in the first quarter of 2016 in the region, which is 4 percent more than in the same period last year. This year, nearly 2 billion tenge (US\$6 million) was allocated from the national budget as part of the Business Road Map 2020 programme. Over the first six months of this year, more than 140 loan applications totalling 6.6 billion tenge (US\$19.5 million) were approved, of which 94 projects were submitted from rural businesses people.

The amount of legalised cash in Kazakhstan now exceeds US\$1 trillion, Ranking.kz reports. Since the beginning of 2016, the average size of accounts opened for the purposes of legalisation was more than 500 million tenge (US\$1.4 million). More than 85 percent of all money was legalised in Almaty. According to experts, the legalised funds accounted for 3.3 percent of gross domestic product by the end of 2015. If the current growth rates remain unchanged, this ratio could rise to almost 8 percent by the end of the year.

After a loss at the end of 2015, production profitability in the processing industry of Kazakhstan has grown again, reaching 9 percent for the first quarter in 2016, Finprom.kz reports. Large and medium-sized enterprises made the largest contribution to production profitability’s growth. From January to March this year, the total volume of output by processing enterprises totalled 1.1 trillion tenge (US\$3.2 billion), 29 percent higher than in the first quarter last year. In monetary terms, the annual output growth totalled 256 billion tenge (US\$756 million) – the highest since 2011.

The lending economy is recovering from January’s decline. Since the beginning of the year, monthly lending increased by 66 percent, Ranking.kz reports. Analysts note that the main factor in the growth was the actions of the National Bank in February, which removed restrictions on the issuance of liquidity. Meanwhile, second-tier banks have built a solid resource base. This June, the size of the loan portfolio in the banking sector reached 12.5 billion tenge (US\$37 million). However, despite the rapid drop in lending in January, the total amount of new loans over the first six months of the year increased by 6.8 percent compared to the same period in 2015.

According to the Kazakh Ministry of National Economy, 45 billion tenge (US\$133 million) will be allocated from the National Fund and the Single Accumulative Pension Fund (SAFP) to stimulate export financing in Kazakhstan, Kapital.kz reports. The SAFP’s share will amount to 30 billion tenge (US\$88 million). As the vice minister of national economy noted recently, the export-oriented project was financed up to 2 billion tenge (US\$6 million), of which 600 million tenge (US\$1.7 million) was allocated from the National Fund. As of today, four projects worth 9 billion tenge (US\$26.5 million) have been approved and 10 more worth about 22 billion tenge (US\$65 million) are under consideration.

Investment in mining metal ores amounted to 151.8 billion tenge (US\$448.2 million) and in processing reached 155 billion tenge (US\$457 million) in the first half of this year, Energyprom.kz reports. Capital investment in production declined by 14 percent, while funding for recycling increased 3 percent. The structure of the investment remained unchanged in the first half of this year. In total, 54 percent of equity was invested and 45 percent was borrowed for investment in the mining ores sector. At the same time, 93 percent of money borrowed is foreign. In the metallurgy industry, a total of 37 percent of equity has been invested and 61 percent borrowed, with 94 percent of borrowed funds coming from foreign sources.

Country Takes Steps Toward Paper Production Using Hemp

By Zhazira Dyusseimbekova

ASTANA – Hemp can be used in paper production, which will lead to a significant decline in its price, said Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister Dariga Nazarbayeva at an Aug. 8 meeting, according to pm.kz. The event was dedicated to the scientific research of chemically cleaning hemp from narcotic substances for its use in industrial and medical purposes.

“Kazakhstan does not have its own paper. Everything is imported and it is reflected in the high cost. Starting Kazakh papermaking production is extremely relevant, including in favour of the print media,” said Nazarbayeva.

According to the research, cellulose from the hemp can be used for a variety of paper, from that used for banknotes to packaging and office paper. It can also be used for textiles and food products.

Nazarbayeva instructed the corresponding public authorities to implement a high-quality and transparent mechanism for granting licenses to production enterprises whose activities will be connected with hemp and its research. She noted this work must be done in cooperation and coordination with the International Commission on Narcotic Drugs in accordance with the United Nations Convention, adding developing the indus-

trial production of hemp must be under strict government control.

First Vice Minister for Investment and Development Albert Rau talked about the hemp processing scheme, which results in the destruction of a narcotic substance in its oilcake.

A pilot project of the roadmap to cultivate non-narcotic hemp was also announced during the meeting. Within the project, hemp seeds were sown for the first time in the agricultural grounds of Almaty, Karaganda, North Kazakhstan and South Kazakhstan regions. The experimental harvest will be sent to Belgium, China, Germany and the United States to develop the technology for hemp production, according to pm.kz.

Personal cultivation and trafficking is prohibited by law. That issue was raised by Nazarbayeva in 2014 when she was deputy of the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament), as she proposed passing the Chu Valley lands, where hemp grows naturally in abundance, to major pharmaceutical companies to further produce drugs from cannabis.

“Hemp is not only the drug that is used for criminal purposes. Hemp is also a useful crop. Medications made from hemp are used to improve the condition of patients with cancer and AIDS. For example, they are used in Israel, the Czech Republic, Canada, the

Netherlands,” she said at the time, adding 25,000 different kinds of products are made from hemp throughout the world.

During the Soviet era and later, authorities tried to eradicate hemp in the Chu Valley by burning vast areas. Those attempts were unsuccessful, however, due to the plant’s deep root system and the need to use chemicals considered to be too damaging for the environment.

Hemp is one of the oldest industries in the world with a history dating 10,000 years. According to the Hemp Industries Association, hemp seeds contain high levels

carbohydrates, minerals and fibre. Spain’s University of Seville said hemp has a perfect ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids and also provides some compounds to lower high blood pressure. Hemp can also be used in textile production as an industrial fibre and is an excellent material for sailcloth, ropes and sacks. Hemp fibre is 10 times stronger than cotton and is not only durable, but also resistant to ultraviolet light.

The Chu Valley measures more than 140,000 hectares. According to some sources, around 5,000 tonnes of the weed are collected



of vitamins A, C and E and beta-carotene and are rich in protein,

every year, which leads to the big drug trafficking.

of the hemp seeds is cultivated in the EU and 50 percent is imported from China. The price of cannabis seeds has increased from 1,000 euros (US\$1,099) per tonne in 2008 to 2,000 euros (US\$2,198) per tonne in 2015,” noted its website.

Hemp is a free raw material that can be converted into useful products such as textiles, clothing, footwear, paper, pharmaceuticals, biofuels, oil, nutritious food and feed, said Doctor of Agricultural Sciences and Kazakh National Agrarian University professor Serik Orazbayev.

“It helps to preserve the ecological balance in agricultural landscapes and prevent desertification in arid regions, stopping the advance of sand on the desert pastures. A huge economic benefit from the sale of industrial products can be achieved as well. In addition, the budget and part of the Interior Ministry staff will be released after investigative and other law enforcement agencies are removed from protecting the thickets from drug trafficking attempts. Highly profitable production facilities and investing organisations will ensure better protection of their business facilities,” he added.

At this stage, the most important thing is research and correctly implementing its results.

The European Industrial Hemp Association has members from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and other countries. The companies use industrial hemp and are known as hemp primary processors or fibre separation companies.

DISCOVER KAZAKHSTAN WITH A NEW APP

A unique digital product – “Kazakhstan – Land of the Great Steppe” – is one-of-a-kind high quality interactive application, presenting multimedia on the most representative geographic, political, touristic, historical, economic facts about Kazakhstan. It contains hundreds of high quality unique photographs, videos, 3D objects, panoramic tours, interactive charts, and innovative maps. It should be of interest to anyone who wants to learn about the world's ninth largest country, including tourists, students, and business people. Available in English, Russian, and Kazakh.

Mobile device versions are available in AppStore and PlayMarket. Also available in Windows and as a web version.

You can run an application webpage by following the link: <http://bit.ly/28PkZza>

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

BUSINESS
NEWS IN BRIEF

Breakthrough horticultural technologies have been used jointly with foreign partners in the village of Turgen in the Almaty region, reported Kazakh TV. Thanks to innovations introduced a few years ago, farmers get 20 kilogrammes of apples from one tree. “Investments in one hectare at the start total about \$30,000 because there is a close planting. Some 3,000 seedlings are planted on one hectare. When we used the old technologies, we planted only 200-300 seedlings, but the harvest is much more now. For the fifth year, this garden is already becoming profitable,” said Patrick Brady, an agronomist and consultant. The garden has been growing for only three years and the current crop already pays for the current expenditure on irrigation and fertilisers. Such trees bear fruit for at least 20 years, giving nearly 100 tonnes of apples per hectare. The company, which laid the garden on nine hectares, was one of the first to use the new technology. Company Manager Mukhit Zhailaubayev noted: “Even every branch is precious for me. They were so small when we planted them and we can already see the fruits today. We are gaining experience and compare and consult with others. They say Almaty, Kazakhstan is the country of apples and now we are trying to revive this industry.” Some 17 varieties are growing in the pilot mode in the special area. Drip irrigation saves water and natural fertilisers ensure the apples’ environmental cleanliness.

Communication enterprises rendered services from January-June worth more than 330 billion tenge (US\$974 million), according to the Committee on Statistics. The figure is 2.39 percent less than in the same period last year, reported profit.kz. In particular, revenue from long-distance and international telephone services amounted to 16.6 billion tenge (US\$49 million), local telephone services 22.2 billion tenge (US\$65 million) and online services 101 billion (US\$298 million).

In August, Kazakh oil refining plants should develop 336,000 tonnes of diesel fuel which will cover the needs for agricultural field work in August and September, reported BNews.kz. The announcement was made by Minister of Energy Kanat Bozumbayev during the government meeting. To date, the country has refined 92,000 tonnes, which is 2.3 percent less than planned, he said. There is a temporary stoppage of one of the oil installation primary bulkheads at the Pavlodar refinery.

Creating accounting service programmes for large and medium-sized companies will remain a priority of the Kazakh IT sector for the next few years, reported Kazakh TV. According to experts at Kazakh-British Technical University, this is due to the current economic situation, when every company develops its own business model and focuses on optimising production, reducing losses and making a profit at the lowest cost. “Computer graphics are gaining momentum now and we are not just talking now about the advertising companies, agencies and publishers. In general, we are talking about the companies that are in need of engineering graphics. Many industrial sectors are interested in the creation of 3D models of their plants, furnaces and production chains and not just the model is important to them, but also the simulation of the model. Before the employee installs the expensive equipment, he or she undergoes training on the simulators. According to experts’ expectations, the growth of the computer graphics and information technologies market in 2016 will show a positive trend in the range of 10-15 percent and will maintain a correlation with overall economic growth in the future,” said Dilda Sabitova, director of the Academy on Digital Technologies at Kazakh-British Technical University.

Green Technologies Distribution Centre Opens in Astana



By Zhaniya Urankayeva

The green technologies distribution centre was opened Aug. 12 as part of the Karaganda Agro-Technical College, reported the press service of the G-Global Coalition for Green Economy and Development.

According to the organisers, the main objectives of such centres are to raise the awareness about energy-efficient technologies, which have been implemented in the country; to demonstrate prospects

for organic agriculture development triggered by the use of green technologies, as well as to replicate the results achieved by the country in the field of low-power, energy-efficient heating and lighting, water conservation, tourism and waste management.

“This is the second centre in Kazakhstan, opened after the National Academy of Green Technologies, which was established in September 2015. The academy is located in the Arnasai village of the Arshaly district in the Akmola region, 45

kilometres away from the capital city Astana. Today, the academy is a testing field for more than 20 various green technologies. Moreover, it offers educational trainings for akims (government heads) of districts, heads of social facilities and representatives of rural enterprises on a regular basis,” said one of the coalition’s representatives.

As part of the opening event of the centre, a roundtable was organised to discuss with experts development perspectives of green technologies in Kazakhstan, as well as their practical implementation. The discussion was attended by the head of the G-Global International Secretariat, representatives of the Karaganda region and the Ok-

tyabrysky district akimat (administration); representatives of the Karaganda regional branch of the Nur Otan party, the Atameken regional Chamber of Entrepreneurs, management of youth policy of the Karaganda region, the Department of Education of Karaganda region, as well as entrepreneurs and journalists.



Local Craftsmen Will Showcase Their Work at EXPO 2017

Staff Report

Astana craftsmen will showcase their work at the international exhibition EXPO 2017, reported Deputy Head of the Commercialisation Department of the Astana EXPO 2017 National Company Iliya Urazakov.

“Our exhibition complex will incorporate a specially designed ethno village. We invite our craftsmen to participate in starting from this moment. The complex will

be beautifully decorated and will offer guests opportunities to take pictures, taste local treats and buy goods that represent Kazakh national cultural flavour and traditions. These are the unique products you can’t confuse with other goods,” said Urazakov, adding that preferential conditions will be offered for all handmade goods.

“When we talk about mass production products we mean those produced of a minimum amount of 5,000 items. The handmade products are unique and demand

great strength and creativity. Usually, we introduce royalty tax ranging between 3 and 11 percent, but goods of our craftsmen won’t get taxed,” explained Urazakov.

The management of the Astana EXPO 2017 company announced its plans to help facilitate all conditions needed for craftsmen willing to participate in the exhibition, including the rents for retail spaces by the end of the current year. It was also suggested to create a working group to select craftsmen for the exhibition.

“We are launching a special programme for licensed products, which we start actively realising this autumn. Our product list already includes 55 items we will introduce to the local market. By the spring season 2017, the total number of goods is expected to double, which means we will have 110 various goods labelled with the EXPO brand. These are the products, thanks to which we will commercialise the EXPO project, as well as to promote it and create a special exhibition heritage



Iliya Urazakov

to be preserved for many years. The product list includes household goods, writing goods, different gadget applications and other products of a current demand,” concluded Urazakov.

WIPO Announces Rating of World Innovative Technology Leaders

Staff Report

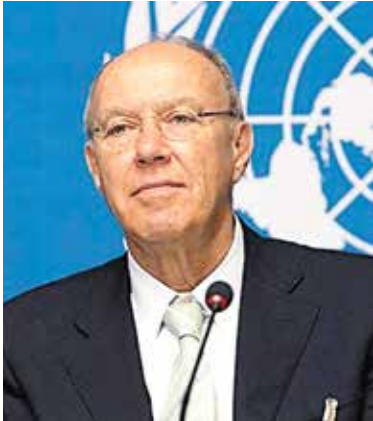
The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) has designed a new rating of world leading countries in the sphere of innovative technologies. Like in previous years, the leaders of the rating remained Switzerland, Sweden, Great Britain, the United States, Finland and Singapore, reported the United Nation’s news centre.

According to the organisation’s report on the global innovation index, China has entered the top 25 most innovative countries for the first time. Thus, this is the first country with an medium income level, to join the group of developed countries, which used to top the rating for years.

Kazakhstan placed 75th. Among other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Russia was ranked in the 43rd place, Ukraine is in 56th place, Armenia is in 60th place, while Georgia is in 64th, Belarus is in 79th place and Azerbaijan is in place 85.

“Further investments in innovations are the vital condition to increase the speed of a long-term economic development of the country,” said Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation Francis Harry.

The report also mentioned the fact that the United States remains one of the innovative countries in the world. However, in comparison to other leading states in this sphere, the U.S. doesn’t spend



Francis Harry

enough on education, which negatively affects the quality of a high and professional education. The country also faces a lack of graduates with a scientific-technical background, according to the report.

Europe’s strongest economies place well in the rankings, holding 15 of 25 positions. Over the past six years, Switzerland stayed as an unchangeable leader of the rating, followed by Sweden and the United Kingdom. The experts note that European states have established strong institutions and a highly developed infrastructure. Still there is space for further improvements in the business sphere.

The research was conducted on the basis of 84 indicators and included 128 countries. The outcomes of the research are meant to estimate the innovation potential of a country and analyse outcomes.

EDITORIAL&OPINION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

25th Anniversary of the Semipalatinsk Closure To Be Marked in Environment of Nuclear Danger, Progress

As we have underlined on many occasions, we are living in deeply uncertain times. Our world faces complex challenges and threats that put at risk all we have achieved and all our hopes for the future. The global economy remains weak. While we may have agreed on the threat that climate change poses, we are still a long way from taking the collective action needed. Extremist groups put at risk our safety and stability. And their menace is linked to nuclear weapons. Last month, new British Prime Minister Theresa May, reminded us that “the nuclear threat has not gone away, if anything, it has increased.” Former U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry also warned that the nuclear threat is greater today than during the Cold War. These stark warnings are based on concerns that terrorist groups, such as ISIS, are actively seeking to get hold of the material and technology to build nuclear weapons. The international community must step up its counterterrorism efforts to prevent these evil and dangerous groups from achieving their objective. Of course, it is not all bad news. There has

been a significant global reduction in nuclear weapons and nuclear material stockpiles. Dozens of countries are now free of weapons-grade materials. Central Asia is among the regions which are nuclear weapons-free zones, thanks to the initiative of Kazakhstan and its regional partners. But there are still approximately 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world. It is against this background that Kazakhstan, and the world, is to mark the 25th anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. It is an event with a huge significance for our country, which is one of the few to have suffered the horror and devastation that nuclear explosions cause. It is why Kazakhstan has taken the lead in the global campaign to move to a world free of nuclear weapons. The international conference “Building a Nuclear Weapons Free World” which takes place in Astana on Aug. 29 – the exact anniversary of President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s decision to shut down the test site as Semipalatinsk and now the UN International Day against Nuclear Tests – will add much needed impetus to this important goal. It comes after President Nazarbayev pub-

lished his manifesto setting out a blueprint for a world without nuclear weapons by 2045 and told the UN this must be the cause of our time. The conference comes at an important time. The newly established UN Open Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament is preparing to submit its report to the General Assembly on how multilateral progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons can be made. In addition, the discussions can feed into the preparation for the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, which will begin in two years. The Astana conference has attracted senior figures from nations that possess nuclear weapons, as well as non-nuclear-weapon states. Political and religious leaders, experts in the field of disarmament, as well as representatives of civil society, international and regional organisations, will take part in the discussions. As U.S. President Barack Obama has said, moving to a world without nuclear weapons won’t be easy. It requires the courage to take the steps, however small, to achieve this ambition over time. We must hope that the discussions in Astana help us plot the next stage of this journey.

Time To Act On Nuclear Disarmament

By Karipbek Kuyukov



KARAGANDA – I am one of those who have been affected by nuclear tests in Kazakhstan. As a result, I was born without arms. I doubt a regular person with two arms can understand what it is like to use your feet for basic things like opening a door or grabbing a fork, or to sign your passport with your mouth. People stare at me. Then they empathise, but none can really, truly imagine what it is like, and no one really wants to.

I dream one day of standing up and facing all those who lobby for nuclear weapons. I want to look in their eyes and ask them why.

Kazakhstan is set to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the closure of the infamous Semipalatinsk nuclear test site on Aug. 29. Twenty-five years is a lot of time from a personal perspective, but little from a historic point of view. Twenty-five years is how much time Kazakhstan needed to become one of the leaders trying to marshal the world to become nuclear-safe – and not without its own share of losing. Yes, I am not afraid to use the word losing, because there are no winners in war: nuclear weapons were created for intimidating, controlling and murdering.

Twenty-five years in my life covers the important period of time starting from the years of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement and up to the recent ATOM Project initiatives. This period of time, thanks to such initiatives, supported by the will of the people, and the wisdom of our President and other moral leaders such as Olzhas Suleimenov, Toktar Aubakirov and others, has propelled our country into a leadership role in nuclear non-proliferation. We are a part of that, and that is what we have to show for 25 years of hard, united work.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, many things started crumbling: ideology, principals, morale. I remember the early 1990s – times were tough. They remind me of what I’ve learned about the great depression years in the U.S. I remember, like yesterday, how we had to break chairs and use the debris to start a fire in our yard to cook the raw meat of a slain sheep. What gave us strength and kept us going was our unity and the common cause – to survive. We gladly shared our last pieces of bread to make sure everyone got an equal part. We gave the last crumbs of bread to our youngsters, because we believed it was they who needed to make a change so nothing like this would happen again to their kids. These times are hard to forget, because they were recent, because they happened to me when I was old enough to remember, and because sometimes, when I am about to throw out a mouldy loaf of bread, I remember that there were times when I would have eaten even that.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan inherited what was at the time the fourth largest arsenal of nuclear weapons in the world. Had we kept that arsenal, we would be a different type of player in the region today. That would have been the easy way. We chose the hard way – winning hearts, earning our reputation, deserv-

ing trust. When the decree on the closure of the test site back in 1991 was signed, it was a victory for my family in particular, but also for our country, for the whole world.

Too many things have changed since then. We use smartphones as if they have been around for centuries. Our eyes have grown lazy and wish only to be entertained; our hearts have become colder because these days we are seldom reminded of what hardships are, so we can appreciate what we have, and because we are too busy buying what we can’t afford, dreaming of what we can’t have.

And what we have is a problem that is slipping away from our focus. We need to be constantly reminded of the dangers of the nuclear weapons. We need to address these issues and keep pressure on the key people who have the power to address this issue. There aren’t too many in the world. We all know who they are. We need to maintain the dialogue.

As part of The ATOM Project, I travel around the world. I meet other people who have been affected by the consequences of nuclear weapons. I also meet young people and I always speak to them, always tell them about our country and what we endured. And as long as nuclear weapons exist, they could end up falling into the wrong hands – into the hands of terrorists for instance! This could trigger a worse outcome than the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The threat is real and we must constantly address it.

I believe that unity and common cause, which once saved my family, can give us the strength to fight the nuclear weapons we ourselves have created. I am not a naive person. I realise the realities of fighting for a nuclear-weapons-free world today. But perhaps not in my time, but maybe in two generations, maybe in five generations, there will be solid changes. That hope also gives me the strength to keep pushing.

This is why events and days like Aug. 29 are very important – they remind us of those hardships, which must not be overlooked! They remind us that we need to tell our youth about the errors of the past, to not be intimidated by the madness of the few in control of the lives of millions of people.

One day, I dream of standing up and facing all those who lobby for nuclear weapons, I want to look in their eyes and ask them: “Is your cause worthier than mine? How does it keep me safer?”

The author is Honorary Ambassador of the ATOM Project, painter and antinuclear weapons activist.

Kazakhstan’s Role in Restoring Turkish-Russian Ties Demonstrates Int’l Trust

Our world moves at an ever-faster pace. Such is the speed of change that what would once have been a year’s history – both good and bad – now seems to take place within weeks. The visit of Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to St. Petersburg on Aug. 9 is another example of this acceleration of events. Even two months ago, his visit and the warm reception he received from his host, President Vladimir Putin, would have been viewed as simply impossible. Relations between the two major regional powers in Eurasia remained in deep freeze, following the shooting down of a Russian bomber in disputed circumstances by Turkey’s air force last November. Russia’s angry reaction to the incident on the Syrian border and the lack of an apology from Turkey led to a diplomatic breakdown and the imposition of severe economic sanctions. While the freeze was not in the interests of either country or the wider region, finding a way to break the deadlock was hard. Both sides’ position was becoming entrenched despite the economic and diplomatic damage it was causing. As our editorial early last month underlined, it took the personal intervention of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, with his long friendship with both leaders, to pave the way for the rift to be healed.

But it is only now, following the Kazakh President’s visit to Ankara on Aug. 5, that the full remarkable details of this role have been made public. Turkish sources have now revealed how President Nazarbayev acted as a trusted mediator and through persistence brought the two sides together. Kazakh diplomats are praised, too, for the part they played in healing the rift. The Kazakh embassy in Ankara, as well as relaying urgent messages to their Turkish counterparts, apparently helped find a form of words acceptable to both sides over the loss of the Russian bomber. This was the key section of the letter from the Turkish President Erdogan to his Russian counterpart that provided the basis for the rapprochement. Interestingly, this was apparently not the end of the personal involvement of President Nazarbayev, who along with President Putin, was in Tashkent for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit. We now learn that, as the aircraft carrying Turkish diplomats with the letter flew towards Uzbekistan, he rang the country’s leader Islam Karimov to gain last-minute approval for it to land. And on arrival, we are told that he read and approved the letter himself before it was shown to President Putin in the room next door. Such extraordinary details underline the trust with which President Nazarbayev is held on the

international stage. It also explains why he was so warmly praised for his efforts by the Turkish leader. The full story also demonstrates Kazakhstan’s active commitment to promoting dialogue and constructive relations whenever it can. Many countries, of course, would claim to foster cooperation but few can point to such a track record of effort and achievement. It is, as we said when the first tentative steps were being taken to restore relations between Turkey and Russia, one of the main reasons why Kazakhstan was elected so overwhelmingly to the United Nations Security Council. But what we did not know when the editorial was written just over a month ago was that within a few days the Turkish President, re-elected with a large majority only two years ago, would be the target of a serious military coup. The coup failed but it is another example of how history seems to have speeded up and the instability this inevitably brings in its wake. This pace of change and unpredictability sets challenges for all countries. It also makes co-operation more vital than ever. Russia and Turkey are now well on the road to putting their relations back on a friendly footing. We now need other countries, with the help of their international partners, to follow their lead.

G20 Summit in Hangzhou Set to Have Significant Impact on World Economy

When in the wake of the global financial crisis, the G20 countries held the first leaders’ summit in 2008, it underlined just how serious the crisis was. It was clear that only coordinated action by a far wider group of countries than usual could prevent a global depression. The collective emergency action taken under the auspices of the G20 helped bring the world economy back from the edge of the abyss. Growth, employment and incomes suffered on every continent, but the worst fears were avoided. This success has led to the G20 and the leaders’ summit taking a major role in global economic governance. But when the G20 leaders meet next month in China, eight years after that first summit, the crisis will still hang over their discussions. Growth has not fully recovered. Unemployment levels remain high in many countries. Debt levels continue to be a serious drag on the financial system. It is why the Hangzhou summit comes at a critical time for the world economy. Determined, coordinated action is needed to revive confidence and growth. And the more regions involved in these important discussions, and the more experience those taking part in the discussions have, the more likely they are to make the right decisions – decisions that can help the world finally shake

off the lingering financial listlessness the crisis created. This explains the decision by the Chinese hosts to invite President Nursultan Nazarbayev to join his fellow world leaders at the summit. The invitation is a mark of his experience, of Kazakhstan’s place now in the world economy and of our country’s growing relationship with China. This friendship, of course, includes our joint efforts to transform transport links and build a modern Silk Road connecting Asia and Europe. The new rail and road routes will slash journey times and give a major boost not just to economic cooperation between our countries but also to global trade – a key priority for the summit. Lifting the barriers to trade is hugely important. As a World Trade Organisation (WTO) report recently identified, the growth in world trade over the last four years has been well below the average of recent decades. For all who believe that trade is an engine of prosperity, this is a very damaging development. But this will also require, as China has again recognised, increased efforts to reverse the protectionist trends that have followed the financial crisis. Here, G20 countries themselves have to take the lead. The WTO has identified over 1,500 trade-restrictive measures put in place by G20 economies since 2008.

Whatever the justification for these steps immediately after the crisis first struck, it is disturbing that this trend is still continuing. The WTO found that an average of 21 new protectionist barriers are still being erected by the world’s biggest economies every month. If the summit can win support to reverse this trend, it will have played a major role in putting the global economy back on track. High on the agenda for the summit, too, is how countries can work together better to promote innovative and inclusive growth. We need bold steps to increase productivity – something Kazakhstan has itself recognised and taken action on. It is easy in times of economic challenges to cut back on modernisation or research and development, but the long-term impact is always damaging. We also need to find ways to tackle inequality. The gap between rich and poor continues to grow. Incomes in many developed countries have fallen or stagnated, fuelling frustration and political instability. Bold steps are again needed to encourage growth that is sustainable and inclusive, so the benefits are shared more fairly. The global economic outlook is, thankfully, not as desperate today as it was when the first G20 leaders’ summit was convened in Washington eight years ago. But there is no room for complacency. The decisions taken at Hangzhou will have a major impact on the world economy and all our prosperity.

THE ASTANA TIMES

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

ICRC Reiterates Calls for Nuclear Weapons Prohibition, Setting Timeframe

By Bauyrzhan Serikbayev

On the eve of the international conference Building a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World to be held Aug. 29 in Astana, Christine Beerli, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) talked to The Astana Times on modern challenges in achieving global nuclear disarmament.

What is the ICRC's position on the importance of the continued struggle to ban nuclear weapons and nuclear tests?

Like the Republic of Kazakhstan, the ICRC has some fundamental views on nuclear weapons and on how to move towards a world without them. I appreciate this opportunity to share them with you.

ICRC has been involved in nuclear issues ever since the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. One of the ICRC's delegates, Dr. Marcel Junod, was the first foreign doctor in Hiroshima to assess the effects of the atomic bombing and to assist its victims. In his diaries, Junod wrote "The centre of the city was a sort of white patch, flattened and smooth like the palm of a hand. Nothing remained."

The ICRC, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement more broadly, have long been concerned about the human suffering that results from any use of nuclear weapons. As is now known, nuclear weapons can have severe and long-term consequences on human health and can even affect the children of those exposed to the ionising radiation released by a nuclear explosion. Information published last year by the ICRC and the Japanese Red Cross Society indicate that today, some 70 years after the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese Red Cross



Christine Beerli

hospitals in those cities continue to treat several thousand victims each year for cancers and illnesses attributable to the atomic bombings of those cities. The health of children born to survivors in the years following their direct exposure to the blasts is also being monitored. The fact that thousands of civilian victims still live at risk and still require treatment for illness and suffering attributable to atomic bomb radiation is incomprehensible. This is equally true for the people and plight of Semipalatinsk, where even though the last test was conducted in 1989, the effects continue to be felt. Clearly, these situations must never occur again.

Thankfully, nuclear weapons have not been used in an armed conflict for more than 70 years and nuclear testing is now a rare occurrence. Yet, today there remains a significant risk of intentional or accidental nuclear detonation. This includes the risk of hostile use and also a detonation that may occur through malfunction, mishap, false alarm and misinterpreted information.

And despite these risks, there remains no effective means of assisting a substantial portion of survivors in the immediate aftermath, while adequately protecting those who will be called upon to deliver assistance. The reality is that if a nuclear weapon were to detonate in a populated area, there would be an overwhelming number of people in need of treatment and

most of the local medical facilities would be destroyed or unable to function. Access to the area would likely be impossible due to debris and damage to infrastructure. And assistance providers would face serious risks associated with exposure to ionising radiation. In most countries and at the international level there is little capacity and no realistic or coordinated plan to deal with such challenges.

The risk of the tremendous human costs of nuclear weapons led the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 2011 to appeal to states to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again. We also called on them to prohibit their use and completely eliminate them through a legally-binding international agreement in accordance with their existing commitments. The ICRC President, Peter Maurer, repeated this call in 2015 and urged states to set a timeframe within which to achieve this goal. While negotiating the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons may take some time, the nuclear-armed states and their allies can and should take immediate steps to reduce the risks that such weapons pose by reducing the role of nuclear weapons in their military plans and reducing the number of warheads on high alert, where such a status exists.

Unfortunately, 2015 was not a year of great progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. The Review Conference of Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to reach a consensus agreement on advancing nuclear disarmament despite previous commitments. There are also reports that the pace of reduction of nuclear arsenals has slowed and that nuclear-armed states continue to modernise their arsenals. Such developments are cause for serious concern.

At the same time, it is encouraging that a 2015 United Nations General Assembly resolution

on nuclear weapons supported by 139 countries recognised the need to bring about the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and urged all states to work towards this goal. Equally promising were the work and recommendations of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, which just concluded in Geneva. In the view of the ICRC, it was the most significant and substantial discussion to date within the UN system on specific measures to achieve

tarian consequences of nuclear weapons requires courage, sustained commitment and concerted action. Today's complex security environment highlights both the challenges and necessity of such steps. Nuclear weapons are often presented as promoting security, particularly during times of international instability. But weapons that risk catastrophic and irreversible humanitarian consequences cannot seriously be viewed as protecting civilians or humanity as a whole. We know now more than ever before that the risks are

The upcoming conference is a key part of the international dialog on nuclear weapons, particularly in this region of the world. ... The conference is also part of the ongoing and effective efforts of Kazakhstan on this issue. Kazakhstan's political and legal initiatives on nuclear weapons clearly demonstrate its high level of commitment and determination to advance nuclear disarmament.

nuclear disarmament. The discussions highlighted that there are a range of approaches that can advance disarmament. Its recommendation for the UN General Assembly to convene a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons has potentially historic implications. This and the rest of the group's recommendations must be seriously considered and taken forward by states.

The ICRC believes that urgent action must be taken to reduce the dangers that nuclear weapons pose and that states must begin negotiations to prohibit their use and secure their eventual elimination. This is a humanitarian imperative. Protecting humanity from the catastrophic humani-

too high, the dangers too real and perils of inaction are much too great.

How, in your view, do events like the Building a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World conference in Astana help in pursuing the goals of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation and the ICRC's mission?

On behalf of the ICRC, I would like to thank the Republic of Kazakhstan for inviting me to participate in this important event. Kazakhstan has shown in word and in action that it is an ardent advocate of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Its commitment is reflected in the convening of this annual conference, its decision to voluntarily renounce the nuclear weapons it inherited upon gaining

independence, its role in establishing Central Asia as a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone, its membership in the Asian Nuclear Safety Network and its efforts in the UN and numerous other fora to help advance the elimination of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan's election as at non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017 provides an opportunity to further these goals.

Events like the conference in Astana are very important to raise awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the need to ensure that such weapons are never used or detonated again. They also help foster dialogue among states in an effort to help advance nuclear disarmament.

The upcoming conference is a key part of the international dialog on nuclear weapons, particularly in this region of the world. It builds upon previous and important events like the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was held in New York from April 27-May 22, 2015; the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons, convened respectively by Norway in March 2013, Mexico in February 2014 and Austria in December 2014 and the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations which I mentioned earlier.

The conference is also part of the ongoing and effective efforts of Kazakhstan on this issue. Kazakhstan's political and legal initiatives on nuclear weapons clearly demonstrate its high level of commitment and determination to advance nuclear disarmament.

These important efforts, and those taken by others in partnership with the broader international community, will help ensure that a world without nuclear weapons will become a reality. The elimination of these weapons is particularly important to actors such as the ICRC, given our humanitarian mission. We never again want to see a nuclear weapon detonate nor ever again have to witness or respond to their horrific humanitarian consequences.

Kazakhstan and Poland: Years of Cooperation and Partnership

By Arsen Omarov

On the threshold of the visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Warsaw on August 22-23, we interviewed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of Poland Altay Abibullayev on the status and prospects of bilateral relations.

You had an opportunity to work in Kazakhstan's Embassy in Warsaw since it was established in 1999. This May, by the decree of the head of state, you were appointed as the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Poland. Can you name key milestones of Kazakh-Polish cooperation?

Some ties between Kazakhstan and Poland already existed in the 19th century and they were continued in the 20th century. The territory of Poland is nine times smaller than Kazakhstan, yet we have a similar history in the desire to restore state independence. Modern diplomatic relations were established April 6, 1992, since then President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Poland twice in 1997 and 2002 and Presidents of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski and Lech Kaczyński visited Astana in 1999 and 2007. Currently, 18 international agreements are in force between our two countries.

Over 25 years of interstate communications, the parties have exchanged mutual visits absolutely at all levels – from the highest to the regional and local.

During its independence, Kazakhstan has become the author of many international initiatives. Do they have support from Polish leadership and its public?



Altay Abibullayev

Kazakhstan and Poland have similar or practically the same approaches towards issues of regional and global security, addressing major challenges and threats of the modern time. The parties strive to support reciprocal international initiatives; for example, the official Warsaw supported main priorities of our country in chairing the OSCE in 2010 and our bid to host EXPO 2017 in Astana.

An agreement on Poland's participation of in EXPO 2017 was signed within the framework of the Astana Economic Forum in May 2016. And I would like to note active involvement of Polish authorities in the organisation of their pavilion.

The initiatives of the head of state, such as the Plan of the Nation, the Kazakhstan 2050 development strategy, the state Nurly Zhol programme and the Manifesto of the President of Kazakhstan "The World. The 21st Century" all published in the Polish language, drew genuine interest among Polish circles. Poland highly appreciates our achievements in the international struggle for a nuclear weapons-free world and looks forward to close partnership for the implementation of our agenda during the non-permanent membership in the

UNSC (United Nations Security Council) in 2017-2018.

It is clear that the spectrum of bilateral relations is wide. Can you name the key area of cooperation?

Indeed, the range of bilateral interactions with Poland is broad. Today, Kazakh-Polish ties are characterised by a great deal of mutual understanding and complementarity and lack of any political or economic problems; there is no single field our countries do not cooperate in. Our relations have been successfully developing in political, interregional, scientific, cultural-humanitarian, sport and other areas. It is natural that economy, investments, industrial-innovation and transit-transport spheres are priorities of our partnership with Poland.

Today, Kazakhstan is home for about 34,000 ethnic Poles. They are a living thread, spiritually connecting and strengthening the friendship between our peoples. A Pole from Kazakhstan was elected to the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Our citizens of Polish origin actively participate in the socio-political and economic life of the country.

Kazakhstan and Poland are not only large states in Central Asia and Central Europe respectively, but also economic leaders in their regions. Thus, Poland is the fifth largest economy in the European Union. In turn, Kazakhstan takes the second position in

terms of its economic potential among the Eurasian Economic Union states.

For our country, Poland is one of the leading economic partners in Central and Eastern Europe (the 17th place among the world countries in terms of trade). At the same time, Kazakhstan accounts for approximately 70 percent of the Polish trade with Central Asian countries.

There is a need to take into account mutual interest in the joint use of the advanced transport-transit capacity of the two states. It is no secret that the shortest land route from Asia to Europe passes through the territories of Kazakhstan and Poland. It implements the One Belt, One Road initiative, uniting the projects for the creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt and Sea Silk Road of the 21st Century. Polish authorities are in-

terested in launching a direct air link Warsaw-Astana.

What are the concrete parameters of trade and economic and investment cooperation between the countries?

According to the Agency of

Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the bilateral trade in 2015 was \$1.13 billion (export – \$789.2 million, import – \$340.8 million). The Ministry of Development of Poland estimates that this figure exceeded \$1.35 billion (import – \$948.1 million, export – \$401.6 million). In the meantime, in accordance with the National Bank of Poland direct Polish investments in Kazakhstan reached \$138.1 million and Kazakh investments to Poland – \$13.6 million. About 200 companies with Polish capital are registered in our country.

It is well known that Polish diaspora live in Kazakhstan. What can you say about its role in the advancement of bilateral collaboration?

Today, Kazakhstan is home for about 34,000 ethnic Poles. They are a living thread, spiritually connecting and strengthening the friendship between our peoples. A Pole from Kazakhstan was elected to the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Our citizens of Polish origin actively participate in the socio-political and economic life of the country. Among them there are well-known lawyers, scientists and business people. In order to revive the national language, culture and traditions of the Poles the Union of Poles of Kazakhstan is established which has branches represented in the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan in almost all regions of the country. The Polish language is taught in some universities and schools of Almaty, Kokshetau, Pavlodar and Taraz. Poland attaches great importance to contacts with compatriots in Kazakhstan. Therefore, this area of interaction is a significant part of Kazakh-Polish cooperation.

More than 770 Kazakh students are studying in Poland. Performances of Kazakh artists from the Astana Opera Theatre are scheduled for November 2016 in the Grand Theatre in Warsaw (Teatr

Wielki w Warszawie) and Wrocław.

Fourteen years ago, the head of state paid an official visit to Poland. It has been nine years since the last visit of the Polish President to Astana. Has the time not come for another meeting between the leaders of our countries to give new impetus to Kazakh-Polish cooperation?

Heads of state can meet not only during mutual visits. So-called working meetings can be held as well. For example, the first meeting between President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and President of Poland Andrzej Duda took place on the margins of the 70th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2015. Following the meeting, the Kazakh leader was invited to visit Poland.

The very status of the state visit emphasised and demonstrated Poland's high esteem for our country and its leader.

It is very symbolic that the President of Kazakhstan will be the first world leader to visit Poland after the NATO Summit in Warsaw and the historic visit of Pope Francis in July 2016, as well as that Poland welcomes the first President of the state that is the initiator, co-founder and active member of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Hopefully, the visit will be dominated by economic and investment topics, the intensification of cooperation in agriculture, transport, transit, construction, chemistry, power engineering, public services and many other areas.

A large Kazakh-Polish economic forum with the participation of more than 500 Polish and Kazakh business people is expected to take place as part of the state visit.

Experience shows that the development of bilateral cooperation is more effective if it is based on the agreements reached during high-level talks. This truth is valid in relation to interaction with any state, including Poland.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

Chinese Robotic Company Trains Kazakh Students

Staff Report

Nazarbayev University students Dinsultan Absattar, Olzhas Adiyatov and Azamat Tikenov participated in a successful training at Makeblock in Shenzhen (China). As part of their internship, the young entrepreneurs participated in implementing six innovative projects.

The projects included construction of a robotic platform with a manipulator, a hexapod robot which operates on six feet and a cyborg for gyro scooter-type stabilisation. The Kazakh interns also worked on an electronic circuit for quadrotors and studied the apparatus for assembling Rubik's Cube.

The financial side of the trip was covered by a grant from the Shakhmardan Esenov Science and Education Foundation.

"The knowledge that I have attained in China I will be able to apply in the university's laboratory. I will continue researching on trajectory planning and motion. The internship at Makeblock helped me to understand that not even the uniqueness of the idea is that important, but an opportunity to find a way for its implementation and sales," said Adiyatov.

Absattar noted most Chinese people know English, but not all are able to speak it.

"The linguistic issue hampered the process of technology understanding, as well as the fact that the Chinese government continues blocking all Google services and other foreign resources. However, my stay in Shenzhen will help me write a thesis and I already plan to make major changes to my final student project. After working for Makeblock, I realised what kind of professional I need to be and in what direction I should move in my career. I also was motivated to improve my English, as it significantly helped me to understand the technical documentation and manuals, as well as to survive in the Chinese environment, simplifying my travelling around the city," he said.

Makeblock co-founder Alice Gian gave positive feedback, emphasising the professional qualifications of the Kazakh students. She also noted the interns diligently mastered advancements in innovative technologies, as they are certainly talented and quickly understand new information.

Tikenov mentioned one month is not long enough for such an

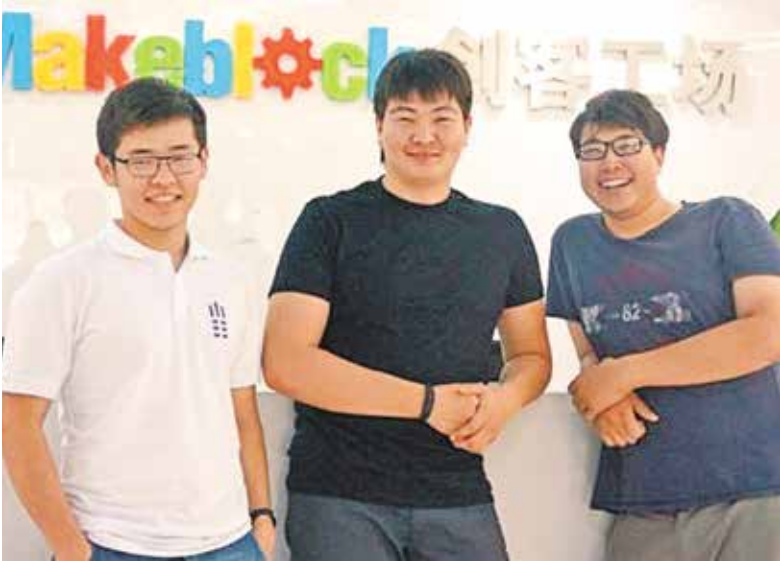


Photo: Yessenov Scientific and Educational Foundation

internship and suggested prolonging it up to three months.

Esenov Foundation programme coordinator Ilzira Aldagarova indicated it is difficult to receive three-month visas at the Chinese Embassy, as it takes a lot of time.

"In this regard, we were forced to take a one-month visa and limit the training time. We also concluded that it is better to start negotiations on internships for 2017 right now. This measure corresponds with particularities of doing business in China and to suc-

cessfully implement our plans we must take into account local mentality and traditions," she said.

Makeblock, a robotic startup, is a design platform to create DIY (do it yourself) robots. In 2013, the team consisted of 10 people and today has more than 120 specialists. Makeblock cooperates with Arduino and Microsoft and succeeded in attracting investments of more than \$150 million. The company has also established official distributors in 40 countries around the world.

Kazakhstan, South Korea and Belarus Create Eurasian Spatial Data Infrastructure

Staff Report

A memorandum of understanding and cooperation to create Eurasian spatial data infrastructure was recently signed between Belarus, Kazakhstan and South Korea.

The text of the memorandum will be sent to the Russian registry for consideration of possible future accession of the country. The memorandum was signed in the framework of the Second International Conference on the establishment of Eurasian spatial data infrastructure, which was held in Astana.

The event was attended by delegations from Belarus, Kazakhstan and South Korea, as well as from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Russia. The creation purpose of the Eurasian technological platform is to increase the efficiency of interaction between all interested parties to promote the innovative

development and growth of competitiveness of national economies.

The spatial data infrastructure is a set of spatial information resources, organisational structures, legal and regulatory frameworks, spatial data processing and exchange technologies to provide wide access and efficient use of spatial data by citizens, business entities and governmental bodies.

According to the participants of the conference, after the Eurasian spatial data infrastructure is included in the Eurasian technological platform of the Eurasian Economic Union, systematic work on accumulation of advanced national and world achievements is going to be provided, as well as the mobilisation of scientific potential to find joint solutions for applied problems, concerning further development and needed implementations in all sectors of national economies.

Kazakhstan Led by Example on Nuclear Disarmament, Renowned Expert Says

Continued from Page A1

The threat from nuclear weapons has scarcely ever been as great. For instance, violent extremist groups are actively trying to get their hands on nuclear weapons and technology. If they succeed, they would not hesitate to use them. What can governments do in order to prevent a potential disaster for the whole planet?

The risks of nuclear weapons being used by nuclear weapon states, whether by accident or miscalculation, are at least as great as the risks of nuclear weapons being used on purpose by terrorists.

Thousands of their weapons are on high alert status (ready to be launched within minutes), on launch-on warning policies and with the governments prepared to launch nuclear weapons even if they do not face an imminent nuclear attack (first-use policies). On at least 15 occasions, we have come within a hair's breadth of a nuclear exchange between Russia and the United States.

So the first step for nuclear-armed states is to stand-down their nuclear forces, declare that they would never be the first to launch nuclear weapons, and enter into negotiations to prohibit and eliminate the weapons under strict and effective

international control. This will not only reduce the risk of nuclear war between countries, but it will also make it impossible for terrorists to acquire or build a nuclear weapon.



Alyn Ware

There will no longer be any nuclear weapons for the terrorists to steal, and all fissile materials will be secured.

What is a role of PNND in this field?

PNND is a cross-party network of parliamentarians from around the world which works on policies, legislation and other initiatives to prevent nuclear proliferation, reduce nuclear risks and achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. PNND works in cooperation with the United Nations, Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU),

Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA) and other international bodies to build cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Many of our members have key positions – such as foreign ministers, speakers/presidents of parliaments, chairs of foreign affairs and defence committees, presidents of inter-parliamentary bodies such as the IPU and the OSCE PA, and international organisations such as the current President of the UN General Assembly. But even those members without key positions can make a difference by raising their voices, organising parliamentary events and initiatives, raising questions or motions in parliaments and cooperating with civil society in global campaigns.

PNND is a co-organiser of the international conference "Building a Nuclear Weapon Free World." Why did you support an initiative to hold such an event in Kazakhstan? What is the main premise of the conference?

Kazakhstan has led by example on this issue. This includes closing down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, which had been the primary testing venue for the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons, repatriating all nuclear weapons in Kazakhstan

(approximately 1,500) to Russia for elimination, negotiating a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone with other Central Asian countries, moving the UN General Assembly to establish the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, establishing The ATOM Project to educate the world about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and drafting a Universal Declaration for a Nuclear Weapon Free World which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2015.

Parliamentarians, governments and representatives of civil society can learn from and be inspired by this example. However, in order to move nuclear weapon states to follow this example, parliamentarians need to work cooperatively with mayors, religious leaders, former officials and military leaders and other influential representatives of civil society. These are the constituencies we are bringing together in Astana for the conference on Aug. 29.

Kazakhstan and the world are set to mark the 25th anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. The country has taken the lead in the global campaign to move to a world free of nuclear weapons. President Nursultan Nazarbayev published his Manifesto setting out a blueprint for a world without nu-

clear weapons by 2045. This is the country's unique experience. However, there are still around 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world. What can the international community do in order to preserve the world for future generations?

The Manifesto "The World. The 21st Century" which was recently released by President Nazarbayev is a very important contribution to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and to an end to war. The manifesto recognises that there are connections between these two goals. The threat of aggression and war is what has led some countries to acquire nuclear weapons for deterrence. But this is no solution, as the very acquisition of nuclear weapons can increase the threats to other countries and perpetuate a negative spiral of tension and war. The manifesto shows another way – a way that is central to the foundation of the UN and is embedded in the UN Charter. And that is to prevent war not by threatening annihilation of others and destruction of human civilisation, but by utilising common security and international law approaches such as diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication. And to support these through verified arms control and disarmament and by addressing issues of extreme inequality or injustice between nations.

PNND has joined with Mayors for Peace and other key networks to establish UNFOLD ZERO, a global platform to promote the role of the UN in achieving nuclear disarmament. Many of the initiatives of UNFOLD ZERO relate very much

to the approaches outlined in the manifesto.

Would you please share your personal experience of joining the movement to get rid of nuclear weapons worldwide?

I was training to be a teacher in New Zealand when I first learned about the catastrophic impact of nuclear tests in the Pacific – our neighbourhood. These bombs were tens or hundreds of times more destructive than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The damage to the health of women, children and others arising from the nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia, Christmas Island and Australia (Maralinga) shocked me – and demonstrated that if this is the effect of nuclear explosions detonated a long way from populations in peacetime, the effect of nuclear weapons in war would be unimaginable and unprecedented.

At the time my country was part of a nuclear alliance, as most people believed that nuclear weapons were necessary for deterrence. So I joined the campaign to educate our people about the weapons and convince the government to ban them. We now have the strongest nuclear abolition legislation in the world, supported by virtually everyone in the country, and we have launched a number of international initiatives. In 1992, I was asked to head to the UN in New York to lead one of these initiatives – a proposal to take the issue of nuclear weapons to the International Court of Justice. We won the case and this has helped build support for nuclear disarmament in the UN and around the world.

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

PEOPLE

The Life of a Global Nomad:
Kazakh Conductor Alan Buribayev

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Movie about Abai's Father to Be
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Festival

B3

SPORTS

FC Astana Leads Play-off Round
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B7

Egyptian-Type Pyramid Tomb Discovered in Karaganda Region, Archaeologists Offer Answers

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – A structure similar to what the world knows as the Egyptian pyramids recently discovered in Kazakhstan's Shet district in the Karaganda region has raised the eye-brows of many researchers worldwide.

A group of scientists working as part of the expedition financed by a grant from the Ministry of Education and Science's Science Committee announced Aug. 16 it had been unearthing the two-metre tomb of a high-ranking ancient leader since 2014.

The international media picked up the news the same day, comparing the finding to the famous Egyptian Pyramid of Djoser, which was built some 1,000 years later.

"This is the first find of such scale in Central Asia – these monumental buildings are dated to the late Bronze Age," Igor Kukushkin told The Astana Times.

Continued on Page B4



Many Kazakh Traditions and Customs Still Relevant Today, While Some Fade Away

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Kazakhs have preserved many traditions and customs that pervade life's important moments, like birth, marriage, raising children, hospitality and celebration arrangements which have been passed to generations throughout the centuries. Many are no longer relevant in modern Kazakhstan, however, due to changes in ways of life and the influence of historic factors.

Paying deference and respect to an elder generation and having respect for wisdom is important for Kazakhs, notes bilu.kz, an online source about Kazakh traditions and customs. Knowing "zhety ata" (all ancestors [grandfathers] from seven generations) was every Kazakh's duty.

"Following this tradition is



Photo credit: parents.ozhnezh-tam.kz

relevant for boys and men who must know their zhety ata and have reverence of genealogical history. Me and my son, we try to keep this tradition by remem-

bering the names of our ancestors by heart. I keep the list with their names and our genealogy next to the Koran," said Rakhman Kaliyev.

Hospitality is another Kazakh hallmark, with a festive table set in a decorated yurt where everyone would sing songs, dance and play musical instruments.

"When I lived with my grandmother, we had guests everyday. While some people would be arriving, some would be leaving," he recalled.

Not giving tea or feeding a guest with one's riches was great shame for a host.

"She would put everything that was best in the house on the table. She kept Indian tea, candies, raisins and cookies that were for special guests, while on a usual day we drank a cheaper mixed tea. Nowadays guests do not even necessarily need to be at home, but in a restaurant or a café," said Kaliyev.

Continued on Page B5

The Spirit of Tengri Project to be Presented in Hungary Seeks to Unite Turkic World

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Creators of the largest international festival of modern ethnic music in Central Asia, The Spirit of Tengri, will soon present their project at a kurultai (assembly) in Hungary to reunite the Turkic world and demonstrate their national cultures.

"We accepted an invitation with great pleasure and will present our project at the kurultai. This indeed is a significant occasion and event that gives a good opportunity for exchanging experience, including our foreign partners. We met organisers of the kurultai in June at our festival in Almaty, now we will continue the collaboration on Hungarian land," The Spirit of Tengri Chief Director Sergey Maiboroda explained in an interview with Tengrinews.

This assembly has been held every two years since 2007. Ku-

rultai gathers representatives of a dozen countries, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, China, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia (Bashkortostan and Tatarstan), Moldova (Gagauzia) and Bulgaria, the report stated.

Theatrical shows, music performances, archeological and anthropologic exhibitions and craftsmen's fair will be held as part of this kurultai.

According to the director, kurultai is an atmospheric act and helps preserve the traditions of the Great Steppe nations, which is one of the project's key values.

"As we already made sure that The Spirit of Tengri is well known in Europe, we have, therefore, prepared a surprise for guests of the kurultai," Maiboroda added, Tengrinews.kz writes.

Continued on Page B3

Discovering Kazakhstan: Portuguese National on Life in Land of Great Steppe

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The young Kazakh capital keeps betting on attracting young, foreign professionals – the pool that can shape the pillars of the future city. What, however, could lure anyone to another country and leave the comforts of home?

"Working and living abroad is already a challenge in itself, especially when you embrace a project for several years away from your family and friends," said Susana Cristina Querido Ramalho, architect country manager at Saraiva+Associados (S+A), a Portuguese company in the city, in an exclusive interview with The Astana Times.

Ramalho, who has been living in Kazakhstan for about 15 months, admits that being a foreigner is only part of the challenge. The other part is the tough reality of being in a business

world dominated by men. "As a woman, every day is a challenge on the corporate management field and specially in Kazakhstan, where the business world is occupied mainly by men. But the learning process on how to adapt myself to improve my work – that's what fascinates me. I have been driven by my passion for understanding what is surrounding me and the challenge of using this knowledge to achieve tangible results in the projects I manage," she said.

S+A has been operating in Kazakhstan for five years.

"We started in Almaty but soon we moved to Astana, where we have been developing several projects," she said. "My responsibilities are concerned with all management of the operation of S+A in Kazakhstan, including finance, project management and business development," said Ramalho.

Continued on Page B5

Student Wins Multilingual Essay Contest, Takes Part in UN General Assembly

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Kazakh student Moldir Arapova is among the winners of an essay contest organised by the United Nations.

A jury selected sixty finalists out of the 3,600 participants who applied over three rounds. The finalists presented their reports to the UN General Assembly in New York. They were also able to communicate with guest lecturers and scientists during the UN meeting, Tengrinews.kz reports.

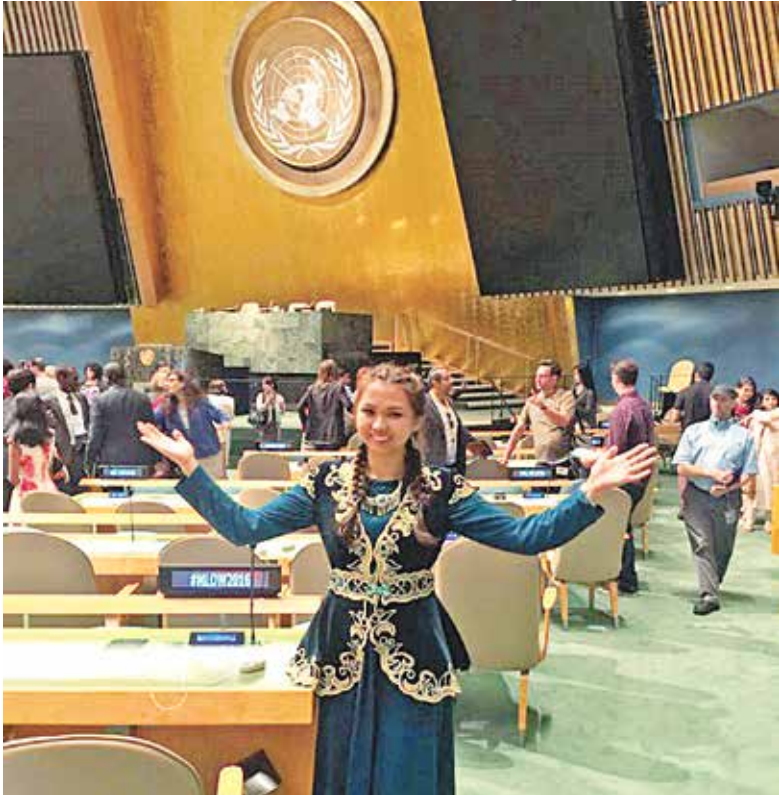
Arapova opened her remarks in the state language and presented her report in Chinese. Twenty-one-year-old Arapova studied Chinese at the Beijing Language and Culture University for one year. Later, she received a scholarship and entered the Philosophy Department at Heilongjiang University in Harbin.

"I learned about the student contest on the internet and decided

to try. It was necessary to submit an essay on the topic, 'Many languages, One World' by the end of March. I wrote an essay on how to learn the Chinese language, what difficulties I experienced and how I managed to overcome them," she said.

Arapova touched upon the topic of creating the Silk Road Economic Belt and Marine Silk Road of the 21st Century projects in her two-minute presentation to the UN.

"If this project is implemented, the issues related to infrastructure, railways and gas ports will be resolved in many towns and villages. The distance between the states will be reduced and this can greatly affect and change the lives of billions of people. And aspects of political rapprochement, trade exchange, capital flow, cultural exchange, too, will increase international exchange and cooperation," she said.



Moldir Arapova

Photo: tengrinews.kz

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

RIXOS BOROVUE

August 27 at 10 a.m. Charity Tour de Burabai

ASTANA ARENA

September 4 at 10 p.m. European Qualifeirs
Kazakhstan vs. Poland

37 TURAN AVENUE

September 4 at 8 a.m. Astana Marathon

ASTANA OPERA

September 7 at 7 p.m. Opening of IV Season of Concert
Music

Life of a Global Nomad: Conductor Alan Buribayev

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

In a recent interview with Kazakhstanskaya Pravda newspaper, world-famous Kazakh conductor Alan Buribayev discussed his childhood, the beginning of his musical career and his present life. Today, as chief conductor of Astana Opera, Buribayev works with the best orchestras around the globe.

Tell us about your early love of music

I was 11 years old when I was suddenly uprooted from my accustomed environment: several Kazakh musicians, among them my parents, were invited to work in Greece. Today, I, of course, recall very warmly the time spent in that beautiful country. But at that time it was a new country, a different culture, a new language for me. I went to the sixth grade of a local gymnasium not knowing a word of Greek. This language, by the way, is unique, not like any other language in the world. It was Greece which gave me the first impulse to be seriously involved in symphony music. I started to like the music of Richard Wagner, one of the greatest opera conductors in the world. Many serious musicians approach his music at a more mature age. However, I reached out to Wagner when I was 13 or 14 years old. I really, really liked his music. I had no difficulties in understanding it at that time, nor later when I started to conduct his works.

Thanks to the works of Wagner I had a great desire to study the German language. I sat down at a grand piano and, playing claviers, sang his operas in the original language. I should say that the language of Wagner is not modern [standard German]; it is the German language of the 19th century, rich and figurative. This is not surprising, since the composer's creativity was influenced by the

philosophy of Schopenhauer and Schiller's poetry.

Usually, conductors are older

Yes, previously it was considered that conducting requires some life and music experience. Anyway, first, one needs to obtain higher education as an instrumentalist or musicologist, and only then enter the faculty of opera and symphony conducting. But it was so interesting for me that I hadn't even thought to follow such a limiting practice. Before going abroad I studied at the Kulyash Baisseitova music school and played quite well already, but conducting more and more allured and captured me. I remember that for my birthday when I was a teenager, I asked my parents to buy me scores instead of toys. My father and mother ... noticed that I was interested in serious classical art. They only encouraged me.

My interest in languages is also related to some extent to the world of opera. I know five foreign languages, and I learned English, German, Italian and French through Greek. This helps me to quickly enter the figurative world of the Italian opera.

After your early start, what difficulties have you faced in your 20 years of conducting?

Indeed, difficulties are still there, every time I stand before a new crew in a new country. I assess the maturity of the conductor not by the years he or she lived, but by the number of programmes and pieces conducted. And today I can say that I have conducted virtually the entire main symphonic repertoire of a conductor. That is, my repertoire includes symphonies of Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov, played repeatedly. More than 20 operas were staged in different countries. These are very mature works written not by



Photo: bur347.kz

ordinary people, but by the best representatives of humanity.

There is a story that you once had to conduct a new programme in Japan having only learned it on the long flight to the country

Such situations have happened more than once. The fact that a conductor works each week in a different country is, of course, great, but it is not as beautiful as it seems. In fact, it is quite difficult. Very often when I go somewhere, I see only the concert hall, the hotel and the airport and ...that is all.

In September, I will be conducting in New Zealand. I will be met at the airport, taken to the hotel. I will probably pass a sleepless night because of the jet lag, and at 10 a.m. I will have to meet the orchestra, in a totally fit physical shape. We will perform Rachmaninov's Symphonic Dances, one of the most difficult pieces for orchestra. I will have to find the strength and do my work at the highest level. I cannot come to New Zealand earlier because I have other projects.

A week after this concert, I will fly to the United States, to Seattle. It is on the other end of the planet.

Then I will have concerts in Europe and in between them in Japan and, of course, I have my work in Astana. These are my plans for this fall. And in between the tours I have to make time to get visas. Sometimes you have to fly to other countries to get them. It is very good that just recently an Irish consulate opened in Almaty – before it was necessary to go to Moscow to get a visa. That sort of thing happens very often. This is the life of a musician.

Maybe it would be easier to have citizenship in another country, one easier to fly from

Yes, I live like a global nomad. Today I am in one country; tomorrow, in another, the day after tomorrow in the third. Another hotel, another music hall, another orchestra. I am everywhere, and at the same time – nowhere. In the mornings I sometimes ask myself, "Where am I?" Maybe that is why the sense of homeland is so important for me. Here in Kazakhstan are my wife, my parents, my brother, relatives and friends. For me, visits to the motherland are a way of escaping and feeling the

happiness of seeing family. Europeans do not communicate very closely; the cult of family is weak there. In my childhood, which was very happy and full of love, I was accustomed to family values. Maybe it comes with age or it is because I live mostly abroad, but I want my roots with home to be stronger.

Is there a future for classical music?

It is a good question, but I think that it should be discussed with culture experts. All factors and aspects of our current existence say that today the internet has replaced classical music and books. I love long flights, because on the plane I read avidly. My whole life, I've faced the problem of extra baggage, because I take dozens of books and scores when I travel. Today this is not an issue – I was given an electronic book. This format is a little bit unusual, because I am conservative by nature. I love Abai, Chekhov, Wilde, Hasek. I read a lot of historical and musical literature, biographies of composers and books about the eras they lived in. I am interested in that. There is a lot of information in English, German and French, less in Russian and very little in Kazakh.

I returned to my mother language after learning five foreign languages. Thanks to the two most important factors in my life, I started to learn Kazakh more deeply. Firstly, this is because of my spouse, Altyнай. She can perfectly speak in mother language; she showed me its beauty and richness. The second factor is the "Abai" opera by Akhmet Zhubanov and Latif Khamidi. In the libretto, written by Mukhtar Auezov, the complex, Shakespearean language makes the music of the opera more precious.

When I staged "Abai" in Germany I was interested to read the opinion of Gerold Belger concerning the translations of Abai's works to other languages. In his essays he proves that it is very difficult to translate to other languages the works of the Kazakh genius. The existing translations are partially rephrased. Sometimes translators avoid the interlinear translation and ad lib, and sometimes trans-

lators try to make a different poet from the Kazakh classic.

Some say being a musician is the most honest profession. What does that mean?

It is implied that there is no unheralded success. Musicians get used to painstaking work from a young age. Some play football on the street, some have to play piano for hours. It does not bring pleasure when you are young, but time passes and you cannot imagine your life without it. I never let myself do anything sloppily, unfairly; music is not a place for carelessness; playing 10 notes instead of the correct 100. If you undertrain, miss couple of notes – it will be heard.

A personal question to conclude: For a time, Kazakhstan's musical circles were very concerned about if you would marry, and whom, and when. And now there is a charming lady accompanying you.

I met my future wife when I was 35 – quite a mature age. I have chosen the European approach – firstly to get on my feet, work, actualise myself and only after that to take the liberty of thinking about private life. As the years went by, I had become a sworn bachelor. Two years ago, an Italian company staged "Abai" in Almaty. My wife at the time worked in the State Academy Theatre of Opera and Ballet, and we met. We started to communicate; I fell in love and after half a year I proposed. Happily, she agreed and we married last summer. We try to spend time together whenever we can.

Tours are not stopping, and I am pretty happy with that. However, now I am married, so when I have a chance I go back to Kazakhstan. Last year, I was mostly in Europe and Japan. This year, it is far more distant areas – New Zealand, North America. Next year it will be tours in South America with the Berlin orchestra. Now I have my debut in Tokyo with the NHK orchestra – the most famous orchestra in Japan. I cannot wait to meet those remarkable collectives. Communication with interesting, talented people fills my life with energy, happiness, inspiration. I really appreciate that.

All You Have to Do Is Love the Game, Say Kazakh Live Commentators

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The voice of the commentator is an inseparable part of watching sport today. Be it football, hockey or the Olympics, the commentator guides millions of people through the whole event, giving statistics and facts and explaining what is happening on their screens.

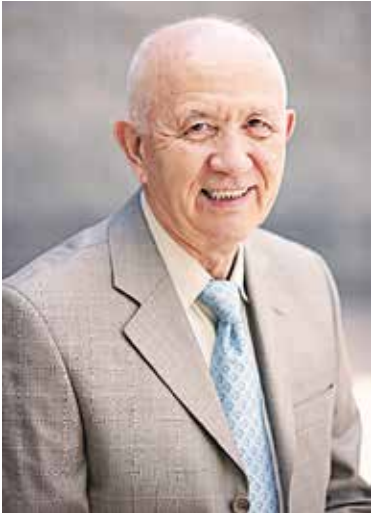
Sports commentator Diyas Omarov, often called a commenting legend in Kazakhstan, used to be a football player. He was a member of FC Almaty Kairat and later became a sport journalist and announcer. He was chosen to comment on field hockey at the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

"I knew football and it was interesting for me. It is live and of course anything can happen. I had some bloopers, but not serious ones. Most of them were connected with the family names of players," said Omarov in an interview with The Astana Times.

He said that he used to prepare a few notes before matches, but during the match it was almost impossible to use them. "The report depends on the game, in my opinion. The better the game, the better the commentary," he added.

Seventy-five-year-old Omarov added that a lot of things have changed in the profession during his career.

"I think that today's sport announcers are much more prepared than we were back then. They know statistics much better. It was hard to get information [then]. Now everything is available online. But sometimes information is too much, you know. It is not necessary to say when the player got



Diyas Omarov

married or divorced," he added, laughing.

He said that usually he watches sport events on mute, without listening to any comments.

Evgeny Akmanov is a 29-year-old sport announcer based in Almaty. He has been commenting live for 10 years now.

During that period he has managed to work at all Kazakhstan's central TV channels, including Khabar, Kazakhstan, KazSport, KTK, Astana and Channel 7. Now he works at ON TV, formerly TAN TV.

ON TV has the rights to broadcast UEFA's Champions League and Europe League, where Kazakh clubs are participating.

"At this moment I mainly comment on football matches. Recently I commented on the President's Hockey Cup, where Barys hockey club has also participated," said Akmanov in a recent interview for this story.

Akmanov said he was not really involved in sport until fourth



Evgeny Akmanov

grade, when he started playing volleyball.

"Later, I started watching broadcasts on TV from 1995–1997. At that time, we had access to different sport channels," he said. Since then, he has been watching, remembering and enjoying sport broadcasts.

Akmanov's career began at the sport department at the KTK channel. In 2006, the channel bought the rights for some UEFA Cup matches. That's where the young commentator got the chance to try himself as a sport announcer.

Being a live commentator is not the most popular job in the country, not even in the media sphere. According to Akmanov, there are about a maximum of 10 sport commentators in the country and almost none of them are attached to any particular TV channel.

"There are not a lot of live broadcasts in our country. With the creation of KazSport the situation has improved, but still not so

much. There is no high demand for specialists," he explained.

Both commentators agreed that the main thing in the profession is a love of sport and the ability to speak well. "Everything else comes with the experience," said Akmanov, who has also been working at the NS radio station, reading sport news every day for the last five years.

Probably almost every sport fan would agree that a lot depends on the mood of the commentator, and it always can be felt.

"I would say that the place we work from also matters – I mean, if we are at the stadium or another place where the event is taking place. Of course, it has an impact on our mood," said Akmanov. "Our Russian colleagues work directly from the venues. When you are there, you get the atmosphere, get the opportunity to see additional places that TV viewers cannot see."

According to him, working from the studio is different, because



CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

Movie about Abai’s Father to Be Shown at the Kazan International Festival

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – A movie about Abai’s father shot by Kazakhfilm will be included in the Sept. 5-11 11th Kazan International Muslim Film Festival.

“The movie tells the story of the fate of Kunanbai Oskembayuly, who was born in 1804 in Shyn-gystau village, the Semipalatinsk region (the East Kazakhstan region). He was a fair judge whose son Abai became famous for his poems,” reported the Ministry of Culture and Sports press service.

The film was directed by People’s Artist of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan State Prize laureate

Doskhan Zholzhaksynov, with the scenario written by Zholzhak-synov and Talasbek Asemkulov. Shooting took place in Karaul vil-lage in Abai district of the East Kazakhstan region, where Oskem-bayuly lived for many years, and the Almaty region.

More than 700 bids from directors and producers from 50 states were entered in the festival. The competi-tion programme includes 60 feature films, documentaries and animated films from 33 countries. Kazakh-film will compete with movies from Bangladesh, China, Iran, Kyr-gyzstan, Malaysia, Russia, Serbia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Kazan fetical has been held annually held in the capital



A still from the film set.

of Russia’s Tatarstan since 2005. The first festival was initiated by the Russian Council of Muftis, the nation’s Federal Agency for

Culture and Cinematography and the Tatarstan Ministry of Culture with the support of the Tatarstan president. The motto is “To the

dialogue of cultures through the culture of dialogue.”

The festival aims to exchange experiences in Russian culture and arts with neighbouring and more distant Muslim countries. The event shows the creative achieve-ments of Muslim cinematogra-phem, and representatives popu-larise human, spiritual and moral values and cultural traditions.

Movies supporting ideas of peace making, tolerance and humanity re-gardless of the nationality and reli-gious affiliation of the authors are chosen for the festival. The selection committee, composed of hon-ourable Russian and foreign film critics, carefully analyses the films and chooses those which are inter-

esting, original, vivid and deserving of audience attention.

The festival will hold numerous master classes with cinematog-raphers, creative meetings, press conferences and roundtable dis-cussions.

Abai Kunanbaiuly was a poet, one of founders of Kazakh literature, composer, translator, philosopher and political leader. He exposed the problems of the Kazakh people, contributing to reforms toward Eu-ropean and Russian culture based on enlightened Islam. Abai’s poetry expresses great love of the nation, which affected the philosophical thinking of educated Kazakhs.

Kunanbai Oskembayuly, the son of an ordinary man, had excellent memory and oral skills. He was an expert in steppe legislation, Russian legislation and the Koran. Oskem-bayuly was highly respected by his contemporaries, who called him the fairest judge, and people through-out the country sought his advice.

Gifted Soloists from Three Countries Perform Bach Concert

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Famous French, Russian and Swiss musicians pre-sented “The Tone of Bach,” a vivid and exciting concert highlighting the work of one of the most bril-liant composers in musical history, Johann Sebastian Bach. The per-formance was given Aug. 12 at the Astana Opera Chamber Hall.

The event featured violinist Ra-chelle Kisananin, violist Pavel Ro-manenko and cellist Eldar Saparayev, a Kazakh native currently residing in Switzerland. The programme includ-ed Bach’s Suite No. 6 D-dur BWV 1012 for cello (solo) and Goldberg Variations for String Trio arranged by Dmitry Sitkovetsky, according to the theatre’s release.

“I was lucky to perform this mu-sic many times with Sitkovetsky. We played this trio on almost all the continents of the world, from Europe to South Africa and even in Tahiti. A month ago, I first worked with Goldberg Variations as a con-ductor, as there is a second version for string orchestra. I worked as Sitkovetsky’s assistant when we had a concert tour in Germany,” said Saparayev.

The cellist is the concertmas-ter and visiting conductor of the Southwest German Philharmonic Orchestra and a member of the legendary cello sextet Cologne Philharmonic. Saparayev noted he was glad to give a concert in col-laboration with Romanenko as he had heard a lot about him.

Romanenko is known to the Ka-zakh public not only for his virtu-oso performance, but also because his career began in the capital, where he was born. He graduated from the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory in the class of USSR People’s Artist Yuri Bash-met. He is now the viola concert-master at the Moscow State Aca-demic Symphony Orchestra under Pavel Kogan.

Music critics repeatedly indi-cated the power and beauty of the viola do not occur from the phys-ical strength of the hands or posses-sion of a variety of techniques, but because of the rich creative nature.

“We wanted to bring the audi-ence the amazing beauty of this bright music that uplifts and heals the soul. When I first became ac-quainted with the Goldberg Vari-ations, I was literally shocked. Its sound makes you forget every-thing and enjoy every tone,” said Romanenko.

The performance was Kisa-kanin’s debut on the stage of the Astana Opera House. Saparayev and Romanenko had previously performed there.

Born and raised in France, Ki-sakanin studied in Lyon, London and Basel. She currently lives in Zurich and performs with various chamber groups and prestigious orchestras including the Zurich Chamber Orchestra and Lucerne Symphony Orchestra. Last year, the ensemble organised Trio Le Délice, which successfully toured throughout Europe.



Kazakh Ballet Star Brings Dance Victory from Seoul

Staff Report

Kazakh ballet star and Astana Opera leading soloist Bakhtiyar Ad-amzhan won the 13th Seoul Interna-tional Dance Competition, reported the Astana Opera press service.

The artist earned the top rating in the classical dance category in the senior male dancers group, af-ter astonishing the jury and audi-ence with his virtuoso technique and highly professional dance per-formance.

The competition took place Aug. 6–10 at the National Theatre of Korea. Great and talented danc-ers from the ages of 11–35 came to the South Korean capital to compete in three categories: clas-sical, modern and folk dances. The awards ceremony was held Aug. 11, followed by gala concerts Aug. 12 and 13 with the participation of competition winners.



Photo: Astana Opera

One of the jury members was a representative of Kazakhstan: Di-rector of the Astana Opera ballet company and Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan Tursynbek Nurka-liyev. He noted that participation in the project, which attracts the entire global ballet elite, is a great honour and responsibility.

“The creativity of our artists is sufficiently high to allow us to

stage complicated performances and successfully perform at lead-ing venues and receive awards from prestigious competitions. Every time one of our students reaches success and finds recogni-tion abroad, I feel truly touched. The high scores given by inter-national experts to Kazakh artists make me feel proud for our beauti-ful homeland,” said Nurkaliyev.

International Ballet Competition Opens New Horizons for Performers

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The third Interna-tional Ballet Competition will be held Sept. 10-17 in the capital. The audition initiated by the fund to develop and support the national ballet and dance aims to draw at-tention to the young capital and its young theatre.

The jury will include Hungarian National Ballet director, dancer and choreographer Tamas Solymosi; Beijing Dance Academy professor, China Association of the National Dance ballet committee executive vice president and leading chore-ographer Xiao Suhua; his assistant Jiri Kylian; choreographer Stefan Žeromski; Italian choreographer Luigi Bonino, who recently staged Roland Petit’s “Notre Dame de Paris” at the Astana Opera House; Slovak National Theatre ballet director Joseph Dolinsky and International Ballet Festival Dance Open founder Vasily Medvedev. International Federation of Bal-let Competitions general director and Ballet magazine prize winner



Photo: tengrinews.kz

Sergey Usanov, who has exten-sive experience in organising and conducting such events, has been invited as the jury’s executive sec-retary, reported Tengrinews.kz.

“The competition attracts at-tention to a particular type of art. In many countries, it becomes the expected cultural event of the year and affects the development of ballet in general. The dancers also grow technically, because everyone wants to show all that they can and even more. It opens up new prospects for the artists

and gives an opportunity to reach new heights. The atmosphere of the competition significantly af-fects and requires more physical and mental strength,” said Astana Opera Theatre artistic director and People’s Artist of Russia Altynai Asylmuratova.

A ballet artist who wants to take part in the competition must be a fighter determined to win, profes-sionally trained and full of charisma, virtuosity and an understanding of the performing parties, she noted.

“Among the first-class soloists,

there are competitive and non-com-petitive ones. The competitive solo-ists are good in a competitive variation with incredible technical complica-tions, but they fail to perform well in a full-length performance. The non-competitive artists are excellent at performing on the stage but in the conditions of competitive rivalry, they lose. But the first does not ex-clude the second,” she said.

In the history of ballet, a num-ber of prestigious competition winners became brilliant artists, including Rudolf Nureyev, Natalia Makarova, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Vladimir Vasilyev and Ekaterina Maximova, added Asylmuratova.

“The ballet school is currently under construction. The Kazakh National Academy of Choreogra-phy will be opened in September of this year. We can say that this field is booming in our country. It is important that so many people have seen it with their own eyes; as they say, better to see once than hear a hundred times. And this is the pledge of the future cooperation with well-known choreographers and theatre makers,” she said.

The Spirit of Tengri Project to be Presented in Hungary Seeks to Unite Turkic World

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The Spirit of Tengri festival was established by the Tengri FM na-tional radio station in 2013.

Musicians from 30 countries and regions across the world like the Turkish BaBa Zula band, Chinese-Mongolian Hanggai team, Magyar

Tilla Török’s Band & Holdviola band, Estonian TRAD.ATTACK! ethno band, Georgian The Shin trio and Argyamak band from Bashkor-tostan have performed over these years, the news report said.

Buryat, Finnish and Norwegian Nordic Namgar project, Tuvan throat

singer and musician Radik Tyuly-ush, Tuvan Huun Huur Tu band and American DJ Carmen Rizzo have also been part of past festivals.

Kazakh Aldaspan, Sharapat, Tigrahaud, Roksonaki, Barabany Almaty (Drums of Almaty) bands and folklore maestro Yedil Khus-

sainov were also on the stage of the latest festival in June.

This year’s open-air festival held in June in front of Almaty’s Republic Palace gathered more than 20,000 spectators in two days. More than ten musical collectives from nine countries performed.



Photo: tengrinews.kz

Expensive Houses in Southern Capital Worth Price, Says Real Estate Expert

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Some expensive houses in Almaty are worth the purchase price. Mansions in the big city with designer décor and measuring thousands of square metres have potential buyers willing to pay the six-figure price.

“Castle-type houses have doors that alone cost \$1 million. The décor is Italian,” said Luxury City Real Estate director Vitaliy Guzeyev in an interview with The Astana Times. “I have one house for sale that costs \$5 million and the owners invested more than \$4 million into its construction. Different neighbourhoods have different prices. Almaty, for example, has land [slots] alone that is worth \$2 million.”

Guzeyev noted many houses are on the market for \$1-\$5 million, meaning the average price is \$2.5 million and only a few are higher than \$5 million. Almaty districts where one can find such properties include Luxor, Miras and Yubileiny.

“A \$3.5-million house was sold for \$2 million because the owner needed to sell urgently and it was done in a week. Many who are willing to buy have money and can afford it and it’s worth it,” he added.

Prices go as high as \$10-\$15 mil-



lion for some 1,000-2,000-square metre mansions currently on the market, depending on décor, space and condition of the house, according to Guzeyev.

“Some just buy land for a cheap price, build it with cheap construction materials and sell for a high price and that does not work. Houses that do sell are usually dis-

tinguished by their designer interior, décor and all,” he noted.

Krishna, a website about Kazakh real estate, has a list of the five most expensive wooden houses in Almaty that fall under the \$2.5 million average.

A six-room, 220-square metre house with 3,000 square metres of land in Nurlytau micro district

is available for 240 million tenge (US\$695,896). The house includes a veranda with mountain view, large garden, banya (a Russian type of sauna/steam bath), swimming pool and spacious garage, notes the website.

A five-room house in Tau Samal, measuring 317 square metres and situated on 1,700 square metres of



land, is available for 266 million tenge (US\$771,285). The house, the fourth on the list, does not have additional outdoor amenities, however the owners promise to leave the Italian furniture and guarantee a superb mountain view, according to Krisha.kz.

Ranking third is a nine-room, 450-square metre mansion on 2,000 square metres in Tau Samal listed for 545 million tenge (US\$1.5 million). The residence has an empire-styled interior – moulded columns and ceilings, walnut doors and natural stone, bathrooms and kitchen. This house has an inside sauna and gazebo for outdoor relaxation, notes the website.

A seven-room, 303-square metre wooden house on 1,500 square metres of land not far from Medeu Alpine Skating Rink landed second on the list. A banya, a few household buildings and a garage are included in the 654 million tenge (US\$1.9 million) price.

The largest among the seven-

room houses, a 530-square metre home made of glued laminated lumber in Yubileiniy micro district of Medeu region, is the leader in the rating. It has a banya, cellar, several household buildings, a small pond and land measuring 3,400 square metres. The property is valued at 850 million tenge (US\$2.4 million), according to the website.

“Sellers were agreeing to make a 5-15 percent discount in all instances during telephone conversations. Owners are willing to give away furniture and household equipment. All houses are connected to central water supply and sewerage,” notes Krisha.kz.

Electric batteries, drilling the home’s own well, using energy saving lamps and autonomous (independent) heating systems that use solar energy may help to maintain the large houses. A cook, housekeeper and gardener are separate expenses.

Documentary about Botai Culture to Start Shooting in North Kazakhstan Region



lersen and Kazakh scientist Victor Seibert, who discovered the Botai culture, and opened the Botai world in the 1980s. Since then, more than 250,000 historical artefacts have been found at the excavations.

The predecessors of the Botai people were nomadic hunters who lived in the steppe, according to Carnegiennh.org. The people travelled in small bands and didn’t stay in one location for a long time. Only four Botai settlements have been identified: Botai,

Krasnyi Yar, Roshchinskoe and Vasilkovka. Beginning between 3,700–3,100 BC, the Copper Age Botai culture significantly changed their lifestyle and started to settle in large, permanent villages. They also focused most of their economy on the horse.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Kazakh archaeologists excavated approximately 70 houses at Botai and one house each at Krasnyi Yar and Vasilkovka. In 2000, a Kazakh-American team from the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and the Presidential Cultural Centre of Kazakhstan started excavations at Krasnyi Yar, discovering a third house and part of a fourth house. All of the artefacts from the excavations at Krasnyi Yar appear to be from the Copper Age.



By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Clearwater Documentary of Canada, managed by renowned producer, director and anthropologist Niobe Thompson, is going to shoot a documentary about the Botai culture in Kazakhstan. The film will explain why domestic horses are so important for cultures in the North Kazakhstan region.

“One of the directions of our work is dedicated to the promotion of historical science in Kazakhstan. The film about Botai culture

united the whole scientific community: historians, archaeologists, geneticists and anthropologists. This project shows the growing role of Kazakhstan in the international development of historical science,” said Presidium Member of the Kazakh Geographic Society and Project Manager of Shejire DNA Nurbol Baimukhanov, the Kazakh Geographic Society reports.

The documentary about Botai culture (which existed nearly 4,000 years BC) will be filmed at the archaeological site in Botai, in Aiyrtau district of the North Kazakhstan region. The project

is supported by the Kazakh Geographic Society.

A press conference devoted to the filming of the documentary about Botai culture was held at the archaeological excavations in Botai. The briefing was held in a yurt (the traditional Kazakh nomadic dwelling). Clearwater Documentary Television has created a number of popular science documentaries about history, archaeology and genetics, including the famous TV series “Great Human Odyssey,” which tells about the great migration processes of mankind.

The Botai Monument on the

banks of the Iman-Burluk River is under the protection of UNESCO. Archaeological excavations in Botai sparked the interest of the film authors, because they think Botai culture has great historical significance. According to scientists, Botai was the main centre of horse domestication in the territory of modern Kazakhstan.

The filming involved an international team of scientists from Denmark, Canada, the U.K., France and Kazakhstan. Archaeologists and geneticists Orlando Ludovich from France, Alan Outram from the U.K., Danish scholar Eske Vil-

Egyptian-Type Pyramid Tomb Discovered in Karaganda Region, Archaeologists Offer Answers

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He is the head of the archaeological group and a leading scientific research associate at Saryarka Archaeological Institute, part of Buketov Karaganda State University in the Karaganda Region.

“My version is there used to be

a trans-Asian corridor that connected today’s territories of Central Asia and the Middle East. This corridor was used for transporting goods, ideas and technologies and was the vital point in this traffic and this is how this type of idea got to our region,” he added.

The burial mound was about 30

metres in diameter when it was uncovered, said Kukushkin.

“At first, we discovered a burial mound that was about two metres in height. After we removed the soil, we discovered this pyramid-like structure that from a distance reminded us of steps. It was made of five-six rows of walls erected to-

wards the centre and covered with vertical plates about 15 metres in diameter and two metres in height. We believe it used to be taller than that,” he noted.

“It is a burial site of a high-ranking leader from the late Bronze Age (1,500 BC–1,000 BC) of the Begazy-Dandybayev culture,” he said.

The Begazy-Dandybayev culture that spread into the current territories of central Kazakhstan still have many ancient secrets to be discovered, he added, including the possibility that additional similar tombs might be found in the future.

“Such structures are quite

rare for the Bronze Age and this mound is one of the biggest in the region. There are only probably five in total. It was assumed that most similar mausoleums had been studied, but this structure prompts us to believe that there are more yet to be discovered,” said Kukushkin.

SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

Kazakh Viners Gain Popularity, 15 Seconds at a Time

By Zhazira Dyussembekova

ASTANA – During the last year or a so new social media trend has caught on among Kazakh users – viners. Viners are people who make funny short videos about everyday life and their creations called vines. They have managed not only become really popular, they monetised their interest.

Nobody expected Instagram to become so popular when four years ago it was basically used for only its filters. But now it has become a social network where people post selfies and what they eat. In Kazakhstan, Instagram is used as an online shop, forum to discuss issues personal and otherwise, a news agency and now a platform for viners.

The term “vine” came from another network with the same name. The idea of the platform was the creation of six-second videos, which were huge in the United States, but did not really suit Kazakhstan. Here, 15-seconds videos



Photo credit: comode.kz

Nagima Akhmetova

in Instagram have gained a huge audience. Somehow, the term viner stuck new social network stars.

Later, Instagram introduced one-minute long videos, which gave creators even more space to show their entertaining stories. At the same time, users started spending four times as much time front of their phone displays. The likes, comments and reposts changed the lives of viners, since the companies realised that their direct audience is huge.

Along with money, viners are invited to act in movies, take trips abroad and they are pretty recognisable now and participate in many

other projects. The followers-base mainly consists of teenagers and the young generation under 30, so the products viners promote are mostly targeting that audience.

According to the youngsters, Nurlan Batyrov (@batyroff) is really popular among users now. The account has more than 4,300 posts with 1.1 million followers.

“The famous character is Mad Woman, who made that account very popular. Mad Woman is played by Nurlan himself dressed in a giant wig and showing different situations connected with her boyfriend or husband, who is also played by Nurlan,” said one of the viewers, who preferred not to disclose his name. “I really like @batyroff, it is funny, but some of the humour is not for children,” he said.

In April, in an interview with Forbes.kz, Batyrov said he earns around \$5,000-6,000 per month using his Instagram account. In recent posts, the account has promoted smartphones, language courses, jewellery and others.

Another popular account is @yu-

frame with an even bigger audience of 1.6 million people. Four students make entertaining videos every day. Recent posts advertise flower delivery, educational agency and their own café, which is also called Yuframe. Their last videos hit more than million views.

“I have been watching them for a while. There are two guys and two girls, all of them are students. I think mostly students of universities and schools watch them. They show situations in relationships with parents, friends and among girls and boys,” said one of the viewers.

After watching videos of @yuframe, another viner appeared with the account @zheka_fatbelly, who happened to be student Zhenis Omarov. His dancing in Paris with a street group recently has attracted a lot of attention. He has 653,000 followers and almost 700 posts. The charismatic young man mainly jokes about himself, dancing with his belly and usually uses curse words. But the videos also include situations with girls and friends.

Judging by the comments, the audience loves him. In recent posts, he has promoted laptops, glasses and even a bank.

“I love Zheka the most. I think he is so real. I laugh every time,” said one of the viewers.

While most of the viners make videos in Russian, a capital group of two students created @xaxa_show, which is only in Kazakh. Their audience is more than 550,000 people. Their most popular videos are those where two friends dressed like girls and show what they consider to be typical girl behaviour in a funny manner. They also advertise products, such as clothing, educational services and others.

Another account that is becoming popular belongs to Nagima Akhmetova (@nagimuwaa). She sings, acts, makes parodies for beauty bloggers and gives sarcastic advice in relations with men. She instantly gained the attention of the public. She even has several popular series of videos. The Aika and 911 series are probably the most popular. In Aika, she represents a village girl who wants

to find love and in 911, she plays an inadequate dispatcher. She also promotes services and products.

“I think she is very original, has a great sense of humour and acts great! I think she stands out from others. She is talented and 911 is played so good. In my opinion she has everything to become a good actress in Kazakhstan. In a short time, she gained so many followers and it shows that people see she has talent too,” said one of her viewers.

All of the viewers interviewed by the Astana Times said that vines cheer them up, but all of them admitted they are addicting, but in a good way. “It is a great way to show your talent. Those people showed that if you are funny and have a good idea and love what you do, people will follow you, literally,” said one of the users.

Other popular accounts include @birzhanashim (217,000 followers), @territima (346,000 followers), @jokeasses (479,000 followers) and @ratbek (313,000 followers).

Many Kazakh Traditions and Customs Still Relevant Today, While Some Fade Away

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In addition to Kazakhs, these days Germans, Koreans, Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Uyghurs and numerous other guests living in a big, multinational country gather at one table.

As one Kazakh proverb says, “a guest brings happiness to the house when he arrives.” Homeowners always tried to have their guest leave in a good mood and gave them fairing for the road, which is still present in modern days.

A Kazakh superstition says that a child will take happiness away from a house if it leaves while being upset. Even now, young guests are given delicious treats and small presents.

The Kazakh cuisine is renowned for meat dishes such as beshbarmak, manty, kazy and other national dishes and beverages like kumys (fermented mare’s milk), shubat (camel’s milk), airan (cold yogurt beverage) and tea.

“From ancient times, Kazakhs loved to drink tea with either milk or cream served after a traditional beshbarmak meal together with their families. Boursaks (fried yeast dough) are baked and various sweets are served with tea,” said mother and entrepreneur Gulnara Ashirbayeva in an earlier interview with the paper.

The tea drinking culture among Kazakhs is a tradition that brings family members together for dinner discussions. These days, however, the entrepreneur noted it is harder to find the time.

“Family matters and news are usually discussed during tea drinking together and our family is not an exception. Of course, we don’t always manage to gather in our modern days; each family member has their own priorities and preferences,” she said.

Raising children has its own traits, too. For example, an old notion indicates a baby is most prone

to the influence of evil spirits who may send illnesses upon an infant or replace a child during the first 40 days of life. Therefore, no one except for the closest family could see a baby until 40 days had passed since birth. Many Kazakhs still follow this tradition.

For every boy, sundet (circumcision) is quite an important religious tradition because it appends him to a Muslim world and the Koran states the necessity of this rite, notes bilu.kz. As a rule, parents arrange toi (celebration) for this occasion and the child is rewarded with congratulations and many gifts.

These days, sundet is performed on 4-5 year-old boys in clinics.

According to family customs, different people would handle the upbringing of each son. The eldest son would be sent to his grandparents, while the middle son remained with the parents and was pledged to later help the entire family. The youngest son would

become a warrior and taught skills such as fencing and archery.

Some grandparents now look after all their grandchildren so the parents can build their careers.

“Me and my husband had to carry our joint family business, busy working until late night to provide for the family. My parents and my younger sister were raising, feeding and looking after our kids most years after they were born. Without them helping, we wouldn’t be able to get up on our feet and succeed,” said Ashirbayeva.

Eloquence and the ability to improvise and compose poems and songs out of hand were valued among Kazakhs and aitys (song competitions held between two poets and singers) are currently popular.

The people of one aul (village) were always like one big family. Neighbours and relatives tried to help if someone was in trouble. Never leaving loved ones and relatives in trouble and keeping the

honour and dignity of one’s own family and genus was a rule for any Kazakh, notes the website.

“Me and my sister, we supported each other all the time even when our parents were alive. I teach that to my children, too, because family is the closest, most precious and important thing that we all have in our lives,” she said.

Women do not necessarily devote themselves only to family and children but attempt to achieve career heights on a par with men or even outrun them in educational level, earnings and status.

There are some customs which are no longer relevant in any form, like a Kazakh only considering the grandchild who was born from a son (and not a daughter).

In the past, girls married at around 13-14 and boys at 14-15, which in this century seriously breaks the law. Although the bride stealing tradition happens, in most cases with her consent, if done

without consent it may turn into a criminal offence.

Similar traditions, that are predominantly no longer present, include amengerlik, when a widow had to marry one of her late husband’s brothers to resolve the issue of the father’s absence, according to psychological sciences candidate and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University Associate Professor Maira Kabakova.

“‘Dertkoshiru’ (to remove disease) used in the case of one’s illness, gathering village residents get together to say ‘kosh!’ (Goodbye) and dispelling a disease has completely been forgotten as well,” wrote Kabakova.

The traditional Kazakh wedding that complies with the basic stages of a traditional wedding ceremony like viewing the bride, marriage portion (dowry), mutual gifting of affiances (engagements) and performing ceremonial songs (“Zhar-Zhar” and “Betashar”) has remained in modern days.

Felting, jewellery mastery, leather dressing, producing musical instruments and other national crafts have been revived as well, showing the young generation’s interest in the history of its nation.

Russia’s Kunstkamera to Return Skull of Keiki Batyr to Kazakhstan

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) is expected to return the skull of Keiki Batyr, the leader of the rebel army and national liberation movement of the past century, to Kazakhstan.

“Indeed, we have the skull of Keiki Batyr. We never kept it a secret; everybody is well aware of it. This skull is being stored with funds and was never exhibited before. If a decree (from Russia’s president) is issued, there will not

be any reason for not returning it,” said museum deputy director Yefim Rezvan, reported Tengrinews.kz.

The exhibit can be passed to Kazakhstan under federal law, he added. Kunstkamera does not have the skull of Kenessary Kassymov, another Kazakh national hero, as its location is still unknown.

“All funds were shown to the deputy minister of the Kazakh Ministry of Culture. Colleagues from Kazakhstan also personally looked at the documents, where new arrivals to the museum are recorded. They were convinced that we never had the skull of Kenes-

sary,” said Rezvan, according to the news agency.

Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov raised the issue earlier of returning the remains of Kenessary Khan and Keiki Batyr to Kazakhstan for burial. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev promised to deal with the issue and provide the necessary instructions to resolve it, said the report.

Keiki Batyr was murdered in April 1923 and his skull later transferred to Russia.

Kassymov was a Kazakh sultan, khan of the middle zhuz (Argyn horde, one of the main territorial and tribal divisions in the Kypchak

Plain) and leader of the national liberation movement on Kazakh territory. He sought to restore the khan authority liquidated by the tsarist Russian government.

Kenessary Kassymov was killed in 1847 in the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan. His head was taken to Russia as a trophy and was later lost. According to some data, the skull is located in the Kunstkamera archive but has never been exhibited, according to Tengrinews.

Institute of State History Director Burkitbai Ayagan believes a genetic examination needs to be conducted for identification of Kenessary’s and Keiki Batyr’s



Photo: yvision.kz

skulls with help of specialists at Nazarbayev University or other re-

search institutions in the country, reported Kazinform.

Discovering Kazakhstan: Portuguese National on Life in Land of Great Steppe



Susana Ramalho

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One of the company’s recently-completed projects is the new Forte Bank headquarters. S+A has a cinema project with six screening rooms under development to be built next year.

“Also we operate in the sustainability field, where we are providing consultancy for some contractors of EXPO 2017 on the BREEAM implementation during the construction phase. Our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a vanguard person in the business field and as Kazakhstan is a coun-

try with so much potential growing towards modernity – the match was perfect! Besides that, Portuguese people were always a nation with the sense of discovery in their DNA,” she said.

Kazakhstan was not always a country with so much potential. Because of its Soviet history, the country was only recently “discovered” on the map.

“I knew that Kazakhstan was the biggest country in the world without an ocean coast, which is interesting for a person from a country so intrinsically connected with the ocean and its associated social and

economic activities. Later I discovered from a scientific article that apples are originally from the region where Kazakhstan is today, which is also curious for me because I’m from a place in Portugal known as the region of apples. So, I came from the Portuguese region of apples to the world cradle of the apple!”

“But the first time that I heard about Kazakhstan was in fact with Borat which I understood as a satiric movie criticising America and not Kazakhstan – as I remember many people got curious about this unknown huge country and that

can be considered a good thing,” said the architect.

Ramalho has re-discovered Kazakhstan since moving to the country. She admits that helped her re-define the purpose of her life in the country and as for her DNA, she is more curious.

“I had a mission when I came to Kazakhstan. Now, I feel that my mission is bigger because of what I learned about this culture, this nation and its amazing history since the ancient times of warriors. This region was a stage for countless battles and great tragedies, but maybe the wandering on the

steppe always gave people back the perseverance to continue and to live peacefully among many religions and different cultures.”

“Taking the example of Astana, it is amazing how fast this city was developed with the amount of people and resources transferred from the beautiful Almaty, transforming a place in the middle of the steppe into the new strategic capital of the country. And I still have so much to learn about it,” she said.

“I’m enjoying this experience of living and working in Kazakhstan very much, where I already created ties and a good network of friends making me feel almost like home. I miss the ocean and the fishy cuisine though... But I’m happy. I thank my family for having supported me on my decision to come here. And many thanks to the friends with whom I can share good conversations!” she said.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

New Public Display Being Prepared at East Kazakhstan’s Valley of Kings

By Zhazira Dyussembekova

ASTANA – Archaeologists have been working on excavations of the so-called Valley of the Kings in Katonkaragai district of East Kazakhstan region for many years. Yet only this year is mound number two of the Berel mounds being prepared for museum display, according to YK-news.kz.

“We have been conducting excavations in the Valley of the Kings for 18 years. This year has been particularly active. Thanks to the initiative of governor of the region Daniyal Akhmetov, museumification of the mound began. This is the first precedent in the history of museums,” said Professor Zeynolla Samashev, chief researcher at Margulan Institute of Archaeology.

Katonkaragai district is widely known outside the region not only for its unique nature, but also an



Photo: yk-news.kz

abundance of important archaeological sites.

Archaeologists under Samashev’s guidance have been working on the mounds for two months. While mound number two will be transferred to the museum, other discovered artefacts will remain at

the site under a glass sarcophagus, according to the source.

Museumification is the direction of the museum’s activities, which consists of the conversion of the historical-cultural and natural objects into objects of museum display in order to maximise the

preservation and identification of their historic, cultural, scientific and artistic value.

More than a hundred graves of various epochs – from Saka to early Turkic – were found in Berel Valley, which scientists now call the Valley of the Kings. Most of the graves have not yet been studied. The place is interesting for the fact that permafrost was artificially formed beneath the barrows, which led to the burial chambers remaining almost imperishable. Archaeologists throughout the world come to the region to explore and witness the so-called “frozen graves.”

This year, one of the most interesting findings was mound number two, as a woman from a noble family of the fourth century BC was discovered buried there. Scientists have suggested it is the queen, possibly a representative of a noble Saka dynasty, or the wife

of the king from the first mound. Seven sacrificial horses were buried nearby and one of the harnesses is decorated with gold and images of a rooster.

Despite the fact that the mound was plundered in antiquity, archaeologists have discovered Saka animal-style jewellery and a horse harness covered with gold plates, as well as vessels for the funeral meal.

The excavation site has already

been visited by scientists from Russia and Japan, who took samples for genetic and arboretum analyses.

The region has adopted a plan of archaeological research for 2016-2018 with 100 million tenge (US\$290,590) in funding from the regional budget. Under this programme, specialists are working to study the mounds and attract tourist interest to East Kazakhstan’s historic heritage.



Photo: yk-news.kz

Skydiving, a Step into the Sky

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Treating oneself to an unforgettable, incredible feeling and range of emotions from skydiving is great fun, especially if it is a long-time wish or a childhood dream.

“It is indeed a really cool and unusual way into the sky and to have an opportunity to have some alone time with it,” Perizat Karimova, who works as a human resources administration specialist at Agip Karachaganak BV, said in an interview with The Astana Times.

Deciding to parachute jump was not exactly spontaneous, as it was her dream when she was a kid.

“I was wishing it for a long time... I did not plan a vacation leave or a holiday this summer, so I decided to add some colour to my life by realising my intent to jump... I just called a number,

signed up for a jump and did not think about it until the day of it,” she said.

Karimova did a 3,000-metre tandem jump with an instructor, where a person experiences free flying for 30 seconds until the parachute deploys. She remembered feelings of worry, inner doubt and nervous trembling when she was on the plane.

“It can be seen on a video how I sat with a very serious look on my face, even a little detached,” she recalled with a smile. “When the instructor told me, ‘Well, it’s our turn,’ I did not have time to understand how I was standing by an open door of a plane. I did not have time to become afraid, as we already jumped.”

A flying feeling during the first seconds was her most unforgettable sensation. She did not even scream, but just tried to breathe intensively because she was short

on air at that height. At the same time, Karimova admitted she was not fearful that the parachute may not deploy.

“After all, that one percent of chance when all can go wrong and not as planned is always there,” she noted.

One’s feelings change to sensing freedom, quiet, peace and some kind of universal calmness and harmony after a parachute opens.

“Trees, people, cars seem such small dots when you watch the earth from above,” added Karimova, giving thanks to the experienced trainer named Igor for her smooth landing. “At some point, after the jump when emotions subsided I had a thought, ‘Wow, I did it. I made one more dream come true. I did not do it for someone, but for myself. I stepped over my fears.’”

Delight and an adrenaline rush

remained with her for several days. She intends to jump once again, “because the sky lures for a long time to come,” but plans to do it alone, as “this is much more frightening, so people say.”

Karimova said she now understands skydivers for whom this type of sport is a pleasurable activity. Becoming a skydiver without sufficient money is not easy, requiring constant training and self-development.

One can do an individual 800-metre jump for 15,000 tenge (US\$43.70), jump with instructor from more than 2,500 metres (45,000 tenge or US\$131) and experience free fall with the capital’s Skydive Astana at Severniy Airfield located on Astana-Kokshetau Highway.

An individual jump is with instruction and ground training, while a tandem jump requires several minutes of preparation and



Photo: wproject.kz

preliminary entry and includes a video of the jump with a GoPro Hero 3 camera.

There are also limitations on weight (45-95 kilogrammes) and health conditions, such as cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases, heightened/lowered arterial blood pressure, fainting, convulsions,

damage to hearing organs, nervous disorders, diabetes, renal diseases, psychiatric illnesses, brain and locomotive system injuries and alcoholic or narcotic intoxication.

Jumpers should be sure to wear long-sleeved shirts and thick-soled footwear and carry identification documents with them.

Sri Lanka and Singapore to Participate in EXPO 2017

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Sri Lanka and Singapore signed on to participate in EXPO 2017 in Astana during EXPO Commissioner Rapol Zhoshbayev’s Aug. 12 – 15 visit to South Asia.

Zhoshbayev met with Minister of Industry and Commerce of Sri Lanka Rishad Bathiudeen, National Commissioner of the Sri Lanka expo section and Chairman of Huejay International Corporation Hubert Jayakody and members of the business circles of the country.

“Astana EXPO 2017 is a valuable opportunity for both countries to commence new trade, which is at present at a very low level – \$5 million,” Bathiudeen said.

The sides exchanged views on



prospects for bilateral cooperation and discussed the terms of participation of the island state in the exposition and the location of their pavilion. Zhoshbayev stressed that Sri Lanka’s participation in EXPO 2017 is a significant step forward in the



development of its relationship with Kazakhstan.

According to Jayakody, Sri Lanka’s total energy capacity today is 3.9 GW, 11 percent of which (448 MW) is generated from renewable energy sources using small hydro and wind power stations. By

2030, Sri Lanka plans to meet all its energy needs from renewable sources.

In Singapore, Zhoshbayev met Wong Toon Joon, the national commissioner responsible for Singapore’s participation in EXPO 2017 and the second director of the Emerging Markets Division of Singapore’s Ministry of Trade and Industry. He also met President of the National Association of Travel Agents of Singapore Devinder Ohri.

The sides discussed bilateral cooperation in trade, investment and science and technology, including green technologies and the broad participation of Singaporean companies in the expo. Singapore will set up a national pavilion at EXPO 2017 to show

Singapore’s experiences in the future energy sector and innovative approaches to sustainable development, city planning and urban governance.

Wong commented on Singapore’s work on developing its green energy sector and reported \$3.4 billion has been allocated from the country’s budget for this purpose so far. The sector is currently supporting 18,000 jobs. EXPO 2017 will facilitate the flow of technology, strengthen the scientific base and improve the image of Kazakhstan internationally, he said.

With Ohri, Zhoshbayev discussed possibilities for attracting tourists from Singapore to the upcoming event and ways for tour operators from the two countries

to cooperate to sell tour packages and tickets to the exhibition. Ohri emphasised that the expo in Astana provides a real opportunity for Singaporeans to visit Kazakhstan and increase the tourist flow.

While in Singapore, Zhoshbayev took part in the annual NATAS International Tourism Exhibition Travel Fair and visited Kazakhstan’s pavilion, “Kazakhstan: Land of the Great Steppe,” organised by the Kazakh Embassy in Singapore and national airline Air Astana.

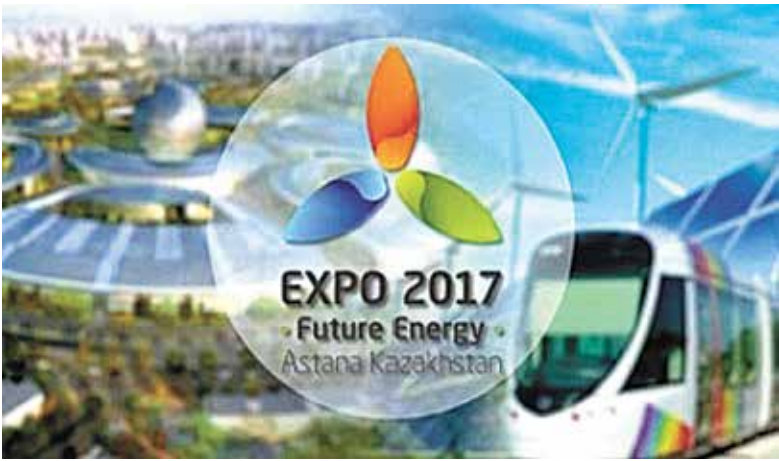
Economic relations between Singapore and Kazakhstan have increased steadily over the years since 2007. In 2015, total bilateral trade amounted to \$89.5 million, making Kazakhstan Singapore’s top trading partner in Central Asia.

EXPO 2017 Presents New Tours around Burabai for Future Expo Tourists

Staff Report

ASTANA – The Astana EXPO 2017 National Company and the Akmola Department for Tourism recently presented a new tour, “Burabai – Pearl of Kazakhstan,” which covers the Shchuchinsk-Borovoe resort area, to tourist operators from Astana, Almaty, and the Akmola, Pavlodar and North Kazakhstan regions, reported the public relations department of the company.

The purpose of the project is to establish joint tourist packages to help guests and visitors to EXPO 2017 fully enjoy the picturesque



landscapes and cultural and historical sites of Kazakhstan.

After the tour project presentation, several agreements between

the representatives of 30 leading holiday resort facilities in Burabai and regional tour operators were concluded. The agreements concern a reception and guest services for expo participants who will come to Burabai resorts. The tour operators have prepared about 300 recreation facilities, including hotels, health centres and guesthouses.

To date, 73 tourist routes for foreign visitors covering all regions of Kazakhstan have been approved. A complete list of available tours can be found on the travel.expo2017astana.com website.

Last September, the Astana

EXPO 2017 National Company announced its plans to conduct info-tours around Kazakhstan for foreign travel companies to promote sustainable tourism in the country. It was expected to gather around 100 foreign tourism companies representing Western Europe, the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Australia to the event. Some travel agencies from Germany, France, Italy and the U.K. are also organising tours to Kazakhstan for the coming exhibition.

After all the tours are over, an international conference on tourism is planned to be held Sept. 12.

By the end of the event, it will be proposed to the participating travel agencies that they become official EXPO 2017 tour operators, which will allow them to sell tour packages to the expo.

Kazakhstan is expecting about 300,000 foreign guests to visit the country in 2017 to attend the expo. It is expected that each foreign visitor to the expo will stay in the country for approximately four days and during the stay will spend about \$1,500.

The EXPO 2017 international exposition will be held in Astana from June 10 to Sept. 10 in 2017. One hundred countries have signed on to participate so far, as well as at least 10 international organisations and 10 companies that are leaders in the sphere of innovative technologies. In general, the event is expected to be visited by more than 2 million people.

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016

Kazakhstan Wins Record Number of Medals in Rio, Places 22nd in Medal Tally

Continued from Page A1

Despite this, the team achieved impressive results. From eight Kazakh weightlifters five returned from Brazil with a medal.

Nijat Rahimov won Kazakhstan's first gold of the Rio games in the weight category up to 77 kg on Aug. 10. The 2015 world champion captured the top prize by setting a world record in the clean and jerk by lifting 214 kg.

"It was my dream. It was a difficult path. The time when people were asleep, we trained. When the snow was knee-deep, we left for the trainings. Thanks to everyone who supported me. This is, firstly, the will of God, and then (for) the huge number of people who believed in me and supported me," Rahimov said.

On the same day, 22-year-old weightlifter Zhazira Zhapparkul won silver, lifting a combined weight of 259 kg in two exercises. First in the snatch, she lifted 115 kg and was in second behind Chinese rival Xiang Yanmei with only one kilogram separating them. In the clean and jerk, the Kazakh began at 140 kilograms, but failed on her first attempt. She got it on her second try. Xiang successfully lifted 142 kilograms on her first try. In the final attempt, the Kazakh lifted 144 kg and her rival 145 kg. As a result, Xiang grabbed the gold medal with Zhazira claiming her hard-fought silver and Egyptian Sara Ahmed winning the bronze.

"I won this medal thanks to our country and our people who supported me. My great gratitude goes to my parents, too. I am glad that I could bring Kazakhstan an Olympic medal. It is a great victory for me indeed," said Zhapparkul.

Kharki, Goricheva and Zaichikov climbed a podium in Rio to receive bronze medals.

"I am satisfied with our perfor-



Zhazira Zhapparkul

mance. Everyone fought and tried to reach the top three. Eight of our athletes performed here and five of them won medals. The remaining three came close to the podium, with two athletes finishing in fourth place and one in fifth. This implies a high level [of the team's readiness]. Our success in Rio became possible thanks to our team's hard work and the support from the National Olympic Committee, the Ministry of Sport and Culture of Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan's Weightlifting Federation," the national weightlifting team's head coach Aleksei Ni commented.

In a stunning upset that shocked the swimming world, 21-year-old Kazakh Dmitry Balandin beat top-ranked Joshua Prenot of the United States by 0.06 of a second to capture the gold in 2 minutes, 7.46

seconds in the 200 metres breaststroke. Russia's Anton Chupkov finished a close third.

"This is the biggest honour and the biggest thing I could have given to my country," said Balandin, according to rio2016.com. I'm very proud of that. Actually, it's history, because it's the first medal in swimming for Kazakhstan and I'm very happy that I'm the one that got it."

Many swimming pundits considered Balandin's appearance among the eight swimmers in the final a success in itself and didn't expect much from the Almaty resident. But swimming in the outside eighth lane, Balandin stayed with the best in the world throughout the event and ultimately prevailed.

"I want to thank everyone in Kazakhstan who has supported me and believed till the end in

our team. It is indeed very difficult. Maybe on TV you do not feel it, but when you are going to the start, especially in such an unusual time, you just give all the strength to please the whole country," said Balandin.

Competitions in women's wrestling turned out to be another success, bringing three more medals. Gyuzel Manyurova brilliantly wrestled all the way to the final and finished as runner-up in the weight category up to 75 kg. Another pleasant surprise came from a 22-years-old Yekaterina Larionova who performed in the weight category up to 63 kg. In a bronze medal match she wrestled the 29-year old Elena Pirozhkova representing the U.S. The American claimed three points in the bout's opening part but in the second fell victim to an impressive at-

tack from Larionova and ended up on her back, meaning an outright victory for the Kazakh athlete. Also, in the weight category up to 69 kg, Elmira Syzdykova claimed a bronze.

Traditionally, Kazakh fans expected medals from their boxing squad. The team generally met the expectations by winning five medals. In the women's boxer Dariga Shakimova ascended to the podium, finishing third. Ivan Dychko won his second bronze in Rio.

Another Kazakh boxer, Vassiliy Levit, could have won gold in his heavyweight match against his Russian opponent Yevgeniy Tishchenko. The 28-29 result for the Russian caused an uproar when it was announced, with spectators booing the result, and is still a matter of much discussion in the sports press. Numerous international media outlets are saying the Kazakh boxer was clearly dominant and criticise the decision.

Adilbek Nyazymbetov won silver in the 81 kg category, losing to a Cuban boxer in the final. This was his second silver from the Olympics, the first coming four years ago in London.

Team Kazakhstan's gold medal in boxing came from welterweight Daniyar Yeleussinov.

Indeed, before the Games, special hopes were placed on the 25-year-old. Kazakh boxers have dominated in the category, with victories by Bakhtiyar Artayev in Athens in 2004, Bakhyt Sarsekbayev in Beijing in 2008 and Serik Sapliyev in London in 2012. Therefore, fans expected only victory from Yeleussinov when he reached the final bout. He managed to meet expectations, defeating Uzbek boxer Shakhram Giyasov by a decisive 3:0.

"As this was the last fight of the tournament, I needed to pull myself together, and given it all, [I think

I've] done my best. I have done this all my life. That is why I could handle the final fight. We [Kazakh boxers] have a good fight technique and are famous for our boxing school. I think we demonstrated that. I would like to thank all the supporters, everyone who worried about me and didn't sleep tonight. I thank my family, my mother, sister, brother, nephew. I thank my son and wife! I dedicate my victory to all the people of Kazakhstan; this is our joint victory!" said Yeleussinov after the awarding ceremony.

"Daniyar is the captain and special responsibility was placed on him. Yeleussinov, fighting in the weight category in which Kazakh boxers have won Olympic gold medals several times, proved his superiority. Daniyar demonstrated a great desire to win; great proficiency. There are no easy matches in the Olympics, especially at the final stage. Through his victory, Daniyar proved the high level of the Kazakh boxing school," said head coach of the Kazakh boxing team Myrzagalai Aitzhanov. He also said that support from President of the Boxing Federation of Kazakhstan Timur Kulibayev had helped the team succeed.

Finally, track and field athlete Olga Rypakova, a gold medalist in the triple jump in London and since then a mother of two, added a bronze to her collection.

Although Kazakhstan was placed lower in the medals tally than in the previous Summer Olympic Games hosted four years ago in London, many fans and sports observers commended the team's overall performance in Rio as generally successful. Hopefully, the Kazakh athletes' latest achievements in Rio would inspire more youngsters to do sports and create foundations for the nation's continued strength in future Olympics.

Kapchagai Reservoir Hosts Professional, Amateur Triathlon

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The first Open Triathlon Championship of Kazakhstan among professionals and amateurs will be held Aug. 28 at Kapchagai Reservoir. Altn Adam Triathlon 2016 welcomes athletes for registration for supersprint, sprint and Olympic distances.

"August 28 is a great day for all of us, for amateurs and professionals. The skills of the starters in the age category have significantly increased. The number of triathletes participating in competitions increases as well. We can see appearing leaders and how the competitive spirit rises. Amateurs are preparing to go to a completely new level, gradually blurring the line between professional and amateur sports,"



said President of the Kazakhstan Triathlon Federation Muratkhan Tokmadi.

"Usually, athletes come to us from neighbouring countries, but this time we are waiting for such triathlon stars as Paul Amey, who is three times World Champion in the ITU Triathlon and legendary Chris McCormack," he added.

Tokmadi also noted that joint trainings with more advanced triathletes are planned from Sept. 6 to Sept. 14 and that triathlon is an effective tool to develop tourism in Almaty.

"Altn Adam Triathlon 2016 isn't just a race. It is a lifestyle. This is the way of a true winner. It symbolises courage, selflessness and nobility of the soul of Kazakh people. It is a symbol of independence of the state, uncovered story in the form of a soldier of the Great

Steppe, fixed future goals and new achievements," Vice-President of Kazakhstan Triathlon Federation Haji Hajiyev said.

"Altn Adam Triathlon 2016 is the start of qualifying process for the Olympic national team, which will be formed on the basis of the competition. At the moment, the main task of the Federation is to identify potentially strong competitors and to prepare for organisation of international competitions and world championships. Our team has to be at the Olympic Games 2020 and fight for the highest awards. We are going to win," he added.

All the competition participants and guests will be met by Riviera hotel. Registration for the participation in the competition is already open at the official website of the federation: www.triathlon.kz.

FC Astana Leads Play-off Round of UEFA Europa League

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

Kazakhstan champions FC Astana beat Belarus' BATE Borisov 2-0 in the first match of the playoff round of the UEFA Europa League thanks to precise strikes in the second half from Junior Kabananga and Azat Nurgaliyev.

Before the match in Astana, Astana's Bulgarian manager Stanimir Stoilov was in a difficult situation due to the disqualification of two key defenders, as Dmitry Shomko and Igor Shitov received red cards in the recent away Champions League match against Celtic. As a result, Abzal Beisebekov came out on the right flank while Yuri Logvinenko appeared on the right.

FC Astana took the initiative in their hands from the first minute and subsequently earned a few chances to score. In one play, Log-



vinenko crossed from the left but Kabananga failed to strike. Towards

the end of the first half, Muzhikov's dangerous strike ended in the hands

of BATE's goalkeeper Syarhey Yeramko. The first half ended 0-0.

In the second half, the pressure on the visitors strengthened. With 62 minutes played, FC Astana's attack created a dangerous situation near their opponent's goal, but with great difficulty the Belarusian goalkeeper managed to break the passage.

Astana had better luck in the 70th minute. Nurgaliyev dribbled past BATE players and passed the ball to Kabananga, who with his left foot sent it into the opponent's net for a score of 1-0.

The hosts doubled their lead in the 80th minute. Kabananga sent a long cross to find Patrick Twumasi a fraction of a second ahead of the keeper but passed the ball exactly to Nurgaliyev. A precise, classy strike from Nurgaliyev sent the ball into the visitors' net, much to the joy of the home crowd in the stands. The match ended with a very comfortable advantage for FC Astana.

"[This was a] deserved victory for our team. The game was difficult and in the first half there were moments in which we were supposed to score but missed... BATE also showed good football. This was only part one, so nothing is over yet. There is a second game ahead which will be much more difficult. We have to play at a party even better if we want to go further," said Stoilov after the match.

"I think the 2-0 was a good result. The main thing was not to miss and we didn't. Let me be honest; it is a comfortable lead for us ahead of the second leg. At the same time, we cannot relax yet because this is football and anything can happen. In the second game you need to play in the same organised way, then I think success will come," said Nurgaliyev.

The return match will take place on Aug. 25 at Borisov.

Capital’s Universities Welcome New Students

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – More than 121,000 students graduated from high school this year across the country, some of whom will enrol in the capital’s universities. State and private, big and small, all the educational institutions are preparing for the new season. The following are the city’s best known universities.

Nazarbayev University

Opened in 2010 at the initiative of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Nazarbayev University (NU) offers educations according to high international standards. Around 4,000 students study in eight different schools, almost all of which are partnered with highly-recognised universities, such as University College London with the School of Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Fuqua School of Business and Duke University with the Graduate School of Business.

Last year NU accepted around 700 students from 3,380 applicants, as the competition is quite

high. There are special exams for those who want to apply. It is also the only university in Astana where everything is taught in English. A great deal of attention is paid to students’ intellectual development, research activities, entertainment, creativity, culture, sports and art. All of the students hold government grants.

Eurasian National University

Eurasian National University (ENU) named after Lev Gumilyov was established in 1996 by combining two existing universities – Tselinograd Civil Engineering Institute and Tselinograd Pedagogical Institute. Four years later, it was joined with the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Academy. In 2005 ENU signed the Magna Charta Universitatum, which has been inked by more than 750 universities from 80 countries.

A division of Astana’s famous Lomonosov Moscow State University works on the basis of ENU.

The university has 12 faculties with more than 11,000 students who can study for free by getting grants or by contract. ENU pro-



Photo credit: bazis.kz

vides Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. degrees. The average cost to study this year is around 720,000 tenge (US\$2,100).

ENU has 28 scientific divisions which focus on research activities and the priorities of Kazakh socio-economic development, according to its website.

Astana Medical University

Astana Medical University (AMU) was established in 1964

under its original name, Tselinograd State Medical Institute. It was renamed in 2009 and became the first joint-stock company among Kazakh medical universities. AMU cooperates with universities in Europe, Russia, Singapore and the United States.

The university has six main faculties – general medicine, stomatology, public health, nursing, pharmacy and medical and preventive work. According to some sources, more than 5,000 people study at AMU.

Kazakh Humanitarian and Law University

Kazakh Humanitarian and Law University (KAZGUU) claims to be the nation’s leading law university. Opened in 1994, it currently offers Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. degrees and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme. Costs vary. For example, jurisprudence students pay around 700,000 tenge (US\$2,000) per year depending on the number of credits. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev is among its honorary professors and Almaty akim (mayor) Bauyrzhan Baibek is Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Kazakh Agro Technical University

Named after Saken Seifullin, Kazakh Agro Technical University (KATU) has existed since Soviet days. It was the first university in the region at the time and focused on training students who would be able to organise agricultural work in line with the Virgin Lands Campaign. In 1961, KATU was known as Tselinograd Agricultural Institute. Today it still keeps its main

direction – agriculture – and in 2012 started making great efforts in the science sphere. Six scientific and research centres are based at the university.

More than 10,000 students study with eight different faculties. For more than 50 years, the institution has trained in excess of 60,000 specialists in the agricultural sector.

Kazakh National University of Arts

Probably every citizen and visitor to the capital has seen a blue building shaped like a truncated cone next to the Palace of Independence. Usually it is called Shabyt Palace of Creativity, but it is also known as Kazakh National University of Arts (KAZNUI). Founded in 1998, it was originally called the Kazakh National Academy of Music. The university has a school and college along with traditional Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degree programmes. The current provost is famous Kazakh musician Aiman Mussakhajayeva.

The listed universities are the capital’s biggest and best known. The city also has many smaller ones, such as Eurasian Humanitarian Institute, Turan University and the University of Technology and Business.

Astana Food and Fashion Festival to Welcome Visitors Aug. 27-28

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan’s capital will host the Astana Food and Fashion Festival noon-8 p.m. Aug. 27-28, in Arai Park, according to the city akimat (administration). The event is dedicated to the upcoming Constitution Day.

“This year two big projects, Astana Food Festival and Pop Up Shop Astana, are collaborating and the theme is Food meets Fashion. Both of the projects aim to make a contribution to the development of the economy and support local producers, restaurants and designers. We want to introduce a new format of family entertainment,” said festival founder and director Aliya Saparova.

“The new format means that we want people to come with their families and friends to the park

while there is great weather to have positive emotions, to do some sports, eat tasty food and watch performances and culinary films along with participating in masterclasses. Visitors will be able to listen to the great music and their children can have fun in a special area for kids.”

The festival is expected to be bigger this year, since many different projects joined the programme and the partners list has been extended as well, she added.

The event also hopes to encourage people in the principles of a healthy lifestyle, as well as acquaint citizens with the innovations in the fashion and gastronomy industries. The festival is expecting to have 10,000 visitors and the association of Kazakh skateboarders is planning to perform.



Photo credit: foodfest.kz

Visitors will have the unique opportunity to taste dishes from a special menu and look for interesting offers from the best cafes and

restaurants in the city, according to akimat’s website. They will also be able to see new collections from local designers and handicrafts,

accessories and projects by modern Kazakh artists.

Arai Park will be divided into several parts – Shatyr (Kazakh and international brands in the food industry, major restaurant chains), Zheruyik (representatives of restaurants, coffee shops, bars, and start-up projects) and Kok Bazar (manufacturers and suppliers of natural food products). Manufacturers and distributors of conceptual products for the kitchen, home appliances, accessories and culinary literature will be in the Astanalayk section.

The Pop Up Shop Astana will present new collections by Kazakh designers, handicrafts and projects of contemporary local artists.

The capital’s top chefs will give master classes, participate in chef battles and talk about health and

nutrition, noted the website.

The festival promises to have different entertainment and sports areas with classes for yoga, Zumba, street workout and CrossFit. There will be an Expo 2017 area, a Chill Out zone for free communication and leisure and creative improvisation, as well as a special film zone.

Mamas Expo will be a sector where visitors will be able to learn about and purchase products for children, women, family and the home, according to the festival’s website. A children’s play area will be complemented by creative workshops, entertainment programmes on child development centres and games with animators.

Last year’s event, known as the Astana Food Festival, gathered around 3,000 visitors, according to the website.

Mobile App Allows Parents to Monitor, Participate in Their Children’s Studies

Staff Report

ASTANA – Parents in Astana are now able to access the progress of the studies of their children using mobile apps. The apps provide twenty-four hour access to the school news, information about

substituted teachers, meetings and events.

As a new school year begins, launch of the Astana Learning Management System Project working via the Edupage website is timely. This system is available as a website and mobile application, the press service of the

Astana city administration reports.

The Edupage website helps parents learn, current grades, the home tasks of their children as well as look through attendance records, menus in cafes, get access to extra learning materials and even take part in quizzes and questionnaires, the press service reports. Parents will be able to com-

municate directly with every teacher and administration of schools.

As for teachers, the system gives them an opportunity to make timetables and keep records in electronic form.

The free application is available for download at Play Market and App Store.



International CrossFit Championship Held in Astana

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The capital hosted an international CrossFit competition, “Astana Throwdown,” Aug. 13 and 14. Participants from Kazakhstan and Russia competed for 2.5 million tenge (US\$7,270) in prize money and the title of “Most Physically Trained Athlete.”

The event was opened by head of the Astana Office of Physical Culture and Sport Berik Marzhikpaev. He called CrossFit one of the most exciting, fastest growing sports in the state and thanked the athletes for their participation and wished them victory.

Director of CrossFit Astana Erik Karabayev is a great fan and supporter of sport, saying “CrossFit is a kind of sport that aims at the comprehensive physical development of a man. And CrossFit’s prescription is that a true CrossFit athlete is ready for all physical activities. We are checking this over these two days.”

The competition, held this year



Photo credit: astana.gov.kz

for the second time, took place at Astana Central stadium and was attended by approximately 60 professional athletes from Kazakhstan and Russia. This year’s event was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s Independence and the country’s Sports Day.

The event was organised by the CrossFit Astana network of CrossFit centres and supported by the city administration and

the Bolashak scholarship association.

CrossFit combines a variety of exercises taken from weightlifting, gymnastics and plyometrics. Competitors completed seven different sets in two stages. The athletes tested themselves in complicated gymnastics, weightlifting, cardio and other exercises from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. over two days.

Aug. 13 was the preliminary



round, which gave CrossFit enthusiasts a chance to prove themselves and be approved for participation in the championship. Only 16 CrossFit athletes, the strongest among the men and women competing on the first day, were able to continue to the final round on Aug. 14.

All prize-winning places in men’s category were won by athletes from Russia. Yakov Filimonov from Kemerovo took first

place, Alexander Salmanov from Chelyabinsk got second place and Roman Grishchenko from Novosibirsk took third.

Among women, Anna Tovchenik from Almaty took first place, Ekaterina Brykova from Kemerovo, Russia, took second place and Anastasia Uakpayeva from Almaty came in third.

Filimonov was also awarded the “Most Physically Trained Athlete” title.

“I’m extremely happy to win this contest and proud of myself. CrossFit is not just a sport for me, it’s my lifestyle. Here in Kazakhstan, all conditions for the development of sport and especially CrossFit exist. I was glad to know that local officials [and] the city administration support such events. I am sure that we will come here again to participate in CrossFit Championships. I fell in love with your city and I will be waiting for new meetings with you,” the athlete said

Uakpayeva, who was ranked third in the women’s category, called on everybody to play sport and live a healthy lifestyle.

“I have been a fan of CrossFit for the past three years. I haven’t gone in for sport before. I would like to note that sport doesn’t improve only health, but also beauty. CrossFit brings great results to those who work hard; you achieve such results as good health, healthy skin and a supple body. All of us wish to be good-looking and CrossFit brings us closer to the dream,” she said.