

Kazakh President Establishes Prize for Nuclear Weapon Free World and Global Security, Chooses King Abdullah II of Jordan as First Laureate

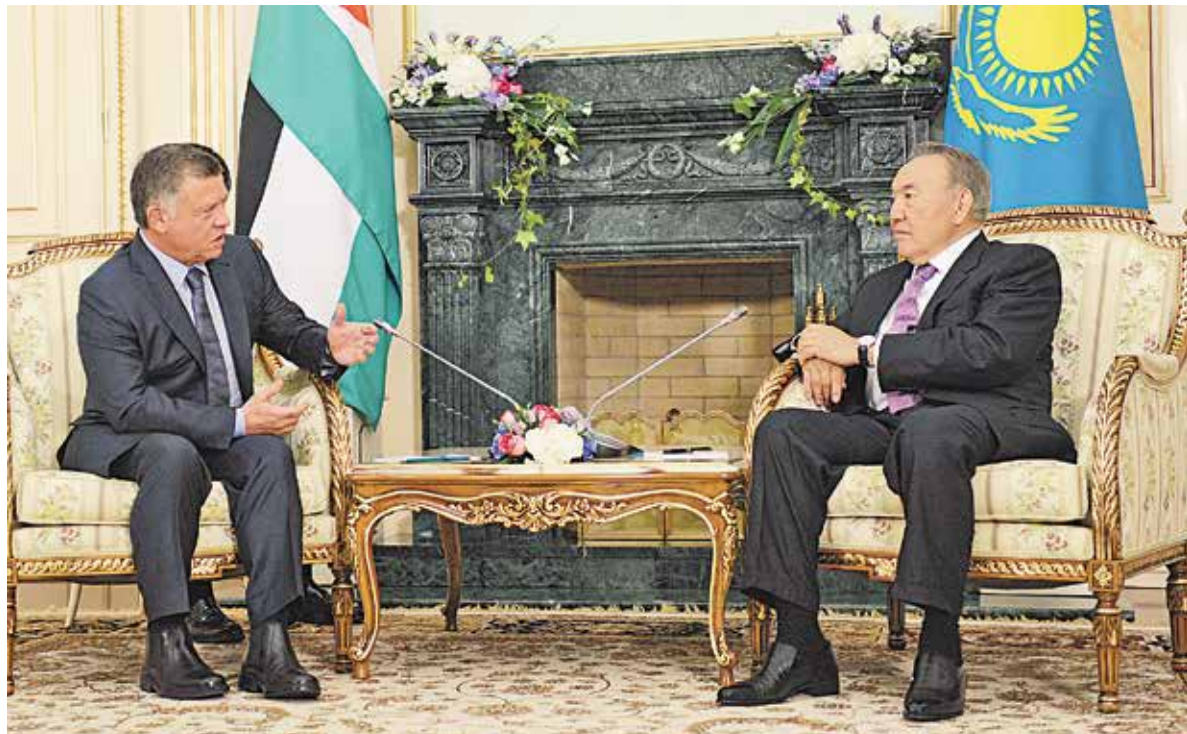
By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced Oct. 10 the establishment of a new prize, the Nazarbayev Prize for a Nuclear Weapon Free World and Global Security, as well as his decision to award the first prize to King Abdullah II of Jordan for his contributions in this domain.

The proposal for President Nazarbayev, who had shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the early 1990s, to establish a prize in support of leaders and activists contributing to global nuclear disarmament was first voiced by speakers at a recent international conference in Astana.

The conference, titled Building a Nuclear Weapon Free World, brought together more than 200 international and 800 local participants to commemorate the UN International Day against Nuclear Tests on Aug. 29, the 25th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site.

Addressing the conference, speakers including Vice President of Bulgaria Margarita Popova, President of the International Parliamentary Union Saber Chowdhury, Vice President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Azay Guliyev from Azerbaijan and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Motome Takisawa, urged the Kazakh President to consider estab-



This file photo shows President Nursultan Nazarbayev meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan on June 10, 2015, in Astana where the monarch came to participate as a guest of honour in the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

lishing a new prize to acknowledge and support others in the quest for a nuclear weapon free world.

In response, Nazarbayev, who has continued to push for global nuclear disarmament during the past quarter century, including through the establishment of the Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, said he would consider such a move.

"Today I would like to tell you and our people about the new initiative. I have made a decision to establish international award for contribution

to nuclear disarmament and security," Nazarbayev said Oct. 10 at the Akorda presidential residence, choosing an official ceremony of the presentation of credentials by newly appointed ambassadors to make the announcement. "This is Kazakhstan's international prize. This year, King Abdullah II of Jordan has been chosen as the first laureate of this award. Later on, a special committee will be established, by the decision of which the prizes will be awarded to the laureates on the day of closing

the Semipalatinsk test site on Aug. 29."

King Abdullah's commitment to global peace and security has been notable through his efforts to accept more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees into Jordan and to turn the Middle East into a zone of peace, including through the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the region.

The prize announcement follows President Nazarbayev's manifesto "The World. The 21st Century" which he presented earlier this year in Washington.

Nazarbayev, Putin Attend Kazakh-Russian Interregional Cooperation Forum in Astana

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed bilateral cooperation, regional and global issues on the sidelines of the Oct. 4 13th Forum of Interregional Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia, according to the press service of the Akorda. The forum was held under the theme "Development of the transport and logistics potential of the Eurasian space."

"The governments of our states have worked well in order to implement the agreements reached at the previous forum in Sochi. Today, the forum will bring together 900 businessmen from the two countries. We have already reached certain agreements as the result of negotiations between the heads of neighbouring regions of Kazakhstan and Russia. All of this evidences our high-level of bilateral relations," Nazarbayev said.

Putin expressed gratitude for the warm reception and noted the two states are strategic partners.

"We interact in almost all areas. At this interregional forum organised on your initiative, Russia is represented by 400 businessmen, who work directly with Kazakhstan. The theme of the forum is important and useful for the development of transport and logistics infrastructure in our region," Putin noted.

More than 1,300 representatives of Russian and Kazakh govern-



ment agencies, quasi-public sector and business circles attended the forum to discuss expanding trade and investment.

Nazarbayev told the forum that Russia is an important strategic, trade and economic partner of Kazakhstan.

"This forum contributes to the continuation of our mutually beneficial wide range business cooperation. The volume of bilateral trade in the first half of this year amounted to nearly \$6 billion. At the same time, this index declined by 30 percent in comparison with the pre-crisis period. In many ways, such dynamics are associated with a number of global external circumstances," Nazarbayev noted.

Nazarbayev stressed the need to

develop bilateral economic cooperation.

"There are more than six thousand joint ventures operating in Kazakhstan. A large number of bilateral investment projects are being implemented. In particular, the petrochemical, mining and metallurgical complex. At the moment, we have more than 60 projects worth \$20 billion, the promotion of which will be supported," he informed.

Nazarbayev also pointed out the considerable potential for cooperation expansion.

"We are working within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). A free trade agreement was concluded with Vietnam. There are similar talks held with China, South Ko-

rea and Singapore. Countries like India, Egypt, Iran, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states and others intend to develop cooperation with EAEU. We purposefully form the common rules of the game, which are clear to all producers and investors. By investing into Kazakhstan's economy, Russian business will be in almost 'home' conditions for itself. The mutual interest of our countries lies in the creation of powerful transport and logistics infrastructure between Europe and Asia," he underlined.

Nazarbayev drew attention to Kazakhstan's efforts to improve the investment climate and diversify the economy.

He talked about Kazakhstan's economy modernisation, including tax regime liberalisation, implementation of the next phase of the large-scale privatisation and creation of two innovative clusters in Astana and Almaty.

In addition, Nazarbayev reminded about the creation of the Astana International Financial Centre and holding EXPO 2017 in the Kazakh capital.

Later, panel sessions discussed developing the transport and logistic potential between Kazakhstan and Russia, and eliminating trade barriers.

More than 30 bilateral agreements on projects in priority sectors, such as food, chemistry, metallurgy, innovations, mechanical engineering, pharmaceuticals and production of construction materials were signed.

Astana, Tashkent to Boost Trade, Economic Ties

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The protocol to extend the main directions in economic and trade cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was signed by the Kazakh delegation headed by First Deputy Prime Minister Askar Mamin during the Sept. 22-23 working visit to Tashkent.

The trade turnover between the countries amounted to \$3 billion in 2015. During the meetings in Tashkent, the parties discussed the current state of bilateral trade and economic relations, strengthening dealings in the field of industrial partnership, the transport sector and prospects for future development as the states have great potential for expanding trade and economic ties, according to Primeminister.kz.

"The negative trend in the trade turnover between our countries needs to change with joint efforts. We, indeed, have unrealised potential. We need to increase the turnover almost twice, bringing it to \$5 billion in the medium term," Uzbek acting President Shavkat Mirziyoyev told Mamin during the meeting.

He expressed gratitude to Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on his own behalf and that of the Uzbek people.

"Nursultan Nazarbayev stayed with us, the Uzbek people, in difficult times. We are grateful for this. Kazakh people are our trustful, sincere and close friends," said Mirziyoyev referring to the Kazakh President's recent visit to Samarkand to pay respects to the late President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov.

Mamin stressed Nazarbayev attaches great importance to cooperation with Uzbekistan.

"We see great prospects for cooperation in economic and trade spheres, especially in the field of agriculture, mechanical engineering, the transport and logistics sector, energy and other sectors," said Mamin.

Specific measures to expand trade and economic ties were discussed at the meeting with Uzbek First Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov.

The agreement was reached to increase the export of agricultural products (grain and flour from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan), set favourable tariff conditions on cargo traffic, offer mutual discounts for railway transportation and launch container trains carrying fruits and vegetables from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan. This is expected to improve the competitiveness of regional transport corridors and ensure high capacity transit.

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Kazakhstan Ranks 52nd in Economic Freedom of World Index

By Zhazira Dyussembekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan has been ranked 52nd among 159 countries in the Economic Freedom of the World report published Sept. 15 by Fraser Institute. The report is based on 2014 data.

"The index published in Economic Freedom of the World measures the degree to which the policies and institutions of countries are supportive of economic freedom. The cornerstones of economic freedom are personal choice, voluntary exchange, freedom to enter markets and compete and security of the person and privately owned property," noted institute's website.

The summary index is based on 42 different data points in five areas,

such as size of government expenditures, taxes, and enterprises; legal structure and security of property rights; access to sound money; freedom to trade internationally and regulation of credit, labour and business.

According to the report, Kazakhstan has improved three spots compared to the previous year, when it ranked 55th. Since 2005, the country has risen from 70th place.

In reviewing each section, Kazakhstan collected high points in areas such as credit market, labour market and business regulations. Judging by this indicator alone, the nation is ranked 22nd among all participating countries. At the same time, the weakest indicator is freedom to trade internationally, where it is only 128th.

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New Ministry Is Established

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed a decree in Astana Oct. 6 creating the Ministry of Defence and Aerospace Industry, reported the Akorda.

The ministry will implement state policy in defence, aerospace and electronics industries, cyber security, mobilisation, formation and development of the state material reserve, participation in the military-technical policy and military-technical cooperation and management of defence contracts.

The newly formed ministry was transferred functions and powers from the Kazakh Ministry of Defence in the sphere of the defence industry, the Ministry for Investment and Development in the field of space activities, the Ministry of National Economy in the sphere of mobilisation, formation and development of the state material reserve, as well as the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Information

and Communications activities in the field of information security.

The Committee for Information Security, the Aerospace Committee and the Committee for the State Material Reserves will be formed under the new ministry.

Former Akim (Governor) of the South Kazakhstan region Beibut Atankulov was appointed Minister of Defence and Aerospace Industry on Oct. 7. Fifty-two-year-old Atankulov graduated from the Kazakh Polytechnic Institute and the Saint Petersburg State University of Economy and Finance. He worked as a diplomat since 2006. In 2010, he became an Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Later, in 2012 he joined the Ministry for Industry and New Technologies, later reorganised into the Ministry of Investment and Development as its Executive Secretary. He served as Akim of the South Kazakhstan region since August 2015 until his most recent appoint as the head of the newly established ministry.

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Kazakh President Visits Pavlodar Region, Launches Mining Plant

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited agricultural and industrial complexes, launched the Bozshakol mining and processing plant and met with local farmers during a Sept. 29 visit to the Pavlodar region.

“A 7,000-kilometre-long highway will be constructed for our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in five years. Government helps its citizens during economic crisis. New apartments, utilities, bridges, roads and cities will be constructed under the Nurlı Zhol programme,” said Nazarbayev.

Also, Nazarbayev launched the Bozshakol mining and processing plant in the Pavlodar region. The capacity of the enterprise is 30 million tonnes of mined ore and production of 100,000 tonnes

believed to be 15 times higher than in similar plants through the use of advanced equipment and a powerful mining fleet.

“A giant company was put into operation introduced for the joy of all people of Kazakhstan. This huge production centre appeared in the steppe, a new village was established. People will live, will work here. Processing is the most important thing. The company will be able to process 30 million tonnes of ore. It is a great joy and happiness for all of us. And I am glad for the fact that I witnessed the launch of the plant, in which I was directly involved. I wish you happiness and success,” the Kazakh President said, according to pavon.kz.

“Construction works have been almost completed and now we are focused on increasing production levels and reaching 100,000 tonnes of copper [production annually]. Thus, the company becomes closer to its strategic goal – to become a



President Nazarbayev and officials visit the construction site of the largest arch bridge in Central Asia.



of copper concentrate. The plant will employ approximately 1,500 people. The plant’s performance is

long-term manufacturer, which will produce 80 percent of the ore in large-scale low-cost open pits,”

said Chairman of KAZ Minerals Group Oleg Novachuk. The President visited the con-

struction site of the largest arch bridge in Central Asia, which will be part of Centre-East highway. The bridge will provide transit flows bypassing Pavlodar city. It is planned to put the bridge into operation Dec. 16.

“This is a mega project. Such facilities are being built once in a while. This is a huge volume of metal and concrete. More than 100,000 representatives of small and medium-sized businesses were involved during the project implementation. More than 150,000 people worked here at the peak of construction. President Nazarbayev approved the proposal of region’s residents to name the bridge in honour of the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s independence.

Our President stressed that it was the country’s largest infrastructure project implemented during the global economic crisis,” said Director General of Kazakhdstroi Serik Tolebayev.

President Nazarbayev was also interested to learn more about a major agricultural project, so called Eco town, which is being implemented in the Zhelezinsk district. It combines livestock breeding, crop production and horticulture.

Investments in fixed assets in the Pavlodar region amounted to 242 billion tenge (US\$722 million) in January-August. The volume of construction works in January-August 2016 amounted to 76.9 billion (US\$229.3 million).

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Gulnara Atabayeva, a businesswoman from the East Kazakhstan region, repaired a bus station in the village of Kalbatau at her own expense, 24.kz reports. The building had been left in disrepair for more than 15 years. But now the station, first built in the mid-1980s, has changed significantly: it has a waiting room, a dining room, sleeping accommodations, and a mother and baby room. Passenger flow through the area is very big because the village is crossed by international and national highways. “For 15 years it was in such poor condition. It was somewhat painful that we didn’t have a bus station in our regional village, so we decided to restore the building for people to be comfortable,” Atabayeva said. “This is a very important building – you know, we often close the road in the winter because of bad weather. People have nowhere to spend the night, and now the bus station has all the facilities passengers need,” said Talgat Bekkasymov, a Kalbatau village resident.

Gun shop owners and security companies are to face administrative liability in case of attacks, Kazakh TV reports, referring to a coming law on extremism and terrorism. “As the deputy chairman of the National Security Committee noted, the changes include strengthening control over arms trafficking and storage,” Kazakh TV outlined. A ban has been imposed on the activities of religious groups and the punishment for terrorist crimes has been stiffened. According to the channel, the draft law developers “intend to specify the reasons for deporting foreign nationals from the country in case of their violation of the country’s laws.” Punishment for illegal migration is also to be tightened. “Now drafters of the bill, special law enforcement agencies, are required to finalise the bill between the first and second readings, jointly with members of Parliament [and] representatives of civil society before the bill is presented to the Kazakh President,” noted Nurlan Nigmatulin, chairman of the country’s lower chamber of Parliament.

The Mangistau region has reached high development levels over the 25 years of independence, Kazakh TV reports, claiming the region ranks second in the country by population growth, with both high migration and birth rates are being recorded. The region continues to attract migrants from all over Central Asia. Six new districts have been built in three years in the northwestern part of one of Mangistau’s cities. The Mangistau region was always a major supplier of uranium, oil and gas; however, over time, the region has earned the reputation of being the sea gate to Kazakhstan. As evidence, the Aktau Seaport on the Caspian Sea has created a great economic stimulus for the region’s development. It was extended northward due to the large freight flow, which allowed the seaport to triple its capacity. “The newly launched grain terminal [at the seaport] has the largest capacity, up to 60,000 tonnes, in the Caspian region, with the possibility of one-time unloading wagons from two rail roads and loading grain onto a vessel with a processing time of 500 tonnes per hour. The existing terminal capacities allow annual re-load up to 1.5 million tonnes of general cargo and 1.5 million tonnes of grain crops,” said Deputy General Director of the Aktau Seaport North Terminal Alexander Kalyavin. “Thanks to the implementation of government programmes, including the completion of the Beineu-Shetpe highway, which links our region with other regions, the Mangistau region has emerged as an industrial region from the shadows of the past. The new Uzen (Kazakhstan)-Turkmenistan-Iran railroad provides Kazakhstan access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The Mangistau region is becoming an important logistics artery connecting Europe with Asia amid transport infrastructure development,” said Deputy Governor of Mangistau Rakimbek Amirzhanov.

New Study Highlights Global Trends in Civil Service

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana and the United Nations Development Programme Global Centre for Public Service Excellence in Singapore recently presented a large-scale study called Global and Regional Trends in Civil Service Development. The study is a unique summary review, which combines theory and expertise from leading international experts in public administration.

The results of the collaborative work have been publicised by Chairman of the Hub Steering Committee Alikhan Baimenov and Global Centre Director Max Everest-Phillips. The review is considered the first of its kind, because such large-scale studies on global trends in civil service development have not been previously conducted anywhere in the world. Researchers from different regions of the world took part in the project.

The study covers basic development and reforming trends in civil service over the past 20 years in the countries of North America, Europe, Southeast Asia, the Caucasus and the CIS.

Baimenov highlighted three global and regional trends in the development of civil service.

The first one is a mutual influence in the systems of recruitment and promotion of civil servants. This means that there is no purely position-based or career-based model of civil service. The models are converging and acquiring the advantages of each of them. The above mentioned is also characteristic for the doctrinal foundations of public administration.

The second trend is a rising role of human resources management

since civil service effectiveness is globally understood to be dependent on the quality of personnel. Hence, there is a striving for openness and transparency in recruitment and promotion with special attention to the ethical standards and talent management schemes in civil service.

The third trend concerns the effectiveness assessment system of civil servants and government bodies with a transition from the processes and procedures to the result-based performance and performance indicators. The effectiveness assessment system is distinguished by the improvement of the management quality in the public sector, introduction of project management and improved performance evaluation system.

Everest-Phillips emphasised that the gradual transformations of public administration are happening in almost all countries. The reason for this are the changes in conceptual ideas of reforms, growing social needs and expectations in connection with the financial crisis, increased numbers of highly educated people, globalisation, new information technologies and new approaches in human resources management, including non-monetary ways for the motivation of civil servants.

Everest-Phillips noted the effectiveness of cooperation between Singapore Centre and Astana Hub and the growing importance of cooperation.

Astana Hub was established in 2013 under the initiative of the Kazakh government and the UNDP. Today, 34 countries and 5 international organisations participate in joint projects at the hub, which has become an internationally recognised centre of knowledge and expertise in the field of civil service.

Surgeons Complete Nation’s First Lung Transplantation

By Zhazira Dyussembekova

ASTANA – The team of the National Research Cardiac Surgery Centre performed Kazakhstan’s first successful lung transplantation on the night of Sept. 23-24, according to the centre’s press service. The operation lasted more than 10 hours.

“The success of the transplantation is possible only with the participation of the society and the development of its spiritual consciousness. Voluntary, conscious consent to the donation, people’s willingness to save human life, is a shining example of humanity and morality. The generous decision of donor’s family members, who agreed for the transplantation, is a matter of respect and appreciation,” said Chairperson of the Board of National Research Cardiac Surgery Centre Yuri Pya.

The operation was for a 67-year-old patient with severe respiratory failure in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). According to the doctors, lung transplantation was the only way to keep him alive. Over the past eight years, the man was on oxygen support at home. His struggled from severe shortness of breath while making even a minimum amount of exercise. Currently, the patient is breathing on his own and his condition is stable.

The lung transplantation is an example of a unique surgical intervention in domestic medicine, states the press release. This fact indicates the beginning of the practice of lung transplants with severe respiratory diseases in Kazakhstan.

“The operation was possible thanks to the high professionalism of the Kazakh doctors, as well as the rapid and well-coordinated work of Kazakhstan sanitary aviation. A team of coordinators of Pavlodar city hospital No.1 has assisted in the process,” said the statement.

The first successful lung transplant operation in Kazakhstan was preceded by the extensive preparatory work of a team of doctors – cardiac

surgeons, cardiologists, anaesthesiologists and intensive care specialists, transplant coordinators and nurses.

Lung transplantation is considered to be the one of the most complicated operations in transplantation. Lungs are very sensitive and can be infected easily. Liver and kidney are recognised as transplantable in 88 percent of cases and the heart in 33 percent of cases. But lungs can be transplanted in only 18 to 20 percent of cases.

World statistics show that 10 people in one million need lung transplantation. According to the data of National Coordinating Centre for Transplantation (NCCT), currently eight people in Kazakhstan are on a

waiting list for lungs and one person waits for both heart and lung transplantations.

Today, there are 10 centres in the country that help patients who need organ donation. As of Aug. 1, 923 operations had been completed in those centres since 2012. This year, 172 operations were conducted. The longest waiting list is for kidneys. According to the most recent NCCT statistics, 2,600 adults and 29 children need kidney transplantation, while 518 adults and 10 children are waiting for livers, which is second largest group waiting for donors. At the moment, 120 adults and 11 children are waiting for hearts to be transplanted.



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EXTERNAL
NEWS IN BRIEF

President Nursultan Nazarbayev held a telephone conversation with Acting President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on Oct. 10. The sides discussed topical issues of mutual cooperation, as well as the process of implementation of the high-level agreements, the Akorda press service reported. The two leaders stressed the positive results of the recent intergovernmental contacts between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. They noted the importance of further improvement of bilateral relations in various priority areas of the Kazakh-Uzbek cooperation. Nazarbayev and Mirziyoyev also exchanged views on current issues of international and regional agenda.

Chairman of the Astana EXPO 2017 National Company Akhmetzhan Yessimov reported to President Nursultan Nazarbayev and confirmed that “construction works on the territory of [EXPO 2017] are being carried out on schedule and will be completed before the end of the year.” This month, the pavilions and facilities designated for international representatives will be handed over to expo participants and members of delegations. In total, 98 section commissioners have been appointed, while some 61 countries have booked dates for their National Days during the three months long event.

As the result of negotiations at a joint business forum in Kiev, Kazakhstan and Ukraine have agreed that Kazakh companies will supply their products to Ukraine. The Kazakh-Ukrainian Business Forum was organised by the Kazakh National Agency for Export and Investment (KAZNEX INVEST) and the Chamber of Commerce of Ukraine with the support of diplomatic missions. “Today, we presented 11 major Kazakh companies interested in supplying their products to Ukraine,” Managing Director of KAZNEX INVEST Askar Arynov said. “Moreover, we expect and invite Ukrainian industrial companies to create joint ventures on the territory of Kazakhstan for co-production and subsequent sale of products to third countries. In Kazakhstan, we have created excellent economic conditions with 10 free-trade zones.”

The North Kazakhstan region and the city of Almaty are key drivers of inbound tourism in the country, Kazakh TV reports. From 2005–2017, the number of foreign tourists has more than quadrupled thanks to Astana (57 percent) and Almaty (23 percent), according to the analytical portal Ranking.kz. Experts note that EXPO 2017 and Universiade 2017 are expected to provide 94 percent growth for the tourism sector in the period from 2015–2017, meaning the next year could be a breakthrough for the industry. Astana and the Akmola region are the most dynamically developing areas, followed by Almaty. The Mangystau, Pavlodar and East Kazakhstan regions are also expected to promote domestic tourism.

Khabar TV projects have been represented at the international level, Kazakh TV reports. One series and various TV programmes have been presented at MIPCOM, the largest TV market exhibition. “The Cannes major event brought together leading players in the television industry: BBC, Canal+, Warner Bros, ABC, Discovery and many others,” the media outlet said. “TV people from Korea, from Arab countries, from European TV companies are interested in our culture and our TV content. They came and asked about our TV shows; they were very pleased and impressed. It’s nice that we have gradually become players in the sale of own television content,” said Director of Programmes at Khabar Sandugash Rakhimzhanova. Khabar’s debut at the exhibition opened new opportunities for domestic television, Kazakh TV pointed out.

Astana Regrets Breakdown in US-Russia Cooperation on Syria

By **Malika Orazgaliyeva**

ASTANA – In an Oct. 5 statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan expressed its “deep regret” regarding the announced termination of cooperation between the United States and Russia on the settlement of the situation in Syria.

“Such scenario is fraught with further bloodshed and human losses in this long-suffering country, it jeopardises all the previous agreements and prospects for achievement of a settlement in the foreseeable future. We are very anxious about disagreements between the two major powers such as Russian and the U.S. and deepening break in finding solutions on regulation of Syrian crisis. This circumstance will not



be helpful in de-escalation of the conflict and achieving stability in the whole region of the Middle East,” the statement said. “As noted in the Sept.10, 2016

statement of the Foreign Ministry, Kazakhstan supported the agreement between Russia and the U.S. on development of the general settlement plan on Syrian crisis.

In Brussels, FM Idrissov Promotes Ties with EU, Pledges Continued Support for Afghanistan

By **Alisher Nuraliyev**

BRUSSELS – Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov attended multiple conferences in Brussels Oct. 4-5 with European Union and international officials, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan.

Idrissov and Foreign Minister of Slovakia Miroslav Lajčák chaired the Oct. 4 15th meeting of the Cooperation Council between Kazakhstan and the EU. Slovakia holds the rotating presidency in the EU in the second half of 2016.

It was the first council meeting following the signing and beginning of the provisional application of the new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) between Kazakhstan and the European Union.

“The EPCA has a very big chapter dedicated to trade and economic cooperation. Europe is our main trade partner and the source of foreign investments. Therefore, this sphere has been outlined at the new Agreement. Overall, the EPCA covers 29 spheres of interaction,” Idrissov said.

The participants discussed trade, investments, development of energy and transport, as well as environmental protection. They also discussed political cooperation, including human rights protections, the rule of law and good governance, internal reforms and combating new threats.

Special attention was paid to simplifying the visa regime for Kazakh citizens traveling to the EU as well as providing Kazakhstan with a market economy status.

The cooperation council stressed the role of the newly established cooperation committee in trade configuration, which will address trade, economic and investment cooperation. The agreement also establishes a new subcommittee on customs cooperation.

“The potential of trade, economic and investment cooperation between Kazakhstan and the EU is far from being used in full. The

main objective of the established structures should be further development of this potential and assistance in the implementation of the EPCA,” Idrissov said.

Representatives from the Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan, the Ministry for Investments and Development, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Justice, the National Security Committee and the National Centre for Human Rights also attended the event.

Following the meeting, the sides agreed to continue the council’s work and maintain contact.

Earlier on the same day, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the

initiated in 2007 and renewed in 2015 for the period until 2020.

“Our cooperation with our partners in Central Asia covers a lot of areas, with an eye also on the security challenges. We share a common neighbourhood, we share deep links and that is why we are engaged more than ever in expanding and enhancing our relations,” Mogherini said, according to ceas.europa.eu.

The meeting covered trade and economic cooperation, as well as regional cooperation in energy, environment, water resources, border security and combating drug trafficking. The parties also exchanged views on Afghanistan, Iran, and other topics of regional security.

On the same day, Idrissov took part in the 18th meeting of the Berlin Eurasian Club (BEC) held under the theme “EU – Central Asia Energy dialogue.”

The German side was represented by Executive Director of the Committee for Eastern European Economic Relations Michael Harms, official German representative to the EU Political and Security Committee Michael Flugger, former German Minister of Economy Michael Glos, former State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of Germany August Hanning, as well as other officials and representatives of leading European companies working in the production and transportation of conventional and renewable energy sources.

Idrissov informed participants about the socio-economic development of Kazakhstan in the context of reforms held in the country and priorities of cooperation with the EU. Particular attention was paid to interaction in renewable energy sources in relation to the upcoming international exhibition EXPO 2017 in Astana.

Flugger praised the measures taken by Kazakhstan to ensure European energy security and diversification of transport routes for these purposes. The German diplomat welcomed the conclusion

We are deeply concerned that this plan, which gave hope for peace in Syria, was not implemented,” it continued.

According to the announcement, the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for the soonest resumption of negotiations between Russian and the U.S. on the issue in order to prevent further escalation of the humanitarian crisis, as well as end the suffering of the Syrian people.

Earlier, Russia and the U.S. agreed on a new plan to reduce violence in the Syrian conflict Sept. 9 in Geneva. The agreement was reached after 10 months of unsuccessful attempts to halt the fighting and of suspended efforts to reach a political settlement to an increasingly complex conflict that began more than five years ago.

“The U.S. is suspending its participation in bilateral channels with Russia that were established to sustain the Cessation of Hostilities,” the U.S. Department of State spokesperson John Kirby said Oct. 3. The announcement came on the heels of various attacks and bombings in Syria in recent days which ended in mutual recriminations between the U.S. and Russia.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has noted that Russia did not give up after the U.S. decision and it would continue efforts to settle the Syrian crisis within the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) and the UN Security Council. According to Lavrov, the crisis can be resolved only by joint efforts, otherwise everything would come down to attempts of military scenario, reported tass.com Oct. 4.

of the EPCA between the EU and Kazakhstan.

Glos emphasised the role of the Berlin Eurasian Club initiated by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2012 to facilitate dialogue between East and West and expand economic cooperation between the EU and Central Asia.

During the event, representatives of German and Kazakh think tanks and energy companies gave detailed reports.

Finally, the Kazakh delegation led by Idrissov participated Oct. 5 in the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan organised by the EU and the government of Afghanistan.

The conference gathered high-level representatives from more than 70 countries and 30 international organisations to hear Afghan leaders present their vision of the future and track record on reform. President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah represented Afghanistan.

The conference reviewed joint international and Afghan efforts to increase sustained international support and funding on the basis of a new Afghan national development framework.

“Kazakhstan, as well as the entire international community is committed to the safe and economically sustainable development of Afghanistan,” Idrissov said at the conference, adding that peace in Afghanistan will positively affect Central Asia.

“This international conference that is hold once in two years plays a very important role. Its main purpose is to once again prove and ensure international support and assistance to Afghanistan, including financial, political, technical and military areas,” Idrissov told the Kazakh media.

In his remarks at the conference, Idrissov noted that Kazakhstan continues to provide political and practical support to the efforts of Kabul and the international community. He said the national agency of official development assistance KazAID that is being created in Kazakhstan will be mostly focused

ing on Afghanistan and regional projects. In addition, Idrissov informed about the pilot project of Kazakh official development assistance to improve the economic independence and rights of Afghan women, which was launched in August jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). He mentioned that Kazakhstan continues to provide university grants to young Afghans in the frame of the 50-million-dollar educational programme initiated by Nazarbayev in 2009. This programme has already provided training to 1,000 Afghans and will now be extended to 2022, Idrissov said.

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Following the meeting, the minister announced that Kazakhstan will allocate \$2 million to support the projects of Afghan security forces. He also stressed that Kazakhstan intends to focus on solving the problems of Central Asia, including the stabilisation of Afghanistan, during its 2017-2018 membership in the UN Security Council.



ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

Nazarbayev Offers ‘Home-Like Conditions’ to Russian Business

Staff Report

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev talked about the favourable conditions of doing business in Kazakhstan during the Kazakh-Russian business forum in the capital. He noted the liberal tax regime is one of the main benefits.

“We purposefully form common game rules, understandable for all manufacturers and investors. While contributing to Kazakhstan’s economy, Russian business will be almost in home-like terms. We will do it,” he said.

In particular, Nazarbayev said several sectors of the economy like oil refining, petrogas agrochemistry, ferrous and nonferrous metallurgy, the food processing industry, car industry and electrical engineering are priority areas within the industrial and innovative development state programme.

“For the six years of implementing this programme, thousands of new enterprises are on Kazakhstan



territory and millions of jobs have been created. In priority sectors investors were exempted from paying corporate income tax, land tax for 10 years and property tax for eight years. Visa barriers were eliminated for citizens of 37 states. The list will be expanded to 56 countries starting next year. Various measures of government support were considered for small and medium size businesses,” said the head of state.

He added the nation has 10 spe-

cial economic zones with specific industry orientation, a liberal tax regime and 13 types of taxes.

“According to taxation at the World Bank rating, Kazakhstan is in 18th place among 189 countries. Russia is in 47th place; we must be ahead in something at least,” joked Nazarbayev.

The President spoke about the second wave of privatising government and quasi-government facilities currently being conducted.

“Approximately 800 government enterprises for a total cost of about \$10 billion are being passed to a competitive environment. Sales are carried out in various ways – from ordinary auctions to direct target-focused sale by strategic investors. I suppose that Russian companies will take part in this occasion,” he said.

Nazarbayev added more than 6,000 Kazakh-Russian joint enterprises operate in the country and many Russian businessmen “understand the possibilities and long term prospects of cooperation.”

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which offers an opportunity for free trade with its participants, is one more advantage of conducting joint business and investments in both countries.

The volume of mutual trade in the pre-crisis period reached in excess of \$20 billion but decreased by 30 percent. Most of the reasons are external, such as sanctions and the reduction in the cost of exchange commodities between the countries, he said.

“Today the union that Kazakh-

stan, Russia and Belarus initiated unites five countries already; a free trade agreement was concluded with Vietnam, while China, South Korea and recently Singapore expressed their desire to open free trade with our union. India, Egypt, Iran, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries and others intend to develop cooperation with the Eurasian Economic community. This tells about the demand for our EAEU he stressed.

Nazarbayev drew attention to providing enterprises with and the opportunity of free competitiveness in the union’s territory, which will be facilitated by further unifying the legislations of participant countries.

“The preparation of EAEU’s new customs code that will significantly simplify all customs procedures among members of the union will be completed in the current year. Unified measures of non-tariff regulation are applied for trading with third countries, an agreement about consecutive, phased establishing of single transport space,” he said.

The President also spoke about the Astana International Financial Centre which will open Jan. 1, 2018. An incentives system and exemption from paying corporate and individual income taxes and land and property taxes will be stipulated for investors, he added.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Approximately 770 billion tenge (US\$2.3 billion) has been allocated to implement the Nurlı Zhol programme this year, according to the Ministry of National Economy. Minister Kuandyk Bishimbayev stressed more than 6,500 kilometres of roads will be reconstructed in the country by 2020. The new Borzhakty-Yersai and Almaty-Shu railway lines will also be built to increase the transit potential between the regions. “In 2015-2016, more than 770 billion tenge (US\$2.3 billion) was allocated for the construction of 96 educational facilities, including 77 schools and 19 kindergartens,” he said. “In general, 43 educational facilities have been launched including 29 schools and 14 kindergartens up to today. Another six schools and four kindergartens will be launched by the end of this year.”

KAZNEX INVEST Chairman of the Board Borisbiy Zhanguرازov has unveiled some numbers on the country’s industrial output. “The chemical industry has been actively growing over the past few years. In general, the chemical industry growth was 5-6 percent and sometimes reached 30 percent per year. In 2015, the volume of the chemical industry reached 244 billion tenge (US\$732 million),” he noted. The volume of foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan’s manufacturing industry may total \$10 billion by the end of the year. In Q1, the total was already \$2.5 billion, he added. The industry’s production has almost doubled over the past five years. Growth has also been spotted in the chemical industry share – the figure has also doubled over the past five years, exceeding four percent of the processing industry’s total volume. Zhanguرازov is sure there is significant export capacity in the production of petrochemical products, fertilisers, agrochemicals and polypropylene.

Lending to the Kazakh small business sector has increased 35 percent since the beginning of the year, reported Kazakh TV. “There are a growing number of deposits in the national currency and the ongoing process of de-dollarisation,” National Bank Chairman Daniyar Aki-shev was reported as saying at the Sept. 30 meeting with President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Aki-shev noted the current situation at the foreign exchange market has stabilised. “The President has set a number of specific tasks for the National Bank and drew attention to the importance of the bank’s work as a regulator of the financial market,” he said. “Oil prices stabilised on the external market. Exchange rates of national currencies of our partner countries have stabilised as well and there is reason to believe that this situation will remain stable in the near future. That involves stabilisation in the foreign exchange market. The lending process has resumed and loans to small businesses grew 35 percent since the beginning of the year, reaching 2.8 trillion tenge (US\$8.4 billion).”

Kazakh businesses made their preferences in tenge in August, reported finprom.kz. As evidence, savings accounts in the country showed a record 18.3 trillion tenge (US\$54.9 billion). The total amount of investment in the eight-month span was 116 billion tenge (US\$348 million). Numerous experts claim the growth of corporate savings accounts in the national currency will continue to grow amid the reduction of those in foreign currency. In the period from January-August, the amount of corporate client tenge savings accounts among Kazakh banks increased to 3.2 trillion tenge (US\$9.6 billion). Meanwhile, since the beginning of the year foreign currency savings accounts of legal entities reduced by 3 percent and amounted to 4.6 trillion tenge (US\$13.8 billion) at the end of August.

Nation Ranks 53rd in Global Competitiveness Rating, Loses 11 Positions

By Zhazira Dyusseimbekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan lost 11 positions in the 2016-2017 Global Competitiveness Report issued by the World Economic Forum (WEF). The country was ranked 53rd among 138 nations between Rwanda (52) and Costa Rica (54).

“The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) shows, to date, progress in building an enabling environment for innovation and remains the advantage of only a few economies. Last but not least, future growth will also depend on the ability of economies to safeguard the benefits of openness to trade and investment that has led to record reductions in poverty rates in recent decades. Against this background, this report serves as a critical reminder of the importance of competitiveness in solving both our international macroeconomic challenges and laying the ground for future prosperity,” the report stated.

This year’s result is the worst for Kazakhstan in the last five years.

“Kazakhstan’s position was caused by the falling prices for raw materials and non-ferrous metals. That can be witnessed by the fall in the macroeconomic environment pillar, which largely affected the position in the ranking (minus 44 points),” Economic Research Institute Deputy Chairman of the Board Perizat Sadykova told The Astana Times.

According to the authors of the report, all countries in the Eurasian region faced decline in commodity prices, instability in exchange rates

and the slowdown in the Chinese economy. Those factors led to a decrease in export volume and contraction of the market, all causing a decrease in revenues to the state budget which increased the size of the deficit and public debt.

The report notes Kazakhstan lost ground in the rankings largely because of the deterioration of the state budget indicators associated with lost income from oil exports.

Among the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Kazakhstan was third after Azerbaijan (37th) and Russia (43rd). Georgia was 59th, followed by Tajikistan (77th), Armenia (79th), Ukraine (85th), Moldova (100th) and Kyrgyzstan (111th). Belarus, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were not ranked.

Switzerland led the rating for the eighth consecutive year. Singapore and the United States are ranked two and three this year, respectively, followed by the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, Japan, Hong Kong and Finland.

The GCI uses 12 pillars composed of 114 indicators. Kazakhstan demonstrated increases in five pillars – Institutions (+1), Higher Education and Training (+3), Technological Readiness (+5), Market Size (+1) and Innovation (+13), according to the research.

Seven pillars were assessed at a lower level than last year – Health and Primary Education (-1), Labour Market Efficiency (-2), Infrastructure (-5), Goods Market Efficiency (-13), Financial Market Development (-13), Business Sophistication

(-18) and Macroeconomic Environment (-44).

Kazakhstan showed positive results in 40 indicators and negative in 65, while nine indicators remained the same. Ten indicators improved by more than 10 positions, including Procedures to Start a Business (+35), Time to Start a Business (+27), Secondary Education Enrolment Rate Gross (+21) and Rate of Internet Users (+21).

“An effective state policy in science and innovation was reflected in this rating. For example, the indicator University-Industry Cooperation in Research and Development improved by 22 positions,” said Sadykova.

Of 65 negative indicators, nine dropped by more than 20 positions, such as Government Budget Balance in Percent of GDP (-98), Ease of Access to Loans (-45), Venture Capital Availability (-33) and Effect of Taxation on Incentives to Invest (-29).

The WEF report also listed the most problematic factors for doing business in Kazakhstan. The top five were inflation, tax rates, corruption, access to financing and tax regulations.

Even though this year’s rating showed negative results compared to the previous 12 months, the Economic Research Institute has positive expectations about next year’s outcome.

“Government measures aimed at overcoming the slowdown in economic development will be reflected in subsequent ratings. Those are measures taken within the practical

implementation of the five institutional reforms, as well as large-scale infrastructure projects within state programmes,” said Sadykova.

The new government recently showed its openness to discussion and outside expertise, including in economic matters. Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev met with a group of economists Sept. 28 to discuss issues such as institutional reforms, financial issues, monetary policy and exchange rate.

“The meeting was held at the initiative of the prime minister. He listened carefully to all the guests and expressed his willingness to continue an open and constructive dialogue with the non-governmental sector,” expert and former Vice-Minister of Industry and Development Rakhim Oshakbayev noted on his Facebook page, adding the non-governmental sector plays a huge role in the economy and its development.

Since the most radical fall in the WEF ranking was Government Budget Balance in Percent of GDP indicator, it was one of the most important agenda items during the meeting.

Oshakbayev talked about fiscal imbalance and the increase in the tax burden. Due to low prices for oil, the budget keeps borrowing funds from the country’s National Fund to support current expenses, as tax revenues are not able to cover all state expenses and budget expenses keep growing, he said.

“For example, for the period from 2013-2017 expenses grew by 43 percent, while non-oil earnings

Kazakhstan Ranks 52nd in Economic Freedom of World Index

Continued from Page A1

“Kazakhstan’s result can be called good as 52th place in the ranking takes into account negative factors of the current crises. It should be noted that the rating and research institutes do not always take into account all the specific factors of a particular economy. At the same time, Astana has reserves to increase the degree of economic freedom of entrepreneurs,” said Alexey Chekryzhov, an analyst at Berlek-Yedinstvo, a geopolitical, public expert organisation working in the field of policy analysis and planning, monitoring and research in the Eurasian region.

Kazakhstan pays a lot of attention to business development, as the tools to stimulate entrepreneurial activity are changing and being modernised, he said.

“Earlier subsidies and funding

for priority activities were in first place, while today the institutional transformation of state comes to the forefront, designed to increase the attractiveness of entrepreneurship,” he added.

Chekryzhov also noted Kazakhstan will soon be launching an interesting experiment which will also affect legislation regarding entrepreneurship.

“We are talking about plans to create an Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), the legal and regulatory framework of which will be based on the English legal system. Of course, these rules will only work in the territory of the AIFC. However, the relationship between the two legal systems is very interesting. Perhaps this intersection is the place where new tools for the liberalisation of the economy will be found,” he said.

In its rating Kazakhstan amassed the same number of points as Peru and follows Spain. Neighbouring Kyrgyz Republic is ranked 70th; Tajikistan, 84th; Russia, 102nd and Azerbaijan, 107th.

The highest positions were achieved by Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand. Switzerland, Canada, Georgia, Ireland, Mauritius, the United Arab Emirates, Australia and the United Kingdom were among the top 10. The lowest-rated countries were Iran, Algeria, Chad, Guinea, Angola, the Central African Republic, Argentina, the Republic of the Congo, Libya and Venezuela.

The Fraser Institute produces the annual Economic Freedom of the World report in cooperation with the Economic Freedom Network, a group of independent research and educational institutes in nearly 100 countries and territories.

Officials Prioritise Quality FDI

Staff Report

ASTANA – Kazakhstan competes with 189 countries for foreign direct investment, Vice Minister for Investments and Development Yerlan Khairov said recently, Kazinform news agency reports.

Analysts say the U.S., China and other countries are investing significant funds into Kazakhstan’s economy. In this regard the vice-minister spoke to journalists about whether that may lead the country to lose its economic independence and feel pressure from investor countries.

“This list of countries looking for foreign direct investment includes all developed countries. Therefore, the fact that Russia, the U.S., China and other countries are investing in Kazakhstan is good for the country and its citizens,” he noted. “At the same time, the investing process is not so

swift. For instance, the announced 51 projects for a total amount of \$26 billion as part of the Kazakhstan and China industrial and investment programme is an intention to a greater extend at this moment. Only a small part of these funds were, in fact, invested,” Khairov said.

According to the official, the government regulates the quality of investment projects, including maintaining a balance in investment volume to Kazakhstan by different countries.

“Good quality foreign direct investments are needed to ensure growth and diversification of our economy. Also, improving competitiveness of a product produced in Kazakhstan, such investments will allow to increase the country’s export potential, which will reduce the impact of oil prices on the national currency rate,” he added.

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Approximately 27 billion cubic metres of natural and petroleum gas were produced in July, 0.5 percent less than in the same period last year, according to energypron.kz. Of that amount 11.9 billion cubic metres were sourced from natural gas in a gaseous state (down 4.5 percent) and 14.7 billion cubic metres extracted from the associated petroleum gas (up 3 percent), while the marketable gas production in the reporting period amounted to 7.2 billion cubic metres, 3.8 percent more than the period from January-July 2015.

Kazakh citizens have doubled the activity of online shopping this year, reported analytical portal ranking.kz. In the first seven months of this year, the number of Internet transactions has grown twofold to 16.7 million units. The financial sector has expanded its position in competitive online market trading. In the early 2010s, only a few banks were offering Internet banking for retail customers; today, this figure is 23 among the 34 second-tier banks. All offer non-cash bill paying and online purchasing. With the growing popularity of online banking among Kazakhs, the average payment check has also increased. During the period from January-July, the average size of online payments was about 8,000 tenge (US\$24). The total retail market size of online banking is estimated at 136.7 billion tenge (US\$408 million).

More citizens are becoming part of the Employment Road Map 2020 state programme, according to ranking.kz. After conducting market research, the research and online service Head Hunter Kazakhstan noted the increased competition among candidates for available jobs. “After summer’s calm period, some growth has been seen starting in September, both in the number of job openings and increased number of applicants. If we look at the job market starting from January, we can see increased competition for vacant positions. In comparison to last year, when 1.8 candidates applied for one position, now we see 3.5 candidates applying for every position. But it does not indicate an increase in unemployment, as one might think; it rather means that more and more people have started to look into changing jobs or taking new roles,” said Head Hunter Kazakhstan Chief Executive Officer Nina Bychenko. “I monitor the average wage dynamics in Kazakhstan. It now totals 120,000 tenge (US\$360) across the country. There have not been any major changes since last year. In Astana, the average salary is about 150,000 tenge (US\$450). The lowest wage is about 50,000 tenge (US\$150). Certainly, this rate doesn’t apply to Almaty and Astana. In terms of professional areas, sales representatives are the most in-demand specialists (19 percent of all job offers). With a large gap, the top five most in-demand specialists also include accountants, administrative staff, marketing specialists, IT and telecom staff. According to the study, the most competitive professions are early career, mining, top management, law and accounting.”

The positive dynamics of the external market conditions, as well as the stabilisation of oil prices, played a major role in reducing the base rate of the tenge, the Kazakh national currency, reported Kazakh TV. The regulator took the decision to lower its key interest rate to 12.5 percent. The range of the interest rate corridor remained unchanged at ± 1 percent. Interest rates for operations on liquidity withdrawal and liquidity provision range between 11.5-13.5 percent. The National Bank decided to reduce its base rate at the beginning of October.

Petrochemical Day Invest 2016 Kicks off in Atyrau

ATYRAU | CHEMICAL DAY
PETRO | INVEST 2016

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Atyrau, the oil capital of Kazakhstan, held its inaugural regional investment forum gathering experts of the petrochemical industry on Sept. 30. The event sought to attract small and medium businesses to the industry to operate in the special economic zone (SEZ).

“The region has been a leader in attracting investments over the last few years. The volume of investments in fixed assets amounted to about \$4 billion for eight months of 2016. External investments reached nearly \$2.5 billion. Today, over 6,000 industrial enterprises work in the region,” said Akim (Governor) Nurlan Nogayev.

The forum was organised by the city administration, Atyrau region administration and United Chemical Company (UCC). The event brought together a number of experts in the petrochemical industry, government officials and representatives of small and medium-sized businesses. The event was also very interesting for foreign and local investors.



Photo credit: forbes.kz

Nogayev, Ambassador of Iran to Kazakhstan Mojtaba Damirchilu, Business Women of Kazakhstan President Raushan Sarsembayeva, Development Bank of Kazakhstan Chairman Bolat Zhamishev and Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund Chairman Kanysh Tuleushin were active participants in the forum.

The main task of the organisers was attracting business people in the petrochemical industry to operate in the National Industrial Petrochemical Technology Park SEZ in the Atyrau region. Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund, KAZNEX INVEST (the national agency for export and investment), the National Agency for Technological Development, Kazakhstan Centre of Pub-

lic-Private Partnership and other organisations have supported the project.

UCC Chairman Zhenis Oserbai emphasised the high potential of the industry in Kazakhstan and reported on the activities of the company, which supports projects in petrochemical production. The company strives to make the Atyrau region a centre of petrochemistry and develop small and medium-sized businesses.

One of the best examples is Polymer Production, which has successfully operated in the SEZ since 2015. The company has produced the first biaxially-oriented polypropylene film (BOPP film), polypropylene bags and plastic film.

In early September, Kazakhstan



Photo credit: forbes.kz

Petrochemical Industries Inc. and China Development Bank signed a loan agreement for \$2 billion and announced construction of a gas chemical complex. The facility is expected to produce polypropylene in the amount of 500,000 tonnes per year.

The Special Service Centre was organised by Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund, KAZNEX INVEST, the National Agency for Technological Development, Kazakhstan Centre of Public-Private Partnership, Kazakhstan Institute for Industry Development, Atyrau region Chamber of Entrepreneurs and National Agency for Local Content Devel-

opment (NADLoC). Centre experts provided consultation and guidance to business people.

UCC, established in 2009 by order of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, is part of the Samruk-Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund. The company operates to advance the petrochemical industry, working on diversification, modernisation and sustainable development of the field. The company is also responsible for attracting investments and support for small and medium-sized businesses. Its total pool of projects has reached \$11.2 billion in the organics sector and \$459 million in the non-organic sector.

Massive Tax Amendments Proposed to Stimulate Economic Activity

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – Proposals to introduce 234 amendments to the law “On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of Kazakhstan on issues of taxation and customs administration” include 207 amendments on tax administration and 27 on fiscal policy, said Minister of National Economy Kuandyk Bishimbayev at the recent governmental meeting.

The changes aim to create a favourable business environment and stable socio-economic development and implement current tasks.

The suggestion would maintain the current minimum requirement of the 30,000 monthly calculated indices (MCI) until the end of 2017 for the purpose of the registration statement to avoid tax and regulatory burden on business. It would then gradually be reduced.

“The minimum requirement for VAT (value-added tax) registration is proposed to be reduced to 25,000 MCI (53 million tenge (US\$158,553)) in 2018, down to 20,000 MCI (42.4 million tenge (US\$126,842)) in 2019 and down to 15,000 MCI (31.8 million tenge (US\$95,131)) in 2020. Also, it is proposed to restore the norm of the tax code on a voluntary statement on VAT registration,” said Bishimbayev. The move is meant to bring into light operations of a large number of enterprises which do not provide tax information.

The proposal also includes a recommendation in the special tax code application to exclude conditions on land ownership in the hands of agricultural cooperatives to encourage cooperative business development.

An exemption from the corporate income tax is provided by writing off the debt in the absence of a commercial discovery on investment financing (carry financing) to stimulate investment in subsoil use.

Another amendment concerns the resolution of taxation problems of subsoil users who sell gas to the national operator, providing the definition of income for the actual sale price without reference to the cost of gas.

“The natural form of getting the share of Kazakhstan under production sharing is provided as part of the North Caspian Sea Production Sharing Agreement. Tax exemption of transaction data is proposed in its implementation. All proceeds from the sale will flow to the National Fund,” said the minister.

Amendments to the financial sector are provided in a separate unit.

“They are designed to assist borrowers in mortgage arrears as part of the refinancing programme. This will solve the problematic issues hindering the implementation of this programme and save the only shelter of socially vulnerable groups. It will also reduce the level of bad debts in the loan portfolio of banks and strengthen the consumer protection in the field of financial services as part of reducing tool leverage for doubtful and bad loans. It will increase the level of protection of depositors’ interests and improve the social security of citizens at the conclusion of the employer annuity insurance contract in case of injury at performance of employment duties,” said Bishimbayev.

An amendment where rail and ferry freight transport will apply to international transport subject to VAT at the zero rate is proposed to increase the competitiveness of the country’s transit potential.

“At the moment, goods transport services by rail to Aktau seaport that are within the borders of Kazakhstan are not recognised as services related to international transport and are subject to VAT at the rate of 12 percent,” he added.

The bill provides amendments related to optimising the payment mechanism for the availability of concession projects of

special importance. The amendments are initiated in connection with the division of powers between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in terms of adopting and approving visa invitations, as well as the amendments to bring existing legislation in

line with previously adopted legislative acts.

All norms were approved at the Aug. 29 National Budget Commission meeting.

“The amount of the budget and National Fund’s losses [which would result in the adoption of the proposed amendments and] which

have been taken to the National Budget Commission for 2015-2019 totalled 176.7 billion tenge (US\$528,625,600). At the same time, additional revenue from increased excise duties and gradual reduction of the VAT threshold will account for 237 billion tenge (US\$709,005,300),” he said.

FROM THE HEART OF EURASIA

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EDITORIAL&OPINION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

Death of Peres Highlights Challenges for Peace in Middle East

Leaders from around the world came together to pay tribute to Shimon Peres. As the ninth President of Israel, he dedicated his life to building a stronger state for his nation while simultaneously working to achieve peace in the Middle East. As former U.S. President Bill Clinton said, Peres “thought big thoughts, dreamed big dreams,” but also developed practical ways of bringing Israel and Palestine to the negotiating table to end the long and bloody stand-off that has existed between them for over half a century.

As one of the earliest proponents of a two-state solution, he constantly promoted dialogue as the most effective way of bringing about peace and empowerment for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. He understood the power of reaching out to those with whom his country profoundly disagreed and he was the first Israeli president to speak in the Parliament of a Muslim country when he travelled to Turkey in 2007. His role in negotiating the Oslo Peace Accords in 1994 won him the Nobel Peace Prize.

There is no doubt he was a titan of the world stage and a figure who will be much missed by those who strive to ensure diplomacy, not warfare, is the chief mechanism by which we secure a lasting settlement between Israel and Palestine.

Peres’ death is not only a moment for us to recognise and pay tribute to his work but to reflect on the huge challenges that continue to affect the Middle East. The last set of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed in 2014 and there are few hopes for resumption in the near future. The long-negotiated ceasefire in the Syrian conflict has broken down and the world is faced with the daily images of brutality meted out on cities like Aleppo and Idlib. And in Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan internal strife and conflict continue to cause misery for large swathes of the population.

The rise of religious extremism and spread of violent terrorist groups has led to all countries facing serious threats. Kazakhstan, in particular, experienced terrible shootings in Aktobe in June. But attacks this year in France, Libya, Iraq and Turkey show no country is immune.

Kazakhstan is a secular state with a predominantly Muslim population. But Kazakhstan is also home to those who worship at the Russian Orthodox Church,

the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant churches and in synagogues. But despite the vast majority of people co-existing peacefully regardless of differences in religious beliefs, there have been some Kazakh citizens that have followed twisted and dangerous religious teachings, turning their back on religious plurality and leaving Kazakhstan to join violent extremist groups.

This goes against the core principles of peace and diversity Kazakhstan was founded on since our Independence 25 years ago. As a country, Kazakhstan must stand against this and hold on to the qualities that have served it so well.

It is for this reason, that the Ministry for Religious and Civil Society Affairs was established earlier this month with the central mission of ensuring the rights of all Kazakhstan’s citizens to freedom of religion are maintained. It will act as a linchpin for discussions with all religious associations to ensure their voices and concerns are heard right at the heart of government. It will stand as a bulwark against forces that seek to divide or create conflict in Kazakh society. The ministry will also act as the key point of interaction between the government and the many civil society organisations in Kazakhstan.

This ministry is led by Nurlan Yermekbayev, who will bring his experience as a former presidential aide, secretary of the Security Council, ambassador and deputy foreign minister to this important role.

Kazakhstan will continue to be a country that promotes peace and harmony amongst different religious and ethnic groups – both domestically and across the world. Under President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan has led – and succeeded – in global attempts to bring countries in conflict together to negotiate a better future for their people. Just recently, President Nazarbayev played a central role in restoring relations between Turkey and Russia and Kazakhstan’s long-term strategy on Iran highlights our ability to identify areas around which countries that disagree on issues can coalesce. Finding new ways to further Kazakhstan’s aim of global peace and security will be a priority for Kazakhstan as it takes its seat on the UN Security Council.

Shimon Peres taught us to “dream big” and believe peace is possible even when it seems difficult to achieve. Kazakhstan will build on his important legacy and continue working to end conflict wherever it arises.

JICA to Assist Kazakhstan Establish ODA Practices, says JICA’s Regional General Director

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – In October 2014, Kazakhstan and UNDP launched a project to develop the national institute of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the country to systematise assistance provided to other countries and to align it with the priorities of the country’s foreign policy. The nation has already provided humanitarian and development assistance to countries in Central Asia, Latin America and the Pacific.

KazAID, Kazakhstan’s fledgling official ODA, is the first programme 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.

“Promoting Kazakhstan’s ODA Cooperation with Afghanistan” has become a pilot project of Kazakhstan’s ODA aimed at expanding economic independence and rights of Afghan women. In particular, Kazakhstan will share its experience in the fields of public administration, health and education.

The Astana Times had the opportunity to interview JICA Director General of the East and Central Asia and the Caucasus Department Toshinobu Kato, who was invited to Astana to participate in a signing ceremony of “Promoting Kazakhstan’s ODA Cooperation with Afghanistan” project.

The greatest focus of JICA’s support to Afghanistan is in creating infrastructure, particularly in the metropolitan area of the capital Kabul, and agricultural and rural development. The project aimed at expanding rights of Afghan women has become a new phenomenon. Mr. Kato, to what extent have you changed the direction?

Based on Afghanistan’s development strategy, JICA has been providing assistance for Afghanistan’s sustainable development especially focusing on the agricultural sector, human resource development, such as education and health/medical care, and infrastructure development. Actually, our assistance for Afghan women is not a new phenomenon, in the past we have provided assistance for Afghan women through study visits to Japan focusing on areas such as women’s economic empowerment and maternal health organised by JICA. The government of Japan is one of the biggest financial supporters for the Law and Trust Order Fund project to reform the police sector, including the trainings of female police officers in Afghanistan.

In October 2015, Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe came on an official visit to Kazakhstan, during which the signing of the joint communiqué with the President of Kazakhstan took place. Article 13 of the communiqué stipulates that Japan welcomes the initiative of Kazakhstan to set up a national ODA system and its striving to cooperate with the countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan in the area of sustainable development. It also says Japan will cooperate with Kazakhstan, including a tripartite partnership with UNDP for assisting women’s economic empowerment in Afghanistan.

Through the support for “Promoting Kazakhstan’s ODA Cooperation with Afghanistan” project, JICA intends to share our experiences and know-how to implement trainings and projects and support



Toshinobu Kato

the government of Kazakhstan in establishing an ODA system through capacity building of the staff for sound implementation of Kazakhstan’s future ODA projects.

Is the Afghan government ready to cooperate in this field? What do you anticipate from this project?

UNDP and the Embassy of Japan in Kazakhstan had meetings with the Embassy of Afghanistan in Kazakhstan to share this idea and the Afghan government is ready to support this initiative.

Through the support for “Promoting Kazakhstan’s ODA Cooperation with Afghanistan” project, JICA intends to share our experiences and know-how to implement trainings and projects and support the government of Kazakhstan in establishing an ODA system through capacity building of the staff for sound implementation of Kazakhstan’s future ODA projects.

JICA expects that the government of Kazakhstan will obtain necessary knowledge and skills to conduct ODA project effectively through this project in Afghanistan, and we anticipate that the government of Kazakhstan will become one of the key donors in Afghanistan in the future. Also, we hope that this project can contribute to promoting the role of women and their capacity in Afghanistan.

Japan has been providing ODA to Kazakhstan since 1993 in the form of financial and technical assistance and concessional loans. What are the main areas JICA is focused on?

In order to assist Kazakhstan in moving to a market system and develop its economy, JICA has been providing aid in a variety of fields, including infrastructure development, disaster management,

healthcare, and human resources training. For example, in the Irtysh River Bridge Construction Project financed through an ODA loan agreement signed in 1996, JICA supported a construction project in the city of Semipalatinsk in the East Kazakhstan oblast to build a new bridge across the Irtysh River, together with the surrounding roadways. Recently JICA financed a road rehabilitation project in Zhambyl Province working together with the Asian Development Bank.

Currently, the level of Kazakhstan’s economic development is high, and JICA selects and implements projects in the sectors in which Japan’s knowledge and technology can be utilised, with an eye to strengthening business relationships between Kazakhstan and Japan. In specific terms, in recent years JICA has been focusing mainly on human resources development in fields such as energy conservation, disaster prevention and management, SME promotion, production and quality management. Some activities are implemented in Japan Centre located in Almaty, which is a hub of Japan-Kazakhstan relationship.

JICA’s activities are in line with the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue for promoting regional cooperation. In terms of regional cooperation, JICA believes that development cooperation in Kazakhstan can also contribute to economic growth and stabilisation in the Central Asian region

Times are changing. Kazakhstan’s responsibility for ensuring international and regional security and stability is growing. What prospects do you see for the KazAID programme?

For many years, Kazakhstan has been providing official development and humanitarian assistance, helping various countries in the Central Asian region and beyond. Kazakhstan has a potential to play an important role in promoting peace and security in the Central Asian region and Afghanistan as an emerging donor. We welcome Kazakhstan’s new initiatives in the region and expect more leadership in the international community. So it is crucial to systematise and professionalise the national system of ODA in Kazakhstan.

We hope JICA can share our experience and know-how with Kazakhstan and we expect that JICA and Kazakhstan will become partners in implementing development projects in the near future.

OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

Shimon Peres in Our Memory

By Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

This week the whole world has come together to pay its last tribute to Shimon Peres, a patriarch of world politics, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, one of founders of Israel, and a friend of Kazakhstan.

At such moments, we say, “A whole epoch is gone”, because the life of Shimon Peres in itself mirrors the history of the evolution of the State of Israel. He took part in the struggle for the independence of the Jewish state and was a valuable fellow to Israel’s first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. During his long political career, he held almost all ministerial posts, was Prime Minister of his country two times and was elected President at the age of 84.

The rich political heritage of Shimon Peres transcends far beyond the State of Israel. He embodied the profound belief in peaceful coexistence of the peoples in the Middle East and represented a progressive trend in international relations.

Over the past 25 years, Peres was an active promoter of the strong partnership between Israel and Kazakhstan. He had very warm, friendly relations with President Nursultan Nazarbayev, personally supporting his regional and global initiatives.

Peres’ first visit to Kazakhstan in September 1995, as Foreign Minister, laid the foundation for a long-term bilateral cooperation. Commending Nazarbayev’s political wisdom and flexibility, with a fair amount of humour, Peres said, “If I were in your place, waking up once, I would have opened my right eye and saw China, would open my left eye and saw Russia. Then I would say: “God, what have you done with me!”

He went on to outline his unique approach to building peace and



Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (L) is shown in this file photo accompanying Shimon Peres on a visit to Astana in 2015.

common understanding between those who have previously been locked in long-standing conflict:

“During the war all depends on victory; at times of peace we need compromise. People love peace, but do not want to compromise.

“Territory is a challenge of the present time.

“Ideas and technologies have no nationality and do not belong to any state. They can pass through the border without paying taxes and duties.

“There is a joint venture between God and the earth. However, it turned out that one of the partners couldn’t be relied upon. There is something unimaginable happening up there. So we – the Jews – have focused on human potential.

“When we have established relationships with Russia, the first thing we did was to buy a cow in Russia, which later became four times as much to produce milk. The system is the core thing here. Sometimes a system produces more milk than a cow. Your riches are under the ground, but it is necessary to make efforts to develop the system.

“It is better to win in the peace, than to lose the election. Peace is an apple, not a tomato. Apple is durable and strong, tomato is short-lived and mild.

“Politicians are like watchmakers. But if watchmaker stops the clock to repair them, a politician has no right to stop the time.

“Kazakhstan will be a surprise of this century.

“In countries where there is a lot of earthquakes, there are two ways to build a building: put the foundations deep in the ground or use the system of balances. For Kazakhstan, it is better to use the balancing policy.

“Socialism has created a surprising contradiction. It is a contradiction between the system and the people. How could such an interesting system make such a number of true intellectuals?

“Bosnia is located in the heart of Europe. The agony continues; there is no end to it. The world is fragile; the UN demonstrates weaknesses. We have our Bosnia. We conquered the west bank of the Jordan River, but then conceded it. We have done

so not because we are weak. Jews are 4000 years old. We never ruled other peoples, but other peoples dominated over us.”

“Water is the most acute problem in relations with the Palestinians. It is possible to divide the land, but it is impossible to divide the water.”

“If we implement all UN resolutions, then a state like Israel would simply not exist.”

“There were 110 rivers in the former Soviet Union, and only one in Israel, it belongs to two countries. There are two lakes in Israel and one of them is Dead.”

“It is difficult to say, how to conduct a policy in Kazakhstan. Genghis Khan, Peter the Great and Stalin prevailed above you. In your place, I would have gone into a depression. Therefore I respect you.”

In 1994, along with the then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestinian Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat, Peres received the Nobel Peace Prize for the development and signing of the Oslo Peace Accords.

Peres was convinced that the concept of peace in the Middle East could not be restricted purely to military and political initiatives. His speech at the second Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Almaty in June 2006 was very astute in this respect. In the presence of Asian leaders, including many Arab states, Shimon Peres set out his vision of achieving peace in the Middle East, saying, “Palestinian people are entitled to have a state on the side of the State of Israel with equal rights, respect and good economy. And from my standpoint the better Palestinians have it, the better neighbour we shall have. And to build a good neighbourhood is a right thing to do.”

In many ways, Peres was drawing

on lessons from the painful peace process of the 1990s: “Unfortunately, the closer we come to peace, the shortage of steam to make it is becoming evident. The distance is short, but the speed is slow and we have to try and think and add energy to introduce a real, durable and just peace.”

Peres also contributed to the economic dimension of relations with the Palestinians through the establishment of joint projects in partnership with Jordan and other international institutions.

At the CICA summit, he also raised the environmental issues that affect the whole region: “We have, just like Kazakhstan, a problem with a lake, which is losing its waters. And if we do not compensate it for the lake, it may well become an ecological catastrophe. We cannot save the lake, unless the three of us [Israel, Palestine and Jordan] act together. We have to bring water to the lake from the Read Sea to the Dead Sea. We can develop excellent tourism there.”

As President of Israel, Shimon Peres participated in the 3rd Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana in July 2009 and again issued a new invitation to some of the leaders of the Muslim world to engage in dialogue: “[F]rom this rostrum, with your permission, Mr. President, I appeal to the King of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the initiator of the Arab Peace Program. I appeal to meet in Jerusalem, or Riyadh, or come to Kazakhstan, together with other leaders of Arab countries to implement your idea, your vision and the vision of all believers of our common God of peace and justice.”

Through his work, Peres raised the profile of the President of the State of Israel, which had previously been badly tarnished following the resignation of his predecessor.

In 2008, Shimon Peres convened a major international conference en-

titled “Facing Tomorrow” to mark the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel. On behalf of our President Kazakhstan was represented by a parliamentary delegation. Despite the busy schedule of bilateral meetings and an abundance of other events, 85-year-old President Shimon Peres led a very spirited conversation with me as the head of the delegation, demonstrating an amazing memory and inherent wisdom on world affairs. He praised the work of the President of Kazakhstan in building a successful state and in the promotion of important international initiatives, stressing that Israel will continue to support the CICA and the Congresses of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

After leaving the Presidency in 2014, Peres continued to live an active political and social life, including at an international level.

The last time I had a chance to meet him and exchange views on the situation in Syria was in Astana in September 2015. Peres led the “Group of Eminent Persons” who came to meet President Nazarbayev. As before, this giant of world politics displayed remarkable wisdom, affirming the popular characteristic of a “mega-brain.”

Despite his venerable age of 93 years old, his departure was very sudden for everyone.

“In the memory of the people of Kazakhstan Shimon Peres will always remain as a visionary leader, a historically significant person and respected politician, who made a great contribution to the improvement of our bilateral relations,” said President Nursultan Nazarbayev in his condolence message.

Shimon Peres has entered the world history as a great statesman, a true patriot of the State of Israel, and a consistent supporter of policies aimed at achieving peace.

The author is Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan.

Towards Green Economy in Kazakhstan

By Zhaniya Urankayeva

In this interview, Saltanat Rakhimbekova, coalition chair and member of the Council on Transition to Green Economy under the Kazakh President, talks about the challenges the country has to overcome to reach its ambitious goals of “greening” its economy.

Could you please tell us about the history of the Coalition for Green Economy and G-Global Development Association of Legal Entities?

The idea of creating the coalition came up in December 2012 when President Nursultan Nazarbayev in his state-of-the-nation address titled “Kazakhstan-2050 Strategy. New Political Course of an Established State” defined the transition of the country to green development as a strategic trend of the national economy.

The coalition aims to support “from below” the green development course and relevant global-scale green initiatives of Kazakhstan – Green Bridge Partnership Programme, Global Energy and Environment Strategy and EXPO 2017. Since then we have managed to join the environmental movement of Kazakhstan, becoming an absolute leader in the promotion of green economy in the country and a leading public provider of the concept of transition of Kazakhstan to alternative energy sources. So I can say that the society is getting greener, which can be proved by those projects that we are implementing.

What does G-Global mean in the title of the Coalition for Green Economy?

G-Global represents the following global approach of Kazakhstan to problem solutions. This is to find likeminded people around the planet and address a problem at a global level with the support of our own country. This was the case for the Nevada-Semipalatinsk anti-nuclear movement. Trying to help the whole world, we also get the support of the international community. In profound social innovations like green economy and



Saltanat Rakhimbekova

Third Industrial Revolution, it is not enough to have political decisions or even money and grants – such endeavours usually die away or get bureaucratized without any meaningful actions if there are no professional enthusiasts – “locomotives” who live with their idea to be fulfilled.

What should be done to reach our goals in green technology development?

In fact, the green economy trend was launched 30 years ago when oil prices went up. Today the situation is completely different; the “black gold” became cheaper and we need to maintain the green energy development trend as a necessary part of addressing climate change. In our country, significant activities have been implemented to introduce green technologies over 10 years by such international organisations as the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and EU (European Union) that today clearly show efficiency and influence the quality of life. The business sector should be involved in green projects implementation so that these technologies become widespread. Our three-year experience shows that it is necessary to circulate the results and our projects implementation experience to the maximum and organise trainings aimed at teaching and introducing innovative technologies.

Is the Arnasai green valley a good example of that?

Yes. On Sept. 3, 2016 we celebrated the birthday of the National

Green Technologies Academy Centre in Arnasai in the Akmola region, the first green village of Kazakhstan. There are thousands of universities and centres of excellence in the world, but a maximum of a hundred of them are similar to this one, where people are taught 24 hours a day to use new green technologies based on existing projects. The project was established by non-governmental organisations – Coalition for Green Economy and G-Global Development Association of Legal Entities, Akbota Public Foundation and G-Global International Secretariat. The project received the trust and support of international organisations working in Kazakhstan: UNDP, EU, OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe), Coca-Cola Belesteri and others. Some companies extended technical support, having provided their equipment and know-how free of charge: Phillips, Gripnik (a Russian company) and Absolut Ecology LLP.

Our centre cooperates with many governmental agencies, members of Parliament, village mayor offices, National Commission on Women’s Affairs under the President of Kazakhstan and G-Global International Secretariat. The National Academy became not only the first open consulting centre of the state on green technologies, but, in fact, the doors to the green economy of Kazakhstan. Different guests visit it every day in official and non-official formats: experts and innovators, entrepreneurs, teachers, journalists, TV representatives, mayor officials, civil servants, youth and tourists. About 3,000 people were educated there during the first year.

The centre installed about 30 operating advanced green technologies, solar bio-vegetariums and an underground phytodiode greenhouse; there is also a lecture hall, canteen and hotel rooms. It demonstrates not only foreign, but local technologies as well, including those that will be showcased in the Kazakhstan Pavilion at EXPO 2017. For example, Bori-senko installation for electro-magnetic air cleaning, flat-plate

solar collector with a concentrator for water heating by KunTech and hydrogel based on unsaturated polyester resin. A park in environmental style is created including reed harbours, a bungalow, alpine garden and phytodesigned facilities made of roots, bark, stones and old timbers. A portable inflatable biogas unit made in Kazakhstan generating 3 kW of power and transforming animal wastes and organics into fertilizers is starting to work on the territory of the greenhouse.

It should be noted that Arnasai became the first green village in Kazakhstan; we submitted the project for the status of a model village to the Ministry of Agriculture – a zone demonstrating a set of green technologies in the agricultural sector and agrarian tourism to spread the expertise further in all regions. In particular, creation of guest houses for EXPO 2017 tourists, smart kitchen gardens, high yielding wheat cultivation with no-tillage, vertical crop farming, distribution of new valuable crop seeds, vermiculture for vermicompost, organic wastes gathering, etc.

It all sounds pretty good, however, it is likely that there have been and are a lot of difficulties faced on your green path.

Of course, the main difficulty is lack of confidence; people don’t believe that energy can be continuously generated from the sun, wind and water. That is why together with the Akbota Public Foundation we decided to create a demonstration area applying alternative technologies for energy generation. Arnasai is kind of a demonstration area for innovative enterprises that have an opportunity to come, show and install their inventions that will be known by all.

What other educational programmes does the coalition implement?

Since 2013, the coalition together with the Social Dynamic Public Foundation has been implementing Coca-Cola Belesteri, an extensive programme aimed at training village women in business basics and start-up financing. Over this period of time, 7,400

women were trained in the basics of doing business and 31 of them were awarded grants for opening their own small-sized businesses. During the first year, the organisers of the Coca-Cola Belesteri put an emphasis on cities, Almaty and Astana; the following years’ trainings, including demonstration of green technologies successful application, were held in two major regions of Kazakhstan – Akmola and Almaty regions. Starting this year, the social initiative expanded its boundaries: Karaganda region joined the initiative.

You explained what experts interested in green technologies development do. To what extent is the legal framework compliant with green path standards?

Enough, but not to the full extent. We have adopted legislation on renewable energy sources; now there are many subsidy programmes and a flexible tariff system that is beneficial for those who deal with green energy. But we have some gaps. In particular, appropriate conditions have been created for those who deal with small-scale power generation; big companies that want to ensure large scale green energy generation and sales face some difficulties. Large investors still have a lot of restrictions; much time is needed for approval. Another issue is subsidizing; for example, all chemicals are subsidised except organic ones.

The abovementioned theme is a keynote idea of the upcoming EXPO 2017 and this philosophy is very close to your organisation. What is the coalition ready to propose to the international exhibition and, maybe, surprise the visitors with?

I would start by saying that we are proud that together with the G-Global International Secretariat we held Online Expo 2017, a national competition that became really useful for local innovators and scientists, providing them with an opportunity to showcase and present their green technologies and projects. The competition was held in five categories; more than 600 applications were submitted, among which we selected the top 50.

Five of them will have an opportunity to present their work at EXPO 2017.

Now, the coalition is functioning only in Astana. Are you planning to open branches throughout the republic?

We put a task to open green technologies centres in the regions; the first centre was opened in the Akmola region. The second centre was opened in the Karaganda region based on Karaganda Agro-technical College, where the opening ceremony of the Green Technologies Distribution Centre was held on Sept. 11. Currently, we are working on such centres in the Kostanaï and Almaty regions. In addition, I would like to note that the coalition is monitoring the implementation of 11 green projects of the UNDP being carried out in eight regions of the country and we and our partners are negotiating the possible opening of a centre based on their projects.

What are the future goals of the coalition?

Today we are creating a horizontal network of knowledge centres on green technologies and innovations; we also want to work further in the International Centre on Green Technologies and Investment Project under the UN auspices that will be created based on the EXPO 2017 grounds. In 2015, the coalition initiated the creation of the Green Bridge Partnership Programme, an international organisation that attracted 17 local and international NGOs to this partnership and Green Bridge Charter signing. Thanks to the partnership development we are already implementing one of the programme’s important objectives – the transfer of green technologies. We plan to attract advanced technologies and investment to Kazakhstan in order to implement small and large green projects. Today we, the coalition, do not only have technologies but also demonstrate their application in practice; that is why we are interesting for our partners and those who want to be greener, since the basis of a “green idea” is an opportunity to save and earn in the future.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

FM Idrissov Discusses Security, UNSC Membership with Officials in London

By Alisher Nuraliyev

LONDON – Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov and British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Boris Johnson met Oct. 6 to discuss bilateral and multilateral issues during Idrissov’s Oct. 6-7 visit to London.

The two also discussed international issues, including Kazakhstan’s non-permanent membership to UN Security Council in 2017-2018. They focused on Syria and Afghanistan, implementation of the Minsk agreements on settlement of the situation in Ukraine, countering terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and regional cooperation in Central Asia, the press release from the Kazakh Foreign Ministry said.

The foreign ministers noted positive developments in the eco-



Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov (L) and British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Boris Johnson.

nomic and political interaction between their states and emphasised the increasing level of strategic dialogue between Astana and London. Evidence of that is the recent meeting of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev with

UK Prime Minister Theresa May during the G20 Summit in Hangzhou last month. The diplomats noted progress in implementing agreements achieved during Nazarbayev’s official visit to London in November 2015.

Idrissov and Johnson confirmed their intention to maintain high-level contacts and develop multilateral relations.

Earlier in the day, Idrissov attended a briefing at the Department of International Trade on the British national pavilion for EXPO 2017. Commissioner of the UK National Section Charles Hendry and a well-known British architect Asif Khan presented the project.

Nearly 20 British companies attended the event and expressed interest in participating in the exhibition. The participants agreed the UK pavilion will be among the most interesting and contribute to the exchange of advanced technology in the use of renewable energy sources.

As part of his London visit, Idrissov held a number of meetings, including with the members of All-Party Parliamentary Groups on co-operation with Kazakhstan headed by Lord Mohamed Itlaf Sheikh and

National Security Adviser to the UK Prime Minister Mark Grant.

Idrissov and the British parliament members discussed bilateral relations and international issues. Idrissov informed about Kazakhstan’s 100 concrete steps to implement five institutional reforms, President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s recent peace initiative Manifesto “The World. The 21st Century,” and the country’s priorities for its UN Security Council seat in 2017-2018. The participants positively assessed the changes taking place in Kazakhstan and congratulated the country on its upcoming 25th anniversary of independence.

Idrissov and Grant discussed bilateral cooperation in regional and international security, as well as in the fight against extremism and terrorism. On behalf of Nazarbayev, Idrissov conveyed a personal invitation to Prime Minister Theresa May to visit Kazakhstan during the time of EXPO 2017.

Idrissov also took part in the meeting of the Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs (ECFA) chaired by former European Commissioner for External Relations and former Foreign Minister of Austria Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

Speaking at the opening ses-

sion, Idrissov gave an overview of the most pressing challenges and threats to global and regional security, as well as promising areas of cooperation between Central Asia and Europe.

He noted that Kazakhstan was the first Central Asian country elected to the UN Security Council and that the Kazakh government will promote the region’s common priorities and attract international resources to counter security threats, with a focus on Afghanistan.

The council heard reports on its work over the past year and its priorities for the coming period. The London meeting was the third annual meeting of the ECFA. Previous meetings were in Brussels and Vienna.

The ECFA is an independent think tank launched Nov. 12, 2014 in Brussels focusing on Central Asian development and the region’s relations with European countries. ECFA’s Advisory Council includes politicians, diplomats, cultural figures, scholars and experts.

A special guest of the meeting was Prince Andrew, Duke of York, who is an honorary patron of the British-Kazakh Society.

Evidence of Ancient Assyrian Church Discovered in Kazakhstan

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The ancient city of Ilyn Balik is well known from pilgrims’ travels. Recent excavations in Usharal village have uncovered an ancient city and cemetery with eight Nestorian gravestones and the markers prove Christianity was present in Kazakhstan long before Western imperialism.

Information about Ilyn Balik, situated 60 kilometres from the Chinese border, can be found in early texts. Historians of Christianity along the Silk Road were

ological evidence of a Christian community in Kazakhstan, said Tom Davis, archaeology and biblical backgrounds professor and Archaeology Department Chairman at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. It supports the understanding of ancient Kazakhstan as a multi-cultural centre between East and West. The findings show the country was home for Muslims, Buddhists and Christians who lived among the local herdsmen and nomadic tribes, according to aina.org.

The Kazakh government is very proud of its multi-cultural history

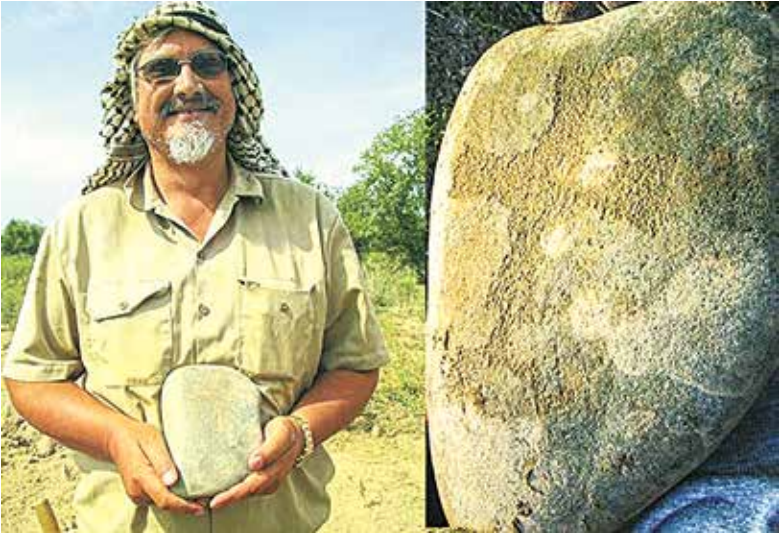
expert on the Silk Road. The centre works on the varied cultural strains in Kazakhstan’s history and supports foreign archaeologists.

Baipakov initiated the creation of Archaeological Expertise, an international team based in Almaty. The team has been cooperating with the seminary’s Tandy Institute for Archaeology to investigate the discovery. The joint team began studying the Ilyn Balik site, a medieval city, which had never been excavated.

Two years ago, an Usharal resident reported the discovery of an inscribed stone marked with a cross. The stone was recovered, but its original location is not known. The team has subsequently found seven inscribed gravestones on the surface outside the main area of the settlement. The suspected grave markers have Nestorian-style inscribed crosses and two have fragmentary inscriptions.

The investigations provided more information about the previously-discovered stone and show the possibly of an associated Christian community in the state. One of the inscriptions, in Old Syriac, has been partially deciphered by Tandy Institute epigrapher Ryan Stokes, associate professor of Old Testament at the seminary. It marks the date of the grave as 1162 A.D.

The Kazakh Christian community has reacted very positively to the discovery.



Tom Davis

aware of travellers’ accounts of Christian communities in the city and region.

The discovery is the first archae-

and established the Centre for Cultural Rapprochement under Karl Baipakov, the state’s leading archaeologist and a world-renowned

Astana, Tashkent to Boost Trade, Economic Ties

Continued from Page A1

Azimov noted it is essential to increase supplies of flour and oil products from Kazakhstan, as Uzbekistan is a reliable buyer.

An agreement was also reached to develop interregional cooperation, set up joint trade houses as the guarantors of providing mutual supplies in agriculture, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, improve customs cooperation on information and organise joint business forums and visits.

“The creation of trade houses as joint ventures with the head office in Astana or Almaty meets our mutual needs,” said Azimov.

Mamin noted the necessity to open markets for mutual investments between the countries and establish close contacts between business circles and real sector enterprises.

Kazakh-Uzbek relations are characterised by relatively high dynamics, said high-profile political analyst and Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies Director Yerlan Karin. Bilateral meetings are held on a regular basis and at different levels. Nazarbayev’s visit during Eid al-Adha on Sept. 12, his visit to the grave of Uzbekistan’s first president Islam Karimov in Samarkand and negotiations with Mirziyoyev demonstrate the special relationship between the countries, he said.

“The Kazakh President has always attached and attaches great importance to cooperation with Uzbekistan, highlighting the special nature of the close relation-

ship between the two countries. The visit of Kazakh First Deputy Prime Minister Askar Mamin to Tashkent proves this, because this visit took place immediately after the working visit of Nursultan Nazarbayev to Uzbekistan. Astana demonstrates its readiness to start the implementation of the agreements as Mamin is responsible for the government issues of regional cooperation and economic integration,” said Karin.

“In this case, the purpose of the visit was to discuss concrete mechanisms of realisation of the reached agreements and specific

the relationship between the two countries,” he added.

In another sign of the rapidly evolving ties between the two regional neighbours, on Oct. 8, Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev met in Astana with Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Ulugbek Rozukukov, to discuss further expansion of bilateral economic cooperation.

And in yet another new development, Nazarbayev spoke on the phone with Mirziyoyev on Oct. 10. The two discussed issues of mutual cooperation, as well as the implementation of the high-level agreements. According to the



Askar Mamin (L) is being greeted by First Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov in Tashkent on Sept. 22.

arrangements. Adoption of the protocol on the extension of the major issues of trade and economic cooperation is a working document. Both sides showed the intention thereby to further deepen

Akorda, the two leaders stressed the positive results of the recent intergovernmental contacts and noted the importance of further improvement of bilateral relations in various priority areas.

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

One and a Half Million Ethnic Kazakhs Live in China

B2

CULTURE

Kazakh DJ Signs Record Deal with Famous Dutch Label

B3

SPORTS

Rally Kazakhstan Included on FIA 2017 World Cup for Cross-Country Races

B7

Astana Opera Opens Season with Annual Silk Road Festival



Astana Opera performers during one of the shows of the new season.

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Astana Opera is presenting an incredible programme encompassing a roster of national and international performances, instrumental music concert series and acclaimed ballet productions Sept. 22-Nov. 15 as part of the third Silk Road International Musical Festival.

“Abai,” a Kazakh operatic masterpiece created by distinguished composers Akhmet Zhubanov and Latif Khamidi, was staged on the opening evening. Presented in collaboration with Italian and Kazakh production groups, the play wowed the audience with its rich decoration, beautiful costumes, 3D effects and excellent soloists’ performances. Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan Nurlan

Bekmukhambetov performed the title part.

Puccini’s “Madame Butterfly” featuring People’s Artist of Belarus Nina Sharubina and Boris Asafiev’s “The Fountain of Bakhchisarai” with the participation of international competition laureate Lyudmila Khitrova and Honoured Artist of Belarus Oleg Eromkin were also staged the first week.

The performance was prima bal-

lerina Khitrova’s debut appearance on the stage of the capital’s theatre.

“I’m delighted to take part in the festival. I was born in Kazakhstan and spent part of my childhood in Karaganda. We are full of positive emotions,” she said.

The ballet’s choreography is characterised by the opposition of classical dancing to oriental, expressing the dissimilarity between the two worlds.

Continued on Page B2

How Kazakh Language Conquered Heart of South Korean Girl



EunJoo Koo

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The study of Kazakh inspired brainy and inquisitive South Korean student EunJoo Koo to learn more about the country, its language and importance to society. The

Cambridge University PhD student recently submitted her thesis, “Continuities and discontinuities of the language paradigms in Kazakhstan: the Kazakh language from cultural repository to added value,” focusing on the changing value of language.

Continued on Page B2

Kazakh Mineral Springs Possess Therapeutic Efficiency

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – One can rest and improve one’s health thanks to Kazakhstan’s unique natural resources, climate and healing mineral waters with diverse composition, chemical properties and therapeutic efficiency. One can find his or her own mineral water in nearly every region.

Thermal waters with a sodium sulfate-hydrocarbonate composition prevail in the northern region. Mineral waters have healing effects, iodine, bromine, calcium and sodium compound. Sodium and magnesium waters, thermal hot springs with sulphate and hydrocarbonate waters are found in the east. South Kazakhstan is rich with nitrogen hydrocarbonate thermal waters and radon sources.

Nearly all balneology types of waters except carbon dioxide are found in Kazakh land, according to filtroinfo.ru. Only a small share of the explored mineral waters is used externally in sanatoriums for therapeutic and prophylactic purposes.

Radioactive (Radon) Waters

The advantages of radon baths have long been known. Since ancient times, Romans bathing in the radioactive waters of Baden-Baden noticed diseases retreated and vitality rose. Today, radon baths are a good alternative to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. In small doses, radon has a tremendous healing effect, noted tr-kazakhstan.kz.

Radon treatments are beneficial for metabolism, stimulate the immune system and provide a local anaesthetising, antipruritic, anti-inflammatory effect. In hypothyroidism and atherosclerosis, they improve lipid metabolism, normal-



Photo: tr-kazakhstan.kz

ise thyroid function and enhance the stomach’s secretory and motor functions. They improve one’s general condition and sustained blood pressure reduction is observed.

When taking radon baths, one must remember simple things to get the best effect. These include eating at least a half hour before taking a bath, recommended bowel and bladder cleansing, not submerging below one’s heart level and bathing for no more than 10-15 minutes, according to the website. Consuming alcohol and nicotine is not allowed.

It is best to consult a doctor first, as not everyone can take radon baths because of existing contraindications.

For radon bath treatments, nearby visitors and those from foreign countries come to Kapal-Arasan Resort in the centre of Semirechie (Seven Rivers). The mineral waters can be compared with the waters of such famous resorts as Velingrad in Bulgaria and Janské Lázně in Czech Republic, as well as some in France, Hungary and Italy, noted tr-kazakhstan.kz.

The water goes into the resort directly from wells and is used in baths, showers and underwater shower-massage. The resort, which provides five meals per day and kumys (fermented mare’s milk)

therapy, has a large and beautiful territory with places designed for children’s rest.

Silicic Thermal Waters

When ingested, silicic waters provide an anti-inflammatory effect and reduce intoxication due to the adsorptive properties of silicic acid.

Rakhmanov springs mineral waters are thermal, radon, sulphate-hydrocarbonate, sodium-magnesium waters containing silicic acid and free nitrogen, according to filtroinfo.ru.

Rakhmanov springs were named after the legendary hunter who, while chasing a wounded deer, suddenly came upon a mountain spring. The water was warm with steam rising from it and he saw the animal he injured. The hunter tried to move closer towards it, but miraculously the mortally-wounded deer freely and easily rose from the water and ran away with its wounds healed. Sick people have subsequently been drawn to the spring and get their portion of the therapeutic water.

Rakhmanov Springs Resort is based in East Kazakhstan region, about 450 kilometres from Ust-Kamenogorsk.

Because the resort is located in the border area all foreigners need pass-

es, with the price depending on when application is made. For example, a pass is 4,500 tenge (US\$13.38) per person if an application is submitted within 45 days before the route begins and could increase to 12,000 tenge (US\$35.68) if filed later.

The Sosnoviy Bor mineral water deposit in Kostanai region, nitric, low-mineralised and with a high content of silicic acid, is used in the resort of the same name to treat diseases of the digestive organs, motor and support and the blood circulation system.

Bromide and Iodine Waters

Bromide waters normalise central nervous system function and have a good effect on inflammatory, vegetative-vascular diseases, neurosis and neurasthenia. In systematic prescription they may decrease the intensity of metabolic processes in the body, however, and are therefore not recommended for patients prone to be overweight and with other disorders of fat metabolism, notes filtroinfo.ru.

Such water is widely used for external and drink treatments in health resorts in Pavlodar region and Almaty.

Waters containing iodine are helpful for gastrointestinal tract diseases with atherosclerosis and thyroid dysfunction.

Chalybeate Waters

Zhosalinskaya mineral water was discovered 160 kilometres from the city of Karaganda. The calcium, sulphate, ferruginous, sodium and acidic waters in its compound can be applied for drinking treatment, baths, showers and other situations.

A departmental sanatorium operates in the birch and aspen forest.

South Kazakhstan Tourism Forum Links Government, Business, Int’l Organisations to Highlight Industry’s Image

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The organisers of the 2016 Ontustik Tourism Forum, held Oct. 6-7 in Shymkent, sought to create a single concept to promote the region’s tourism industry and its reputation as the “Heart of the Silk Way.”

“The forum serves as a dialogue platform for meetings and negotiations among representatives of government, business, academia, media and NGOs on the development of the tourism industry along the Silk Way under the aegis of international organisations such as UNESCO (United Nations Educa-

tional, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the Turkic Council and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO),” reported the organisers prior to the event.

The region is attracting more than one million tourists annually, according to data released by the local Akimat (city administration).

“The pearl, which is [the] object of the UNESCO World Heritage – the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassau, – is [referred] to as the ‘masterpiece of human genius;’ [standing alone] it annually attracts more than one million tourists,” noted the release.

Continued on Page B2

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

ASTANA OPERA

October 14,15 at 7, 6 p.m.	Evgeny Onegin, Ballet
October 18 at 7 p.m.	Carmina Burana, Cantata
October 19 at 7 p.m.	Violin Masterpieces, Concert
October 22 at 6 p.m.	Roden, Ballet
October 26 at 7 p.m.	Bel Canto, Chamber Music Evening

BARYS ARENA

October 18 at 7:30 p.m.	HC Barys vs. Dynamo Moscow
October 20 at 7:30 p.m.	HC Barys vs. Vityaz
October 22 at 5 p.m.	HC Barys vs. Lokomotiv

One and a Half Million Ethnic Kazakhs Live in China

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – China is home to nearly 1.5 million ethnic Kazakhs, reported the Chinese State Committee for Nationalities during a meeting of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan and National Committee of Chinese People’s Political Board.

“As of today, 1.46 million ethnic Kazakhs live in China. At that, 1.42 million live in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,” said political board deputy chairman Wang Zhenwei, according to Forbes.kz.

He noted the GDP of the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture

ranks first among similar administrative units in China.

“In 2014, the average per capita income in Uyghur Autonomous Region amounted to 11,861 yuan (US\$1,862), which exceeds the average for all of China,” said Zhenwei.

Ethnic Kazakhs in China make up approximately 13 percent of all ethnic Kazakhs in the world. Kazakhs composed 9 percent of the population of Uyghur Autonomous Region in the 1940s and account for 7 percent today. The Kazakh population in China represents 0.1097 percent of the nation’s total population, or 1,462,588 people, according to the 2010 Chinese census.

The Kazakh party was represented by Parliament Mazhilis deputies Nadezhda Nesterova and Zuhra Sayapova, board members of Dungan and Uighur Ethnic and Cultural Centres as well as a counselor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department for Foreign Policy Analysis and Forecasting Aida Yermekkaliyeva.

Kazakhs are one of 56 ethnic groups officially recognised by the People’s Republic of China. Kazakhs were among the peoples who moved into the depopulated regions of Dzungar Khanate following its fall.

China has one Kazakh autonomous prefecture – the Ili

Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture – located in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. There are also Kazakh autonomous counties: Barkol Kazakh, Aksai Kazakh in Gansu and Mori Kazakh in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Most ethnic Kazakhs in China are not fluent in Han Chinese and prefer to speak Kazakh.

Today, Kazakhs in China can be divided into two groups. Ethnic Kazakh farmers are engaged in agriculture, while highly-educated intellectuals usually live in big cities and study at the best universities of Beijing, Shanghai and Japan.

A special study was conducted by the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies.

“Kazakhs of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region have saved a strong ethnic cultural code. 92.5 percent of them got their education in their native language. At that, 89.6 percent of the respondents consider their ethnicity very important. At the same time, 83.2 percent of the Kazakh population of the region is trying to enter into mono-national marriages within their own diaspora. Approximately 90 percent of the interviewed representatives of Kazakh ethnoses in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region would like their children to

live in Kazakhstan,” said institute director and study author Botagoz Rakisheva.

The history of ethnic Kazakhs in China can be divided into four major phases:

- * Traditional phase before 1949, when they used the lifestyle of other Turkish tribes of Central Asia.
- * Communist Revolution from 1949-1966, when the Soviet-style way of life was introduced.
- * Cultural Revolution from 1966-1977, when ethnic Kazakhs were forced to abandon all vestiges of their past.
- * Post-Cultural Revolution, when a fair balance between tradition and modernity was created.

Medical Insurance Programmes Depend on Scope and Price, Says Chief Physician

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Medical insurance is a must for expatriates and those who work in Kazakhstan on contract. Several medical insurance programmes are available depending on the scope and price of the package.

“Medical insurance makes it possible to evacuate in case of serious illnesses or death. An employer is obliged to provide hired expats with health care. Foreigners are serviced according to insurance packages purchased by employers,” Khamit Oshurbayev, chief physician of the capital’s Interteach Clinic, recently told The Astana Times.

bating gallstones, arthritis, etc.) in their insurance plan, said Oshurbayev. An expatriate is therefore simply referred to a clinic.

“Every expat has an individual insurance card with a corresponding number that allows him or her to refer to a medical facility that an insurance company has a contract with. An insurance company carries out medical services hereinafter,” he noted.

Insurance companies do not cover treatment of oncological diseases, tuberculosis and dangerous infections. These should be addressed only at government medical facilities. Interteach can only diagnose and lead a patient to such centres for further treatment.

Any resident or non-resident of

Kazakhstan. Specialised medical insurance is used only during medical emergencies both for Kazakh and foreign citizens.

“A standard type of this insurance is also available for expats. It only includes emergency situations and a small package of laboratory services,” he added.

In-patient care, pregnancy and childbirth are included in an expanded insurance package. The specialised programme involves complex surgeries such as an organ transplant.

“Such complex manipulations relate to high-tech medical care. A medium package consists of primary health care and specialised care. An expanded insurance programme has primary health care and specialised care,” said Oshurbayev.

He added many expats who arrive on a job obtain their insurance from Interteach.

“Interteach has been around for 26 years and deals with foreign medical insurance not only in Kazakhstan but also throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States and far abroad,” said Oshurbayev.

Interteach has its own clinics in nearly all cities and 56 ambulance cars across the country. They operate within their own services, such as 24-hour consulting and dispatch service, family doctors, paediatricians and ambulance service, according to interteachastana.kz.

Patients can visit a neurologist, cardiologist, otolaryngologist, gynaecologist, obstetrician gynaecologist, ophthalmologist, surgeon, endocrinologist, dentist, dermatologist, urologist, gastroenterologist, haematologist, physiotherapist or masseur on schedule. The clinic also conducts ultrasound diagnostics, acupuncture and a sampling of all kinds of tests.



A social package for expats can include benefits such as dental care, drug coverage, hospital treatment and medical examinations during pregnancy, he added.

Hospital care is divided into emergency and planned inpatient care. Expats mostly use emergency care, meaning urgent health conditions like appendicitis or acute injuries.

Employers sometimes include planned inpatient treatment (an aggravating disease like exacerbating gallstones, arthritis, etc.)

the country can obtain voluntary medical insurance. This type of insurance is usually a year long but also depends on the length of the planned stay in the country.

“A client can select any desired coverage, everything up to evacuation, transportation or personal patient’s room with hospital care,” said Oshurbayev.

Mandatory public health insurance that includes a compulsory basic package is coming soon to

How Kazakh Language Conquered Heart of South Korean Girl

Continued from Page B1

EunJoo Koo, whose name ironically sounds like the Kazakh name “Inzhu,” became acquainted with the country through a documentary film about Korean diaspora.

“Kazakhstan was such a mysterious country to me and that was something I was looking for... I was thinking that in order to understand a particular region, I have to know the people. In order to know the people, I have to understand them through their language, because language is not just a communication tool, but it entails people’s thoughts, wisdoms, values, life and history,” she said in an interview with The Astana Times.

Her initial steps in learning Kazakh came in 2004 as a student in the Central Asian Studies Department at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. She had the opportunity to discover its full linguistic diversity during an internship at Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages.

Driven by intellectual curiosity, she came to Almaty at age 18 and lived in the southern capital for two years.

“Kazakhstan was more interesting than I thought,” she said. “Since I am from a monolingual and monoethnic society, looking at the various ethnicities who speak multiple languages was already fascinating to me. The majority of people I encountered here were so kind to me. Some even refused to charge me money in taxis and bazaars only because I spoke in Kazakh. They told me ‘Sen konaksyn’ (‘You are a guest’). I feel very close to Kazakh people as they are open and warm. Thankfully, I met so many good people who helped me from A to Z, from doing grocery shopping to learning Kazakh.”

“When I finally began speaking Kazakh fluently, I could afford

taking some breaks and exploring the country. My favourite places are Shymbulak, Turgen Gorge and Issyk Lake. I first visited Astana in 2006. Later, I came to Astana a few more times during fieldwork for my PhD,” said the researcher.

Soon after she arrived in Almaty, she began dreaming about visiting Shymkent.

“I was so curious about this city, because many people told me that Shymkent is such an interesting place! In 2014, I finally visited Shymkent and Zhetisai. I particularly enjoyed the time I spent in Zhetisai. First, because I had a friend who invited me and organised my visit and second, since the linguistic feature of the village was so different from Almaty city. It was interesting for me to see that everyone speaks Kazakh and studies in Kazakh regardless of their ethnicity. I also met some Korean agailar (‘older brothers’) who are living in Zhetisai. It was such a meaningful experience for me to see life in the southern part of the country. So, I would say Zhetisai was the best place for me and I really want to go back one day,” she said.

As a former vice-president of the American university’s Kazakh society, Eun-Joo Koo was involved in different cultural activities and built good relationships with Kazakh students.

“We have the Central Asian Forum and an official student society entitled Cambridge University Kazakh Society. Whenever I talk to my Kazakh friends, I can feel strong connections with them. I guess it’s because we (Kazakhs and Koreans) share similar values and culture; therefore, we can easily get along and understand each other. They also gave me inspiration for my research,” she added.

The experience of living in the southern capital was very important for Eun-Joo Koo’s doctoral project, as it gave her time to think about how Kazakh language is valued in the market and society and why people speak more Russian than Kazakh in a place like Almaty.

“These questions have preoccupied me since and later became a cornerstone of my PhD dissertation. In my research, I have tried to explore the value of the Kazakh language from an economic angle. I did in-depth interviews with people in particular companies and asked how they deal with the language policy which tries to encourage greater use of Kazakh in work and official communications. I also conducted around 600 surveys in Almaty and Shymkent to assess the changing perceptions of the younger generation on Kazakh language in the economy. Compared to 2005 and 2006, I feel that Kazakh is more widely spoken and I think that it is really exciting for me to observe this change,” she said.

“My research means a lot to me as it is not only an academic paper, but also an abridged edition of my eleven years’ experience in exploring Kazakhstan,” she added. “The time I spent in Kazakhstan during my twenties has broadened my perspective on academic life and shaped my personal values. I am extremely thankful to the Kazakh people for their hospitality, wisdom and generosity.”

When Eun-Joo Koo feels nostalgic, she listens to the songs of Makpal Issabekova and Son Pascal which remind her of the time she lived in Almaty.

“I am planning to read Dulat Issabekov and Gerold Belger’s novels. They are my favourite contemporary writers. My future goal is to be a useful person for Kazakh people, who can contribute to the development of Kazakhstan and also to the relations between Kazakhstan and South Korea. I cannot wait to visit my second hometown Almaty and have a giant beshbarmak (Kazakh national meal) soon,” she said.

THE ASTANA TIMES

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

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EunJoo Koo (L) during her visit to Syrdarya University.

CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

Kazakh DJ Signs Record Deal with Famous Dutch Label

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Sultan Karimov, better known as Farleon, has signed a record deal with Don Diablo’s label Hexagon. His track “Fever” will be officially released Oct. 21 on the sub-label of Spinnin’ Records, the Dutch independent label, which will manage and promote the track.

“The track will be available on all online platforms, including Spotify,” Farleon’s manager Temirlan Dautletkaliyev told The Astana Times, adding it is one of the major labels in the world of electronic music. “Hexagon is one of the top labels right now. Don Diablo is really popular at the moment. He has the same management team as Tiesto. That team really liked Sultan’s track and showed it to Don Diablo and he contacted us.”

Farleon, who produces his own music, lives and works in Almaty. The DJ and his manager plan to produce more tracks, conquer the international audience and keep working with major labels.

“For me, it is a big step forward in my musical career in these six years,” said Karimov in an interview with Kazakh music channel Gakku TV.

“I have been searching for my own sound for a very long time and I hope this is it,” he added, noting his new track is a mix of Future House and funk and also inspired by Daft Punk.

Little information is available online about Karimov. According to buro247, he was born and raised in the village of Saumalkol in North Kazakhstan region and has been involved in music since an early age. In addition to Daft Punk, his music is influenced by Justice, Wolfgang

Gartner, Mord Fustang, Skrillex and many other electronic performers. He released his debut EP “Millennium” in 2012 on little-known Canadian label Funkk Sound Recordings. “Millennium” unexpectedly entered the top five best releases of the week on Beatport, the American version of the electronic music portal.

A year later, his remix of Martin Solveig’s “The Night Out” became one of the most popular on Sound Cloud along with remixes from A-Track and Madeon, wrote buro247.

His nickname was created at 16. “When I began to create instrumentals, I wanted some kind of exclusivity. There were many ideas, but I stopped with that one. In fact, my nickname does not mean anything,” said Karimov in one of his early interviews with Compextro Community.

His tracks are getting good feedback from audiences.

“I don’t know how you aren’t a more popular man. I first started listening to you back when you and Rabbit Killer released a bunch. You’ve got some great songs! Keep it up! Hopefully you get bigger soon,” said user Trevor Brown in a comment about one of Farleon’s tracks on YouTube.

“I still remember the first time I listened to that... one of the most amazing music that I’ve ever heard,” said user Rodrigo Borgia in a comment on Farleon’s remix of the SpekrFreks & Relentless song “Apollo.”

Spinnin’ Records was founded in 1999 by Eelko van Kooten and Roger de Graaf and is famous for working with widely-known deejays like Calvin Harris, Zedd, Martin Garrix, Bob Sinclar, Steve Aoki, Yellow Claw, Tiesto and Solveig.



Farleon.

Eurasia International Film Festival Brings Movies to the Masses



Grand Prix goes to House of Others.

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – More than 120 films were shown at 20 different venues during this year’s Eurasia International Film Festival in Almaty, with viewings drawing more than 70 international guests to the Sept. 24–30 event.

This year’s festival was organised with the theme, “Love is the foundation of human life and a path for the harmonisation of cultures.”

For this year’s festival, the 12th iteration of the event, a more democratic format was used, and films were shown for free in public spaces.

“We are seeking to reach everyone who appreciates and loves the cinema, who sees films as a source of imagery, inspiration and aesthetic pleasure, to use this unique opportunity,” said president of the Eurasia Film Festival Rashid Nugumanov in an August announcement about the festival.

The new format was received very positively in Almaty. “Everything went very well. We are receiving really good feedback from visitors. They say the programme was really interesting. The fact that films were shown for free [increased] the flow of viewers a lot,” programme direc-

tor of the festival Yelena Larionova told The Astana Times.

“Now, we are even receiving requests from places where the films were shown to meet them with distributors, because the screenings went so well so they want to repeat them,” she added.

Larionova said screenings of both feature films and short films in the competition were very popular – so much so that some screenings were standing room only. Screenings of films not in the Eurasia competition, (the “Panorama” portion of the festival) but which had won prizes at other festivals, were also well attended, she said.

As part of the Panorama there were films from Asia (“After the Storm,” “Sleepless,” “Nay,” “Tharlo” and more), Europe (“One of Us,” “Blind Sun,” “Zero,” “Dark Diamonds” and more), the Arab world (“Rattle the Cage,” “Clash,” “Road to Istanbul” and more), America (“Paulina,” “Before the Streets,” “Endless Poetry,” “Radio Dreams”) and Australia (“Last Cab to Darwin”).

The international jury for this year’s film contest consisted of recognised professionals such as Valeriy Todorovskiy of Russia, Reza Mirkarimi of Iran, Ning

Ying of China, Aktan Arym Kubat, Doskhan Zholzhaksynov of Kyrgyzstan and Grimur Hakonarson of Iceland.

The grand prix of the festival in feature films went to “House of Others,” directed by Rasudan Glurjidze, which also took the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC) prize.

Adilkhan Yerzhanov was recognised as best director for the film “The Plaque at the Karatas Village.”

Yuri Pomerantsev won for best actor for his work in “Once a Week,” directed by Igor Piskunov, and Emmanuelle Devos took best actress for her role in “Moka” by Frédéric Mermoud.

The jury’s special prize went to “Area” by Luisito Lagdameo Ignacio of the Philippines.

The short film competition was judged by a different jury. There, the main prize went to Kazakh director Darkhan Tulegenov and his film “The Ray of the Rising Sun.”

Famous “Wounded Angel” by Emir Baigazin received the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) award.

“My Friend Raffi” was named best film for kids. It was directed by Arend Agthe.

“The Red Fox” by Alexandra Strelyanaya took the prize for

best script among movies for children.

A special prize, “History and Personality” was given to the documentary “With Nazarbayev, to the Point,” based on the exclusive interview of the Kazakh President with journalist Yerlan Bekkhozhin.

“In the film, the President of Kazakhstan openly talks about the times and about himself. [He] honestly remembers the past, sincerely talks about the present and with great enthusiasm talks about the future of Kazakhstan. Through the simple – at first glance – questions, the viewer gets comprehensive answers to many topical questions,” notes the website of the Akorda presidential administration.

The Eurasia International Film Festival is organised under the patronage of Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Culture and Sport.

“The Eurasia Film Festival brings to life the idea of a multi-polar and multi-cultural world. Such large-scale projects draw the attention of a wide international public and, of course, are very important in strengthening the international cultural and humanitarian cooperation of Kazakhstan and the global community,” said Minister of Culture and Sport Arystanbek Mukhammediy.

Astana Opera Opens Season with Annual Silk Road Festival

Continued from Page B1

The theatre’s entire troupe was involved in the play. Anel Rustemova performed the part of Zarema and Honoured Artist of Kazakhstan Zhandos Aubakirov and Doszhan Tabyldy played the parts of Khan Girei and Nurali, respectively.

The most anticipated production, Verdi’s “La Traviata” starring Honoured Artist of Ukraine Zoya Rozhok, Belarusian Bolshoi Theatre soloist Yuri Gorodetsky and local vocalists, will be held Oct. 7.

“I’m honoured to participate in the Silk Road Festival. I represent the National Opera of Ukraine at the event. ‘La Traviata’ is one of my most loved and favourite opera characters. I want the audience to feel the depth and richness of the inner world of my character. I strive to show that she is sincere, bright, tender, vulnerable, but at the same time is a proud and incredibly strong woman behind the mask of a carefree and glitzy one. In the name of love, she oversteps herself by agreeing to a treacherous offer from Germont and renounces her love. In fact, Violetta is faithful and true to herself. Her deep feeling is the meaning of her life,” said Rozhok.

The singer added it is important to create a lively, emotionally-rich personality full of internal and external contradictions.

“I aspire to use all the colours of my lyric coloratura soprano, my stage experience and artistic skills. I want to make the listener love my character and understand her as Giuseppe Verdi succeeded

to show the nobility and strength of a woman’s love which she is able to defend to the last moment of her life,” Rozhok said.

“Carmina Burana,” one of the most popular works by Carl Orff,

will premiere Oct. 18 as part of the Spiritual Culture World Forum. The choral piece, grouped into “Spring,” “In the Tavern” and “The Court of Love,” will be performed by the Astana Opera soloists, cho-

rus and symphony orchestra under the guidance of Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan Abzal Mukhitdinov.

Virtuoso South Korean pianist Kun-woo Paik will give a concert Nov. 4 with the assistance of the

Korean Embassy. He won the gold medal at the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition in Bolzano. He has appeared on some of the world’s foremost stages including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Centre, Wigmore Hall and Berlin Philharmonic. His repertoire is varied and sometimes unexpected.

Concerts with the participation of well-known artists from Italy and Russia are also anticipated on the stage of the Astana Opera Chamber Hall.

The series began Sept. 18 with famous Russian musician, soloist and first violin of Moscow Virtuosi orchestra and Honoured Artist of Russia Alexei Lundin presenting violin concerts by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Schnittke and Vivaldi.

It was followed Oct. 4 by a concert by brilliant conductor and People’s Artist of Russia Sergei Roldugin featuring the works of the great classics, including Mozart’s “Little Night Music” and Tchaikovsky’s “Serenade for Strings.” The event was organised in cooperation with the Kazakh National University of Arts.

“The Venetian Sounds of Oboe,” highlighting international competition laureate and La Scala Opera House orchestra first oboe Gianfranco Bortolato and the Astana Opera Chamber Orchestra, will be held Oct. 30.



Photo: Karla Nur

Asyl Miras Foundation Opens Centre in Ust-Kamenogorsk for Children with Autism

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Asyl Miras, the private foundation formed by Kazakh businessman and equity investor Bulat Utemuratov, opened the country’s fourth centre for children with autism Sept. 21 in Ust-Kamenogorsk, reported Forbes.kz. The other centres are in Almaty, Astana and Kyzylorda.

“We want to help children with autism spectrum disorders to socialise and live fully. Our foundation aims to provide world-class rehabilitation programmes for them in Kazakhstan. Therefore, we work with the world’s leading specialists in rehabilitation. In June 2015, we opened the first centre in Almaty, then in September we opened a centre in Astana and in June 2016 the one in Kyzylorda opened. Every day, parents of special children address us. At the moment 1,530 families have asked for help in three Asyl Miras centres, 827 children have gone through several stages of diagnosis and 567 children are included



Photo: autism.asylmirus.org

in the programme of psychological and educational rehabilitation,” said Asyl Miras Foundation Director Marat Aitmagambetov.

The multifunctional centre for children and their families was opened within the programme “Autism. One World for Everyone.” With the new centre the programme will be able to provide the most modern rehabilitation and correctional and advice help

to an additional 478 youngsters and their families by the end of the year, he added.

Asyl Miras centres are unique institutions where children and their parents receive multifunction care from professionals. The rehabilitation course for every child is intended for five and a-half months. Each centre can provide help to 180 children at the same time and is free of charge.



Photo: autism.asylmirus.org

“Now each centre has an interdisciplinary team of 30 specialists, psychologists and teachers who have been trained with the leading experts of Kazakhstan, as well as by advanced technologies from foreign countries (the United States, Russia) on issues of autism. The work of the specialists is based on the method of use of applied behaviour analysis, through which children quickly adapt to

the social environment,” said Yelena Yegorova, head of the rehabilitation department at the Asyl Miras Centre in Almaty.

According to the centre’s website, there is a special single correctional programme at all centres based on two methods of autism treatment.

The first is classic, involving study and development of the child’s social-communicative and

cognitive areas, as well as language and everyday life skills. Within this method four specialists, a psychologist, a defec-tologist, speech therapist and social educator, work with the child at the same time.

The second method is ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) therapy using an assessment of basic skills and language behaviour. In this technique, each child is provided with an individual teacher and system based on 544 skills he or she should master.

All the specialists at the Ust-Kamenogorsk centre have passed trainings on applied behaviour analysis, autism diagnosis, sensory integration and other specialised courses. The programme is expected to train professionals for other centres and in the future share methodological and practical knowledge with professionals throughout Kazakhstan.

The help of experts and support of society is very important in autism treatment. “Autism. One World for Everyone” is designed to help change attitudes towards those with the disorder, promote rehabilitation and socialisation programmes at the national level and provide the opportunity for children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and their families to become full members of Kazakh society, noted the website.

Kazakhstan Maintains 5 Percent Unemployment Rate

Staff Report

ASTANA – Since the beginning of this year, the Kazakh government has taken measures to promote employment. A national programme called Employment Roadmap 2020 was used to employ more than 111,900 people.

The Central Communications Service recently held a press conference on Shaping the Society of Universal Labour and Employment of the Population.

“In the whole world, employment is considered to be the main priority of the social and econom-

ic policy of any state. Kazakhstan is implementing the Employment Roadmap 2020 programme, which supports different regional employment programmes. Despite the current situation in the world economy and unemployment rates rising, the state takes measures to keep unemployment at the level of 5 percent. Today, we focus on quality jobs with stable wages,” said Deputy Minister of Healthcare and Social Development Birzhan Nurymbetov.

The deputy minister also said 74,400 (66.5 percent) of people who took part in Employment Roadmap 2020 programme were

unemployed; 36,200 people (32.4 percent) were self-employed and 1,258 people (1.2 percent) were part-time employees. The share of young people under 29 years is 47.4 percent. At that, the proportion of women reaches 45.1 percent.

On Sept. 1, regional employment programmes were used by more than 313,000 people. Of those, 279,800 got jobs. The number includes 139,100 people who got permanent jobs and 140,700 people who got temporary jobs.

“Today, we are working on a new media project, which is called Kazakhstan People – a

Successful Nation. The project united 100 citizens – heroes of our time, who have achieved success and good results over the years of Kazakhstan independence. This project aims to demonstrate the achievements of Kazakhstan using the images of new people, whose fate, character and achievements embody the success of the country since it became independent,” Nurymbetov said.

The Kazakh government increases the prestige and popularity of vocational specialties among young people that meet the needs of the economy.

Worldskills Kazakhstan special regional and national championships of working professions have been held in the state since April 2016. More than 700 participants from all over Kazakhstan competed for the right to be called the best specialist in such fields as restaurant service, confectionery, hairdressing, network and system administration, web design, mechatronics, dry construction and plastering, bricklaying, welding works, decorative work, early childhood education, fashion design and electrical work.

One of the most important

events for the popularisation of the idea of The Society of Universal Labour Society and enhancing human labour authority is the celebration of Labour Day since 2014. Celebrations with veterans, professionals and representatives of labour dynasties, who made a personal contribution to the development and strengthening of Kazakhstan’s economy are organised in all regions of the country.

In July 2012, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev unveiled his vision for the formation of the Society of Universal Labour. In November 2013, the country started to celebrate Labour Day.

More than \$3.9 Million Fines Paid in 2016 for Environmental Violations

Staff Report

Fines in the amount of 1.3 billion tenge (US\$3.9 million) were paid for violations of environmental regulations in the first eight months of 2016. The fines were the result of 1,818 inspections, the press service of the Ministry of Energy reports.

“For violations of environmental legislation, 3,027 administrative fines were imposed totalling 1.1 billion tenge (US\$3.3 million). Today, 2,577 administrative fines were paid totalling 1.3 billion tenge (US\$3.9) or 89 percent of the total,” said the statement.

“The results of the inspections revealed 4,100 violations of environmental legislation. To eliminate these, 2,706 prescriptions were issued.”

Since the beginning of the year, some 932 notices have been issued with the requirements for damages caused to the environment totalling 31.2 billion tenge (US\$93.6 million), of which 743 claims have been recovered to the amount of about 536 million tenge (US\$1.6 million) or 2 percent. The remaining provisions with the requirements for compensation are pending in court.

Some 118 materials were sent

to the court to suspend economic activity with 92 approved by court.

Environmental Regulation and Control Committee of the Ministry of Energy has issued 12 opinions on the mandatory environmental audit.

“The purpose of the environmental auditing is to bring environmental activities in accordance with the requirements of laws and regulations, optimising the use of natural resources, reduction and regulation of energy consumption, waste reduction, prevention of accidental discharges, emissions and man-made disasters,” the statement from the ministry noted.

Alcohol, Tobacco Excise Duties to Grow before 2019

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – A phased increase of excise duties on alcoholic beverages and tobacco products to strengthen the fiscal functions of excise duties will be introduced. This was announced by Kazakh Minister of National Economy Kuandyk Bishimbayev at the recent presentation of the draft law “On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of Kazakhstan on issues of taxation and customs administration” during a governmental meeting.

The excise duties on alcohol and tobacco will be gradually in-

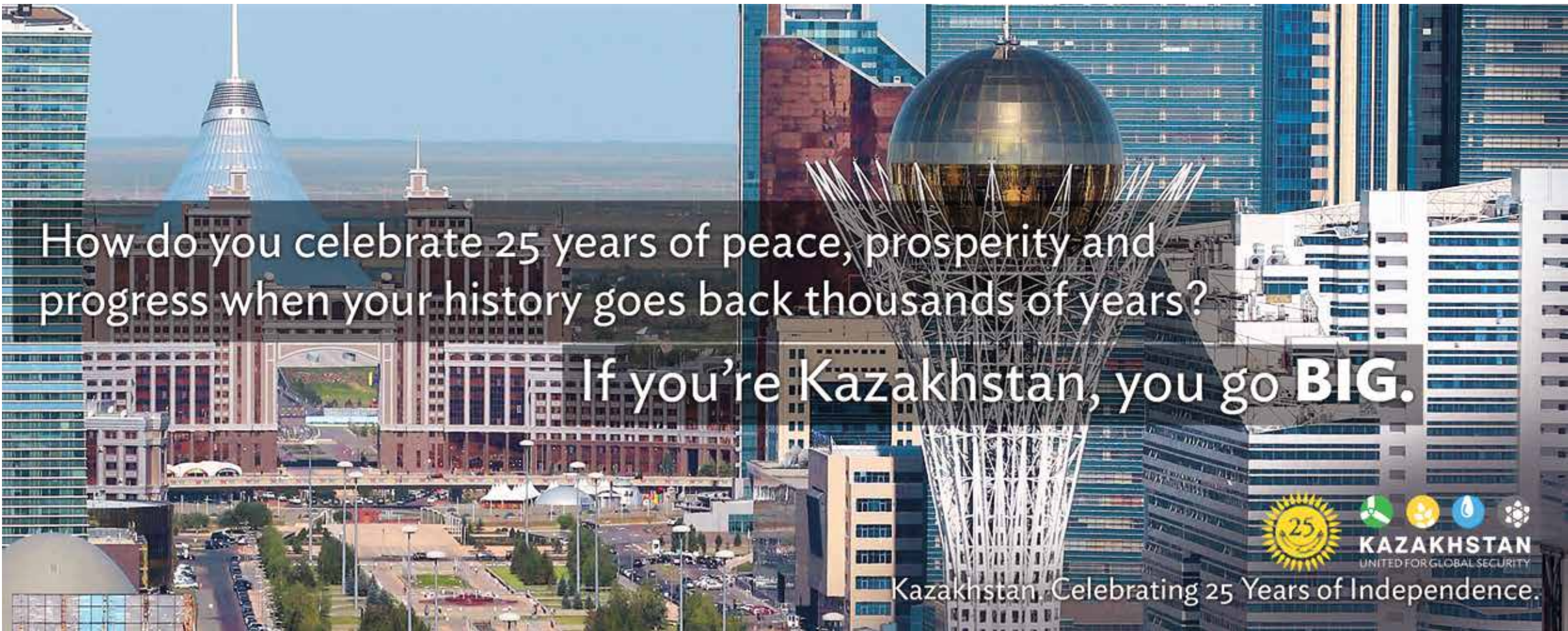
creased by 2019. Excise duties will grow to 85 percent on alcohol, 219 on beer and 74 percent on tobacco products.

“Tax Code set the excise duties for 2014-2016. The rates of excise duties have not been set for 2017-2019. It is proposed to introduce the rates of excise duties for 2017 with a gradual increase in 2018 and 2019. The excise duty on alcohol will account to 2,000 tenge (US\$6) per one litre in 2017 and 2,550 tenge (US\$7) in 2019. The growth will amount to 85 percent in 2016. The excise duty on beer and beer-based beverages will account for 39 tenge (US\$0.11) for

one litre in 2017 and 57 tenge (US\$0.17) in 2019. The growth will amount to 219 percent in 2016,” said Bishimbayev.

It is proposed to set the excise duties on tobacco in the amount of 6,200 tenge (US\$18) for 1,000 pieces in 2017 and 8,700 tenge (US\$26) in 2019. The growth will increase up to 74 percent in 2016.

“It is proposed to introduce a zero rate of excise duty on ethyl alcohol to avoid double taxation and boost the competitiveness of domestic producers in exporting alcoholic beverages. The similar exemption is introduced in Russia and Belarus,” he said.



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

Emoji Stickers Express Feelings with Kazakh Characters

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – iPhone users can now express their emotions with Kazakh national characters, as a free set of national emoji stickers is available for download from the AppStore. The app requires the iOS 10.0 operating system and is currently available only for iMessage.

“The character for the stickers originated from cultural traditions of Kazakhstan. The boy’s name is Aibala. He is cheerful,

ASHIRBAYEVA:
“I think it’s cool that we can promote our culture and have fun by expressing our feelings through national characters all at one time. Aibala has a really cute and heartwarming smile face.”



sarcastic and full of energy and optimism. All human traits and emotions are peculiar to him; that makes him perfect for expressing emotions in a completely unique way,” noted Nimoji Software Limited, according to Tengrinews.

The creators added Nimoji sets of 21 graphic character stickers that reflect the national affiliation of the user and cultural and traditional features of his or her nation. The app can be found by typing “Kazakskie Emoji” in Cyrillic.

Smartphone users reacted positively to the idea of a Kazakh national emoji.

“I think it’s cool that we can promote our culture and have fun by expressing our feelings through national characters all



Photo credit: tengrinews.kz

at one time. Aibala has a really cute and heartwarming smile face,” self-employed entrepreneur Saule Ashirbayeva shared with The Astana Times.

A number of users expressed their positive feelings in the comment section on Tengrinews.kz. Many noted the idea is creative and lovely and the emoji has charismatic and hilarious looks.

“A very proper PR move;

keeping up with all technology is essential in a modern world,” wrote a user named Karakoz.

Not all the comments, however, were positive. Some people disliked Aibala’s facial expression, claiming a more handsome version could have been designed.

“To me, this guy looks like someone a little not bright. It is as if there is some balance or proportion missing in his appearance,” student Abai Kali told the newspaper.

A commenter named Oskar thought Aibala was designed without using any national ornamental design and as a result looked similar to the Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek emojis. Making him different would draw more users, he thought.

Multinational team from six countries worked to create Nimoji and the idea to make na-

tional emojis originated in Kazakhstan, according to the news agency. The creators noted the mission of the project is to give people from different countries an opportunity to express their emotions in a unique way when communicating in messenger and other text messaging platforms.

“We respect and welcome the natural right of representatives from every country, nation and cultural tradition to be presented to a modern globalised world in all of its exclusivity. Our project brings a part of a culture and national colour of talkers into a familiar non-verbal communication,” wrote the creators, reported Kazinform.

The app will soon be complemented with extended paid packages of more than 50 stickers, added the report. In the near future, developers plan to make an app that will offer an opportunity to use the stickers in all basic messaging apps on iOS and Android platforms.

A conversant does not necessarily need to install the app to see stickers sent in chats, according to Nimoji. The company also promised a female character named Aksaule will be the next emoji sticker.

Committee of State Revenues: Save Your Receipt and Win a Car

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – With the support of the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs (NCE), the Committee of State Revenues launched a campaign Oct. 1 called “Ask for a receipt – win a prize!” Like last year, the main prize is a Kazakh-produced car, announced committee spokesman Murat Zhumanbai.

Receipts are accepted in electronic format via the Wipon mobile app to combat the shadow economy. Zhumanbai reviewed additional differences between the 2015 and 2016 campaigns.

“As you remember, last year the Committee of State Revenues (CSR), supported by Atameken, launched a campaign throughout the country ‘Ask for the receipt – win a prize.’ More than 200 prizes were handed out – household appliances and gadgets, including the main prize, a Chevrolet. To participate, citizens had to submit fiscal receipts to the authorities of the state revenue obtained from payment of goods, works or services during the campaign. Across the country, over two million people took part in the campaign who provided more than 10 million receipts. As a result, over 9,000 individual entrepreneurs working illegally have been officially registered, as well as more than 8,000 cash registers,” he said.

Through their proactive actions, he added Kazakh citizens have contributed to reducing the shadow economy and encouraged fair competition among entrepreneurs.

Last year, the event was held separately and in different formats in each region. In some regions, the receipts were sent through the What’s App application and some were exchanged for lottery tickets. The winners were determined through a lottery drawing.

“Summing up last year’s results of the campaign, we promised that this year it would be automated and would be held centrally. Therefore, the campaign will be carried out

electronically via the mobile app to combat the shadow economy with the financial support of Atameken. The Wipon application is a purely Kazakh product designed by domestic programmers. It can be downloaded for free and used on all kinds of smart phones and other gadgets,” said Zhumanbai.

Any Kazakh citizen who can confirm the purchase of goods, works or services can participate by simply presenting a picture of a fiscal receipt. In the case of non-issuance of a receipt, citizens may also file a complaint about the violation.

“The campaign will be conducted from Oct. 1-Dec. 15 this year. During this period, in all regions and cities of Astana and Almaty each month there will be lotteries and their presentation. The final will be held at the CSR at the end of this year, where people will be awarded valuable prizes including the main prize, a car,” he said.

Prizes are provided by the business community. Sweepstakes winners will be determined by the random selection of receipts, so the more receipts citizens send, the more chances they have to win a prize. In order to ensure transparency and objectivity in determining the winners in each region and the cities of Astana and Almaty, the CSR will create a commission which will include representatives of the business community, NGOs and the media.

Vaypoing Director and Wipon developer Rustem Sultanmuradov noted the application will improve and have new features.

“Now, Wipon can detect illegal alcoholic beverages. After scanning the tax stamps in the application, information about the authenticity of alcoholic beverages is displayed. All data scans containing information on the possible illegality of the goods are sent to the committee in real time. In addition, we will soon add the ability to conduct home accounting/scanning receipts so you will be able to analyse their spending and buying,” he said.



Eurasian National University Student Wins ‘Science Slam – Kazakhstan’

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Master’s degree student in Architecture at Lev Gumilyov Eurasian National University Asel Pazylbekova won this year’s “Science Slam – Kazakhstan” science show in Almaty. Pazylbekova presented a project for making an architectural kit for students where through playing and learning they can create new forms of buildings and develop creative thinking.

“Platforms such as Science Slam organised by the Foundation of the First President of Kazakhstan are very helpful for young scientists. I have been searching contests or projects where I could accurately convey my idea to peers, for similar science researchers for a long time. Then I came across Science Slam advertisement,” Asel Pazylbekova said, according to the press service of the foundation.

“I really liked it that the expert of the fund Roza Yedigeyeva was always helping and guiding when I reached out to her. She never rejected. I decided for myself that since organiser is so serious the contest will be decent too. And so it was,” Pazylbekova noted.

Created in Germany in 2006, Science Slam is a scientific talk where scientists present their research in 10 minutes to a non-expert audience. Results depend on audience judgement.

The show is becoming popular among Kazakh scientists and the Foundation of the First President

organises this event for the second time now. Six participants from Astana, Almaty and Shymkent reached the final this year. Young scientists were talking about their research in fields of architecture, sociology, journalism, biology and management, the report said.

Although Pazylbekova handled well the task of translating complicated scientific terms to plain language, this was the hardest part for her. Having conquered both the au-

dience and jury, Pazylbekova won a certificate for Project Management training and boxing gloves as a sign of victory over opponents.

According to the Foundation of First the President, Science Slam helps showcase what modern scientists are doing and provides opportunities to promote a scientist and his research developments.

“This event has already formed its own spirit and mood. ... I really like that there is no officialdom

here and a friendly atmosphere is created. A meeting of like-minded people was held today. Young researchers need to be tuned precisely this way. A solution to complex issues occurs in similar, in some cases even free surroundings. Such confidential atmosphere such as here is very important for developing scientific thought,” jury member and Professor Alexei Tsekhovoi said, presidentfoundation.kz wrote.



73-Year-Old Bicycles 1,200 Kilometres in Honour of Kazakh Independence

Staff Report

ASTANA – Veteran of the National Security Committee Abiltai Shaikhov recently completed a 1,200-kilometre bike trip from Almaty to Astana in honour of the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s Independence.

The 73-year-old pensioner began the journey Sept. 21 and ate traditional Kazakh foods to give him strength along the way, 24.kz reported.

“I was eating kurt and irimshik (Kazakh national dairy products) during my trip. I specifically took them with me. This is our Kazakh tradition. Kurt gives me strength

and relieves thirst. Doctors had even prepared a first aid kit with medicines for me, but I did not use them. Kurt is the best source

of calcium,” Shaikhov said, adding that he is glad he completed the distance.

The veteran said that he was

warmly greeted in almost every major city by compatriots. In Astana, in spite of rain, Shaikhov was met and celebrated by dozens of people on the main square of the country, Khabar TV reported.

“I was very surprised. I really didn’t know that our people will be so kind on my way. I really did not expect that. Five colonels from different organisations met me in the Zhambyl region. They were on bikes too and they escorted me. We covered 200 kilometres together. They handled bikes better than me and had more experience in bike riding. The colonels taught me how to drive, how to sit and most importantly – how to rest correctly,” Shaikhov said.



TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

EXPO Chairman Seeks Cooperation of Diplomatic Corps

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Chairman of Astana EXPO 2017 national company Akhmetzhan Yessimov briefed on Sept. 30 more than 50 heads of foreign diplomatic missions accredited to Kazakhstan on expo preparations and urged them to help accelerate the work of the exhibition’s official participants.

“The construction of all pavilions, located on 174 hectares, has been coming to the finish line. At the end of October, we are planning to provide these objects for international participants’ use for installation and other works,” he said.

To date, 103 countries and 17 international organisations have confirmed their participation and 98 sections commissioners have been appointed. Sixty-two countries have booked celebrations of their national days during the exhibition which will last from June 10 through Sept. 10, 2017. The chair also said there are only five available pavilions that will be distributed soon.



“Great attention is paid to the content of international pavilions. Today, we are receiving requests from our international colleagues on how to develop a theme of the exhibition. In this regard, I would like to highlight projects of the national pavilions of Austria, the U.K., Germany, China, Pakistan, Poland, Japan and Russia that were presented to us for consideration,” said Yessimov, asking the diplomats to help speed up the granting of concepts of pavilions of their countries.

He also informed the diplo-

matic corps about a contest on best global practices in the field of energy for the Energy Best Practices Area (eBPA) Pavilion at EXPO 2017. A commission headed by Secretary General of the International Exhibitions Bureau Vicente Loscertales chose 22 winning projects out of 133 submissions from more than 25 countries.

“We are starting a large-scale public relations campaign to promote Astana EXPO 2017 around the world in collaboration with the American company Burson Marsteller,” said Yessimov. The



company was founded in 1953 and is a leading global public relations and communications firm.

Yessimov also informed participants that the Astana EXPO

2017 national company has signed agreements and memorandums with local and foreign partners totalling \$141 million. He also said that in November,

the Unified Service Centre will start its activity. It will help participants access a wide range of public services in a single location.

Astana EXPO 2017 Invites Entrepreneurs

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – Astana EXPO 2017 organisers predict that the exhibition will receive approximately 5 million visits over three months. The organisers offer Kazakhstan’s entrepreneurs the opportunity to take part in the selection of commercial services for the event in Astana.

It is planned to organise the following services and sell the following products: pharmacy, excursions and tours, entertainments, beauty salons, payment services, vending machines, printing, manufacturing and installation services, design services and 3D-visualisation, rental of office equipment, photo and video and installation, car rental, transla-

tion services, studio, flower arranging, legal services, consulting and accounting services.

“According to our registration dossier, five million visits – is the number of people who will pass through our exhibition for three months. We are talking about 55,000 visits a day and this number will reach up to 110,000 visits on weekends and holidays,” said Deputy Director of Commercialisation Department of Astana EXPO 2017 national company Ilya Urazakov.

He noted that many people will come to Kazakhstan not only to work, but to have a good time and get acquainted with the country.

“We, as organisers of the exhibition, have to create the most comfortable, safe and interesting conditions. For this purpose, our department has

developed a commercialisation programme,” Urazakov said.

He forecasts that 5,000-10,000 people will be employed at that exhibition and considers that EXPO 2017 is a great opportunity for Kazakhstan’s business to make money.

The selection process of the service and goods providing companies will be simple and transparent. Any company has the right to participate in the commercialisation.

Regarding the commercial and financial conditions, he said that two forms are provided for the companies.

The international specialised exhibition will be held in Astana from June 10 to Sept. 10, 2017. Arrival of participants to the expo area and the start of preparatory works is planned for December 2016.

CARICOM Countries to Take Part in Exhibition

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia and Suriname have decided to participate in EXPO 2017 in Astana, it was announced in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

At the General Assembly, EXPO 2017 Commissioner Rapol Zhoshybayev met with Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Irwin Larocque. Larocque will serve as commissioner on behalf of the CARICOM countries that will take part in the exhibition.

During the meeting, Zhoshybayev reviewed preparations for the event and invited Larocque to participate in the international participants meeting that will be held in early 2017. Larocque noted the relevance of the EXPO 2017 theme, Future Energy, for Caribbean states seeking to develop alternative energy due to their lack of traditional energy sources.

Larocque also confirmed his intention to maintain a close dialogue with Kazakhstan, now a member of the UN Security Council, concerning water, energy and food security.

Zhoshybayev also held talks with UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States Gyan Chandra Acharya and UN Under-Secretary-General for Sustainable Development Wu Hongbo. The sides discussed the-

matic events planned by UN agencies for EXPO 2017 as well as the implementation of the UN Convention on Climate Change. CARICOM was established in 1973 as a successor to the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA). Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian country accredited with the CARICOM Secretariat.

On Sept. 21–22, Zhoshybayev paid a working visit to Canada, where he met with official bodies and representatives of business circles of the country.

Canadian participants noted that the theme of the expo will provide companies the opportunity to present advanced experience, new technologies and innovations in sustainable development, the green economy and environmental protection to the whole world.

At a meeting with Director General, Europe and Eurasia Bureau at Department of Foreign Affairs of Canada Leigh Sarty, the sides discussed bilateral relations, simplifying visa regimes and the par-

ticipation of Canadian companies in EXPO 2017.

Zhoshybayev noted the significance of the meeting of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev with Prime Minister of Canada James Trudeau on the margins of the G20 Summit in China, during which the Kazakh leader invited him to visit Astana in 2017.

He also highlighted that the participation of the Canadian companies in EXPO 2017 will strengthen bilateral cooperation and advance new levels of interaction. Sarty expressed confidence in the success of the Astana expo.

In Toronto, Zhoshybayev took part in the Kazakhstan and Canada: Opportunities for Cooperation within EXPO 2017 conference organised by the Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association (CERBA) and the Kazakhstan-Canada Business Council. Top managers of companies such as Cameco Corporation, Uranium One, Phoenix Geophysics, Minas Energy, Gowlings WLG and others attended the event. Canadian participants noted that the theme of the expo will provide companies the opportunity to present advanced experience, new technologies and innovations in sustainable development, the green economy and environmental protection to the whole world.

Following meetings companies expressed willingness to participate in EXPO 2017 and to hold a regular meeting of the Kazakhstan-Canada Business Council during the event. Canada has extensive experience in organising international exhibitions. The country is known for EXPO 1967 in Montreal and EXPO 1986 in Vancouver.

Slovakia Confirms Participation

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – The Slovak Republic recently became the 104th country to confirm it will participate in EXPO 2017.

National Commissioner Rapol Zhoshybayev received an official letter from Prime Minister of Slovakia Robert Fico at the Slovak embassy in Astana.

In November 2010, the Slovak government adopted a National Action Plan on energy produced from renewable energy sources. The new plan calls for increased use of renewable energy derived from biomass to 14 percent by 2020.

According to the official position of the Slovak government, biomass

can be an effective substitute for energy obtained from fossil fuels and thus make a significant contribution to reducing the volume of natural gas consumed in the production of heat.

On Oct.3, Chairperson of the EXPO 2017 national company Akhmetzhan Yessimov invited President of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov to the expo site.

“The complex is very large and meaningful. I knew that Astana has been preparing seriously for the upcoming exhibition, but today I was amazed by what I saw. I am sure that EXPO 2017 will be one of the best among exhibitions,” emphasised Minnikhanov.

The sides also signed a memorandum of cooperation to establish

partnerships and develop long-term cooperation.

According to Yessimov, the memorandum should help develop tourism related to EXPO 2017 with the involvement of leading tour operators of Tatarstan.

Besides tourism, the parties intend to cooperate in fields such as improving investment climate and investment attractiveness, mutual assistance in simplifying administrative procedures and others.

EXPO 2017 will be held in Astana from June 10 to Sept. 10, 2017. More than 2 million visitors totaling 5 million visits are expected.

Expo organizers have been developing cultural and entertainment programmes, which will total more than 3,000 events.

South Kazakhstan Tourism Forum Links Government, Business, Int’l Organisations to Highlight Industry’s Image



Continued from Page B1

To further enhance tourism inflow into the region, seven agreements were signed which will include projects such as developing the Saryagash resort area, constructing conveniences and roadside infrastructure, establishing and building a tourism school and attracting investment to the area.

The forum’s concept, “Tourism is a major industry in the world economy,” was similar to the UN organisations’ proclamation of “a century of tourism.”

“The Great Silk Way is an original phenomenon of the history of humanity, its desire for unity and

exchange of cultural values. Kazakhstan’s section of the route of The Silk Way is a unique complex of monuments of history, archaeology, architecture, urban planning and monumental art, reflecting deep processes of interaction between nomadic and settled agricultural cultures of the people of Central Asia,” noted the organisers.

Representatives from more than 300 organisations took part in the event including as the consuls in Kazakhstan from the Czech Republic, Kuwait, Macedonia, Mongolia, South Korea and Spain. Local and foreign representatives of tour companies, universities, national companies, chamber of

entrepreneurs, trade missions, business councils, government bodies and city administrations from other regions and cities like Astana and Almaty were also present, as well as mass media from 10 countries.

Kazakhstan Tourist Association Director Rashida Shaikenova moderated the forum and key speakers included Kazakh Ministry of Investment and Development Department of Tourism Industry Director Marat Igali, AP Contemporary founder Andrey Pichugin, South Kazakhstan region Association of Tourism Industry Chairman Gulmira Akhberdieva, Fabulous Abu Dhabi Hotel Man-

agement General Manager Marius van Rensburg, F&F Trade Engineering business developer Massimiliano Avogadro, Russian Hotel Association President Gennady Lamshin, Reikartz Hotel Group General Manager Maxim Bogdanov, Sabre Travel Network Central Asia General Manager Pavel Spit-sin and SWISSAM International School of Hospitality CEO Hans Hirtner.

A tourism fair and gala concert were a part of the two-day event, where numerous B2B meetings were held and many bilateral memoranda on further cooperation signed. The participants were also taken on InfoTours around the city.

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

Rally Kazakhstan Included on FIA 2017 World Cup for Cross-Country Races

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Rally Kazakhstan was officially added to the calendar for the 2017 FIA World Cup for cross-country rallies after Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) held its latest World Motor Sport Council meeting Sept. 28 in Paris.

For the first time, Automotorsport Federation of Republic of Kazakhstan achieved the right to hold a FIA World Cup stage for rally, the federation informed on their website. This will take place May 20-27 in the Mangystau region in the Aktau and Zhanaozen area.

“Being a part of the international calendar for FIA rallies is a huge achievement not only for us as organisers but for the entire country. We have been moving towards this goal for several years and finally achieved the right to hold one of

this prestigious world cup's stages for the first time in Kazakhstan's history,” said President of Kazakh Automotorsport Federation Marat Abykayev, according to fams.kz.

A cross-country rally is a sporting event with a route covering the territory of one or several countries. Cross-country Rally, cross-country marathon rally (Marathon) and cross-country baja are three types of cross-country events, according to fia.com. The World Rally Championship is a multi-stage series of races held annually in different countries, from the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Morocco in the south to Russia, the world's only snow and ice baja.

“I hope that as a result of big joint work, experience and effort of every expert on this race. We can add to the positive news about Kazakhstan and make one of the most colourful and interesting World Cup stages in our country,”

Abykayev continued, according to the report.

In 2017, the World Cup will comprise 11 stages, each is the best race in each country, which highlights the prestige of the World Rally Championship.

Rally Kazakhstan 2016 held May 28 through June 3 by the Automotorsport Federation of Republic of Kazakhstan was a race candidate for inclusion on calendar for the FIA World Cup for rallies. In total, racers had to cover more than 2,000 kilometres along the territory of the Mangystau region. The length of special speed stages amounted to 1,616 kilometres, according to news sources.

Vice-Chairperson of the FIA Commission for rallies Fred Gallagher, who was also a director of Rally Kazakhstan 2016, arrived to observe Rally Kazakhstan 2016.

“I lay high hopes on this race. Kazakhstan's climate and landscape allows conducting motor-



Photo: fams.kz

sport competitions of high-level complexity, developing unusual routes, attracting interest of inter-

national public. I wish good luck to the entire team of the organising committee and a healthy passion

for sport to participants,” Gallagher commented back then, according to fams.kz.

FC Astana Earns One Point in First Two UEFA Europa League Group Stage Matches

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – Kazakh champions FC Astana in the second match of the group stage of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Europa League at home drew with Swiss club FC Young Boys 0:0. Both Astana and Young Boys lost their first matches in the group to APOEL of Cyprus and Olympiacos of Greece respectively. Therefore, on Sept. 29 in the capital of Kazakhstan, both teams

were determined to earn their first points in the tournament.

The hosting Kazakh team, from the first minute seized the initiative. However, the first dangerous moment came at the goals defended by the home club's Serbian-born goalkeeper Nenad Eric. However, Young Boys' Yorick Ravet's attempt to send the ball above and behind Eric missed the goal.

Astana's response turned out more threatening. After the throw-in from Astana's defender Dmitry Shomko, the ball rebounded to

Roger Cañas, the Colombian hit with a reversal, but the ball went past the far goal post. The hosts had their best chance to open the score at the 37th minute when, in a similar situation, Shomko's throw-in led to George Despotovic's bicycle kick but that only hit the crossbar.

After 39 minutes, Shomko had the opportunity to score as he went for the far corner of the Swiss goal but the strike lacked accuracy.

In the second half, the hosts had new chances to score from Shomko's inclusion into attacks. But

the defender's strike went straight into the Young Boys goalkeeper's hand. Astana's Abzal Beisebekov tested his luck from a distance. But once again the goalkeeper stood in the way of the ball.

At the end of the match, Young Boys had the opportunity to earn all three points in Astana but striker Kwadwo Duah lacked composure to complete the dangerous cross from his teammate and the ball went over the crossbar. Thus, a rather boring match ended goalless and the two teams earned one point each.

“Young Boys are strong opponents, the second strongest team in Switzerland after Basel. Astana played with a great desire to win. Unfortunately, the game's outcome was disappointing for us. We planned to actively use the flanks so that our strikers clung to the ball, but we did not show enough accuracy in the completion of our attacks,” FC Astana's Bulgarian manager Stanimir Stoilov said at the post-match press conference.

“We played well and created some good chances to score. The Swiss

team had only one opportunity in the end. But they played well in defence and made few mistakes. It is a pity that we did not use our moments since we had all the chances to win this game,” Shomko commented.

In the first match of the UEFA Europa League's group stage, FC Astana lost in Cyprus on Sept. 15 to APOEL Nicosia 1:2. The tournament's next match for the Kazakh champions will be against Greek powerhouse, Olympiacos Athens. The match will be played in Astana Arena on Oct. 21.

Astana Pro Team Cyclist Lutsenko Wins Tour of Almaty

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Astana Pro Team cyclist 24-year-old Alexei Lutsenko, from Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan, beat Italian Mauro Finetto of Unieuro Wilier and Russian Roman Maikin (GazProm-RusVelo) Oct. 2 in a rainy, 186-kilometre race to claim the third Almaty Tour in his career. Lutsenko finished the race in four hours, 23 minutes and 55 seconds.

“Tour of Almaty has become a trump card and a brand of our city – confirming the status of a sporting region,” Almaty Akim (Mayor) Bauyrzhan Baibek noted, as quoted by Zakon.kz. “This, fourth Tour of Almaty, is being held in the 25th year of Independence of Kazakhstan and the 1,000th anniversary of our beloved city of Almaty. Thanks to the support of the head of state, Almaty has transformed into a sports centre with modern infrastructure that can host events of global scale.”

This was the fourth tour in the history of the city, which hosted 14 international teams with a total prize fund of \$43,802. It was perhaps the last one-day event, accord-



Alexei Lutsenko (L) receives the trophy from Akim Bauyrzhan Baibek.

ing to the organisers, as the race is to become a multi-day event.

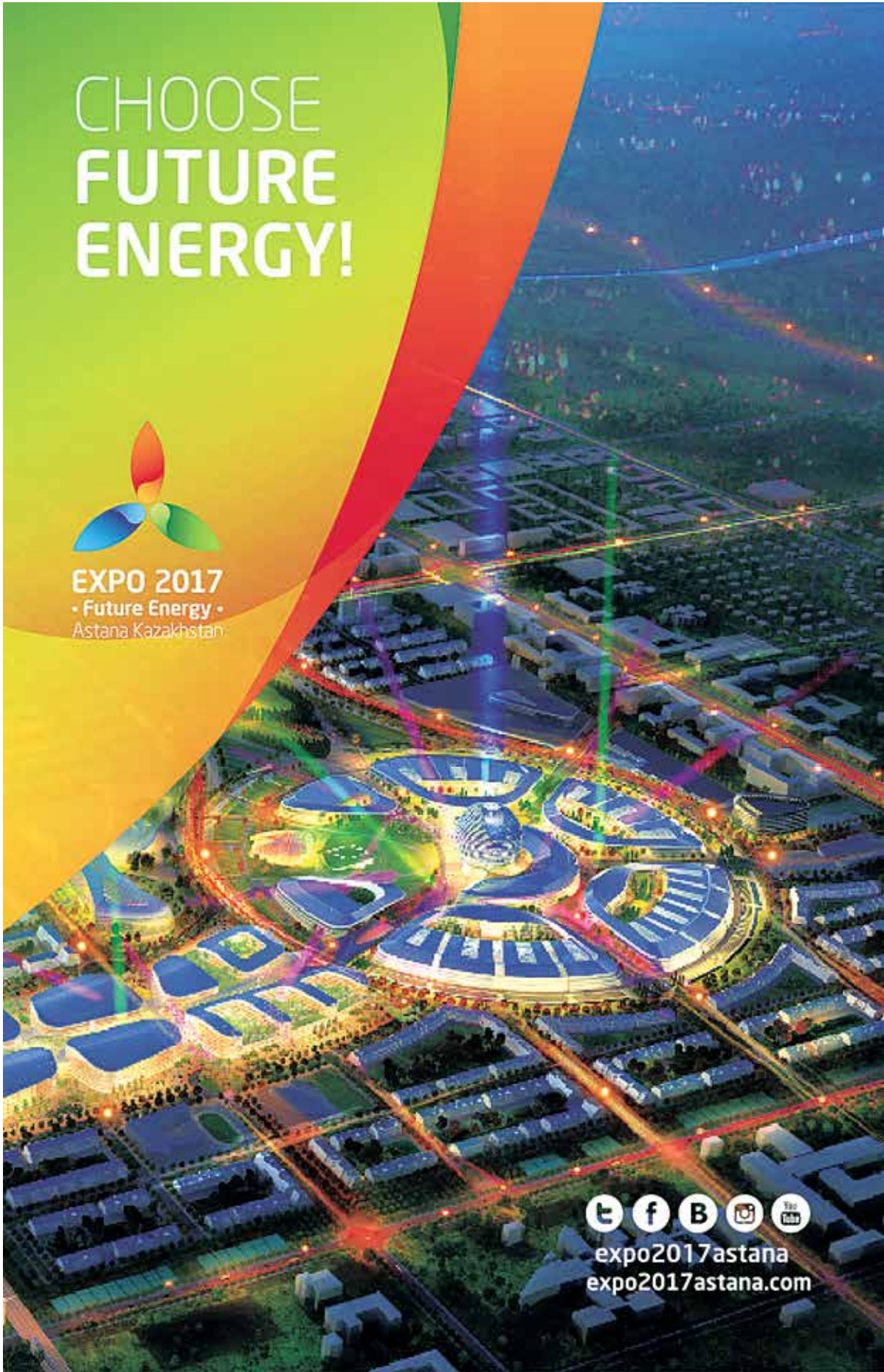
According to the official Astana Pro Team website, Lutsenko, besides winning the 2014 and 2015 Tour of Almaty is also Champion of the 2014 Asian Games. Last year, he celebrated his first World Tour victory by winning one of the Tour de Swiss stages. In 2014, Lutsenko also won the short, hilly individual time trial “on a windy day in August at the Tour of Denmark, surprising himself with a performance unequaled by specialists more experienced on the day,” the site states. In addition, Lutsenko

is the 2013 U23 World Road Race Champion.

As Almaty is readying to host the Winter Universiade next year, the management of the universiade, jointly with the city administration, is promoting the city's and country's images abroad. In recent years, the city has hosted sporting events such as the Seventh Winter Asian Games, held in 2011, boxing and weightlifting championships and a judo grand prix as well as constructed numerous modern sporting facilities. The upcoming universiade is to be attended by more than 2,500 athletes and 1,500 delegates from 58 countries.



Lutsenko at the finish line.



Ocean Basket Seafood Restaurant Opens in Astana

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – World-known South African seafood restaurant chain Ocean Basket (OB) opened in Astana Sept. 23 and the management is claiming every seafood lover should pay a visit for delicious otherworldly treats.

“The restaurant is distinguished by high-quality, fresh seafood. Besides, we are going to offer meals, which have never been offered in Kazakhstan before, even the sushi is unique,” the restaurant’s public relations service told local media.

“The kitchen is fully supervised by our colleagues from South Africa. This restaurant chain was established by two brothers from Greece – migrants to South Africa in 1995. The network has grown since then.”

According to OB General Manager in Kazakhstan Grigoriy Berdnikov, Astana’s 160-seat restaurant is only the first in their plans.

“We are planning to expand our brand in Kazakhstan and will soon open [a restaurant] in Almaty. The uniqueness of the restaurant is that there are seafood dishes that are

The restaurant is located at 7 Saraishyk Street on the left bank, a five-minute walk from the Baiterek and the Diplomat Hotel – across from the Diplomatic Town. The average bill at the restaurant per customer is about 6,000 tenge (US\$18). The famous fish and chips combo for instance is about 2,000 tenge or \$6.

cooked only at the Ocean Basket restaurant chain, for example, the special process for preparing sushi at OB restaurants has been introduced

by sushi champion of the world Pepi Aneviski,” Berdnikov said.

The restaurant is located at 7 Saraishyk Street on the left bank, a five-minute walk from the Baiterek and the Diplomat Hotel – across from the Diplomatic Town. The average bill at the restaurant per customer is about 6,000 tenge (US\$18). The famous fish and chips combo for instance is about 2,000 tenge or \$6.

“It’s not an everyday eatery as it is quite pricey for locals. Once in a while it would be great though to have it as the food really is delicious. But what’s more important is the quality of seafood. For Kazakhs, being so far from the ocean, it is a joy to have such a restaurant with fresh seafood and deliciously prepared meals. So this chain really does bring the value to the table,” said guest at the restaurant Yerbol Saduakass.

However, despite the fine-dining prices, in Kazakhstan terms, the restaurant boasts a large children’s playground and an unpretentious environment.

“There are no super-expensive finishes or cutlery or huge equi-

site wine glasses,” said guest Zhanana Ayaganova. “But the vibe they have created prompts there is an ocean somewhere near, it feels like you’re somewhere on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea and almost can hear the ocean tides...”

Ayaganova said she felt a feeling of exclusiveness and comfort

needed for a great dining experience? It puts a smile on my face to see world-famous names coming in to our market like Starbucks and McDonald’s and now OB. It gives us a little glimpse into the other part of the world and leaves its special taste in our steppes.”

Today, OB has more than 200

restaurant and its owner coupled with giving the consumer more than they expect (that’s what value for money means), and it’s what we focus on. This success is coupled with a determination to build a brand globally. Trusted, consistent, relevant and distinctive,” she told businessmedialive.co.za.



OB staff from South Africa is giving training in Astana.

at Astana’s OB from the moment she walked in.

“The hostesses were friendly and the service was fast. The menu offers a good variety of dishes, the food was delicious and there is a large children’s playground for families. What else is

restaurants in 17 countries. The company’s top management is planning to continue its expansion with five restaurants in five years planned for Kazakhstan, according to OB Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Grace Harding.

“The success of every single

“Everything we do is about sustainability. For two years, we have been setting the foundation, creating the right infrastructure and making sure that we have what our franchisees need to succeed. Now is our time for expansion,” she added.



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