



Astana, Minsk and Moscow Advance Efforts to Create Eurasian Economic Union by 2015, As President Nazarbayev Urges Thorough Preparation and Care



Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia, Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus met in Moscow on Dec. 24 as part of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. They discussed the directions of integration among three member states of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space, as well as progress on the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union by the scheduled date of Jan. 1, 2015. They also discussed issues on preparation and implementation of the road maps on Kyrgyzstan and Armenia's accession to Eurasian integration structures. Following the meeting, several joint decisions on a common customs policy, regulation of natural monopolies activity and competition rules took place were signed. President Nazarbayev also had a bilateral meeting with President Putin as the two leaders signed an agreement on cooperation in the military-technical sphere and oversaw the signing of several other bilateral documents relating to joint use of the Baikonur Cosmodrome and to the transit of Russian oil through Kazakhstan to China.

Country Marks Independence with Speeches, Songs, Celebrations

By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – The Independence Day celebrations in the capital began with an address by President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Dec. 14 and the presentation of state awards to a number of prominent figures in Kazakhstan's cultural, scientific, health, education, business, military and other spheres for their significant contributions to the socioeconomic and cultural development of the country. The celebrations continued with concerts and fireworks.

After the awards ceremony, the President spoke at a grand meeting dedicated to Kazakhstan's Independence Day. On Dec. 16, 1991, he said, a new star, the Republic of Kazakhstan, appeared in the constellation of nations of the world.

"On this day, we started our Kazakhstan Way. We have implemented a great mission – we began our independence. Time flies. Today, what came just after the birth of independent Kazakhstan is already history, receding into eternity. We must judge our past in comparison with our current great achievements. Twenty-two years ago, we could only dream that we could grow our economy. This year, Kazakhstan is among the 50 most competitive countries in the world," the President said.

Noting that the number seven has always been significant for Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev commented that the Kazakhstan 2030 strategy was based on seven priorities. He then listed seven priceless assets the country gained upon independence, including the land itself and the borders secured for the first time in history, the unity of Kazakhstan's people, the coun-

try's culture and language, its industry and innovation, the Society of Universal Labour the country is building, the city of Astana and the nation's sense of global responsibility.

"Independence rallied the people under the single shanyrak of the assembly, guardian of peace and harmony. Our spiritual unity is the main foundation of the secular state and society," Nazarbayev said. He also noted the spread of the Kazakh language around the globe and emphasised the country's rapidly developing economy, which he said had been achieved by the "painstaking work" of all Kazakhstan's people.

After the meeting, a gala concert and reception in honour of Independence Day were held.

Astana's Alau Ice Palace hosted days of public skating leading up to the Dec. 16 holiday and held contests and prize giveaways on Independence Day. The rock opera Zheruiyk was shown in the Palace of Peace and Accord. In Astana's central square a disco was held with the participation of Kazakh stars. Soloists from the State Philharmonic of Astana opened the show, followed by Kazakh stars Ulytau, Yerke, Zhaly, Retro, the Alaman trio, KZ, Dabyl and soloists Kydyrali Bolmanov, Dos, Assel Omarova, Bakit Shadayeva and Dosymzhan Tanatarov. Young people at the disco were given the chance to sing with their favourite performers, as well as dance to their hits. The celebration closed with fireworks.

All over the country, mass festivities including concerts, exhibitions and competitions were held to celebrate Kazakhstan's 22 years of independence.

Kazakhstan and Canada: Cold Climates, Warm Relations

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Kazakhstan and Canada, two countries with harsh winters, small populations and lots of open space, are finding that their similarities are increasingly opening avenues for cooperation, particularly in agriculture.

As Kazakhstan continues to invest in its agricultural sector, the country's livestock trade is growing. But Kazakhstan needs animals suited to its climate. Canada, with its long history of ranching – and equally fierce winters – is becoming an increasing significant partner in Kazakhstan's evolving livestock industry.

The current value of Canada's livestock trade with Kazakhstan has reached \$50 million, and more growth is expected next year, Canadian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Stephan Millar told The Astana Times. Currently, Canada supplies Kazakhstan with beef and dairy cattle, genetic materials and hog industry products. Canada's cattle breeds, including Canadian Angus and Canadian Limousin, are "ideally adapting

to cold climate conditions of Kazakhstan," Millar said.

Beef and dairy cows from Canada are estimated to account for about 20 percent of Kazakhstan's livestock imports. In 2013, Canada exported 2,500 head of cattle to Kazakhstan, mostly through the KazAgroFinance programme, though some Kazakh agricultural businesses are connecting with Canadian suppliers privately. Agreements between Kazakh businesses and the Canadian livestock companies Alta Exports, Friesvale Farms and Xports International have recently been signed, the ambassador said, and there is every expectation that the trade will continue to grow.

The current trade is driven by strong interest on both sides, Millar said. The embassy has supported a number of recent visits by Kazakh delegations to Canada to explore possibilities for cooperation in agriculture, including raising livestock. Those missions resulted in both sides identifying prospective commercial partners, Millar said.

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In Seoul, Kazakh Prime Minister, South Korean President Discuss Trade and Economic Cooperation

By Sergey Osanov

Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Serik Akhmetov met South Korean President Park Geon-hye during an official visit to South Korea on Dec. 10 to discuss developing bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

"We have made significant progress in this direction, as evidenced by the dynamics of our bilateral trade, the volume of which over nine months of this year exceeded \$1 billion. We intend to continue to increase the rate of turnover," Akhmetov said during the meeting according to his press service.

He noted that Kazakhstan and South Korea had implemented a number of large-scale joint projects, including the construction of the Balkhash Thermal Power Plant and a chemical complex in the Atyrau region and the development of Zhambyl oil field.

"I am confident that the implementation of these major projects will contribute to the development of Kazakhstan's economy and will significantly enhance investment and technological cooperation between the two countries," said the prime minister.

Akhmetov also conveyed Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev's best wishes to

President Park and invited her to pay an official visit to Kazakhstan in 2014.

The South Korean leader praised the level of bilateral cooperation and called for further deepening of

the countries' ties across the entire spectrum of bilateral relations.

"Kazakhstan is one of Korea's main partners in the Eurasian space," she emphasised during their meeting. Park also noted South Korea's

experience in holding international expositions and expressed willingness to share their extensive experience in organising such events with Kazakhstan.

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South Korean President Park Geon-hye (r) told Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Serik Akhmetov (l) that Kazakhstan is one of South Korea's main partners in the Eurasian space.

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NATION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

Poll Shows Most Kazakhs Feel Positive about the Future

By Julia Rutz

ASTANA – According to the recently published opinion poll by IPSOS Mori, a leading market research company from the U.K., 86 percent of Kazakhstan's citizens are optimistic about the future of the country. Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the direction of the country's development and regarded the economy positively.

The research, carried out between Sept. 27 and Oct. 16 of this year, showed that 86 percent of ordinary citizens feel "positive" about Kazakhstan in general, while 35 percent describe the situation in the country as "very positive."

The development of the country's economy was also estimated as "good" and 81 percent of respondents said they feel the country has become a better place to live over the past 10 years, mentioning such aspects of everyday life as the gradual elimination of corruption and rising general standards of living.

Respondents were asked to rate life in Kazakhstan today and compare it to 10 years ago. Satisfaction ratings over the 10-year period often doubled and increased by nearly sixfold in several cases. Job opportunities were rated as "good" 10 years ago by 18 percent of the population; 36 percent say they are good today. Thirty-six percent of the population say transport infrastructure is good today versus six percent for 10 years ago.

Survey respondents were also asked to name major challenges they are facing now. Most respondents (26 percent) said employment was their most pressing issue, while for 15 percent the main problem remains housing. Human rights and democratic reforms were identified as chal-

lenging by five and two percent of Kazakhs, respectively.

Stability and peacefulness were included in the top 17 descriptive terms associated with the country by more than a third of respondents. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of citizens agreed that their children's generation will have more opportunities than their own.

Regarding Kazakhstan's global standing, 50 percent said the country has "greatly improved" and 90 percent said they supported Kazakhstan's participation in international trade, with 54 percent expressing "strong support."

Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov said he was "delighted that this far-reaching research, which was carried out throughout Kazakhstan on a scientific basis, has resulted in such a positive endorsement by the people of our country's steady progress in the last 10 years. We note these results with satisfaction but no sense of complacency, and hope that our international allies share the same approach."

Noteworthy is the positive estimation of Kazakhstan's development expressed by the generation that experienced life in the USSR.

"New horizons appeared for us in 1991 that were unreachable before. Of course, all the hardships we faced after the collapse of the Soviet Union didn't allow us to reach everything we wanted, but we became free to choose our own destiny. People started to be free to choose their life paths. That was a tremendous change, something like a turning point," Deputy Director at Kazakhstan TV Marat Raimkhanov, who turned 31 in December, said in an interview.

According to Raimkhanov, the first years of independence were a true challenge for all Kazakhs, but



people learned to work hard, to be purposeful and rely on themselves. He called the country's economic growth and positive international image major achievements.

"Kazakhstan became the initiator of a global dialogue between civilizations. Today, our state has to continue developing democratic reforms and supporting liberal values. We have to establish a true civil society in order to be competitive and successful. This delicate task has to be solved by my generation," Raimkhanov, who did his master's degree at the London School of Economics, explained. And past success is no reason to stop. Quoting Benjamin Franklin, he said, "When you are finished changing, you're finished."

"We have to be purposeful, honest and passionate about what we do. We have to try to reach unreachable goals and think differently. Only then all the goals will be within the range of our abilities," Raimkhanov concluded.

The sense of youthful optimism

is even stronger among those who were born as the country was just becoming independent.

22-year-old Nursultan Akhmediya, a student of political science at the University of Vienna and one of the leaders of the Kazakh Student Association in Austria expressed his strong belief in the future of Kazakhstan and the new opportunities the country can give to its young generation.

"If you look back, you can see how many changes we've come through over the past 22 years. Since the 1990s, we have improved the quality of our life dramatically. In my opinion, major changes have happened in the everyday life of our citizens," Akhmediya said. Born in December 1991, Akhmediya said his worldview changed along with his growing country's.

"I do believe every generation has its own mission. Our parents laid the first stone of our independence, so we have to continue

developing the newborn state. Our mission is to build new cities, plant trees around them and raise new generations. And I also do believe that we have worthy sons of our country who will contribute to creating a better future for Kazakhstan," Akhmediya said. He named interethnic and interreligious tolerance, which he called the basis for further development and prosperity, as the main accomplishments of the past 22 years.

"Some can say that in comparison to, say, Singapore, our country may have reached more goals. I believe each nation has its own unique way of development and there is no need to compare one state with another. In my opinion, Kazakhstan has successfully overcome most of its obstacles and become one of the most successful nations in Central Asia," Akhmediya said. In the future, he said, he hopes his peers will identify clear goals, work hard to reach them and think creatively.

[See also editorial on Page A6.]

DOMESTIC NEWS IN BRIEF

On Dec. 20, Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov handed out the Altyn Sapa presidential prizes for quality to domestic enterprises during a national teleconference. Neftkhim Ltd. from Pavlodar won for best production enterprise, KazTranGas from Astana won for best company providing services and Khimfarm from South Kazakhstan won best enterprise producing goods for the population. During the teleconference, President Nursultan Nazarbayev launched 10 new production facilities within the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development. According to the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, from 2010 to 2013, more than 600 projects of the Industrialisation Map were put into operation, including 125 projects this year. Total output at the enterprises participating in the programme amounted to 2.5 trillion tenge (US\$16.2 billion). More than 60 companies have exported products totalling 126 billion tenge (US\$817.7 million). A total of 50,000 people have gotten permanent jobs at Industrialisation Map enterprises.

On Dec. 18, the draft law "On protection of children from information harmful for their health and development" was approved at the plenary session of the Mazhilis (lower chamber of the Parliament) chaired by Speaker of the Mazhilis Nurlan Nigmatulin. The document and accompanying amendments provides for applying special requirements to the content of information products (print media, audio and video products, mass media and others), aimed at different age groups of children, taking into consideration their psychophysical peculiarities. Having noted the importance of the draft law, Nigmatulin emphasised the necessity of using a complex approach from the involved ministries and departments. He also noted that publicity and availability must not influence the emergence of information harmful for health and development of children. "We are all for openness and publicity and the availability of information, but we all have to understand that it should not lead to any harmful consequences," Nigmatulin said.

Kazakhstan is planning to build 146 new schools in the next three years, starting with 50 in 2014, kt.kz reported on Dec. 9, citing Education and Science Minister Aslan Sarinzhypov. By the time all 146 schools are built, the number of schools in poor condition will decrease from 3 to 1.5 percent. The government plans to focus on schools in villages, as 93 percent of the schools in poor condition are located in rural areas. Among other measures to improve education, Sarinzhypov mentioned new courses for teachers and updating equipment, gyms and lab facilities. He also acknowledged that teachers' salaries affect the quality of education, and promised to raise salaries in the near future.

Kazakhstan's Deputy Prosecutor General Andrey Kravchenko and U.S. Charge d'Affaires a.i. in Kazakhstan Ambassador John Ordway held a joint press conference in Astana on Dec. 20, announcing new findings in the February 2006 triple murder of Altynbek Sarsenbayev, his bodyguard and driver. Based on FBI-verified polygraph tests and accounts of interrogation of Rustam Ibragimov, who had been earlier convicted as the mastermind of the murder, it was revealed that Kazakhstan's law enforcement bodies now suspect that Rakhat Aliyev was behind ordering the killing of the politician. Rakhat Aliyev was earlier convicted in absentia to long prison terms for his role in the murder of two bankers and for his efforts to instigate a coup d'etat. Earlier, Yerzhan Utembayev, who was then the chief of staff of Kazakhstan's Senate, was convicted of ordering the murder of Sarsenbayev, and, it was revealed on Dec. 20, that the country's Supreme Court amended his sentence on Dec. 19 in light of new evidence.

Kazakh Military to Join UN Peacekeeping Forces

By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – At the joint session of the Parliament of Kazakhstan on Dec. 20, members considered President Nursultan Nazarbayev's proposal to send Kazakh officers to United Nations missions in Haiti, Western Sahara, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia.

Twenty officers, who will have observer status in UN peacekeeping forces, will be sent in groups of five. It will be the first time the Central Asian country has partaken in UN peacekeeping.

Minister of Defence of Kazakhstan Adilbek Dzhasybekov addressed the members of both chambers of parliament and read a report about the role of Kazakh military in UN missions.

"In accordance with Article 53 of the Constitution of Kazakhstan, I ask you to support the proposal to send Kazakh military officers to participate in UN missions in Haiti, Western Sahara, Cote d'Ivoire and

Liberia as observers. Each mission will consist of five people, they will work to fulfil our obligations to preserve international peace and security," Dzhasybekov said at the joint session.

According to the minister, the number of international conflicts since 1992 has declined by 40 percent thanks to global efforts. He also drew attention to the fact that participation in UN missions is highly appreciated by the international community and serves as a weighty argument for promoting the country's interests.

Members of both houses of Parliament asked about the probability of Kazakhstan suffering any losses in these missions.

"Frankly, there is such a possibility. We are sending troops to areas where there is conflict and the military-political situation is unstable, this entails risk. First of all, I would like to note that observers are not involved in the conflict, they are unarmed, as their

main task is to observe, assist in monitoring and to report on the situation to the UN," the minister answered.

He noted that the Kazakh mission will comprise entirely of volunteers.

"These are soldiers. In coming to the military, they should understand that their work is risky; they are a special breed of public servants," he said.

Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Mazhilis (lower chamber of parliament) Maulen Ashimbayev considered it natural that Kazakhstan is expanding its participation in UN peacekeeping missions and that the country will promote peace and harmony in a number of countries in Africa and the Caribbean. He noted that this will begin a new stage of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the UN.

"This initiative will support Kazakhstan's candidacy for a non

permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2017-2018 and will help Kazakhstan share its success in interethnic and interreligious harmony," Ashimbayev said.

According to him, strengthening the country's international prowess will create favourable conditions for long-term sustainable development and expand cooperation with the leading countries that form the international agenda.

The 45 members of the Senate at the meeting voted for the president's proposal, as well as all 106 present members of the Mazhilis.

Candidate selection will begin once the decision is made.

"Officers have not yet been selected; the parliament only put its support, which turned out to be unanimous, behind this measure today. Efforts to select candidates will begin now. We are only going to be deploying 20 officers – five people to 4 countries. This number is not very large. In a year, these officers, if they would like to, can

return home and replacements will arrive on a rotational basis. But if they want to extend their contracts, they are welcome to," Ashimbayev added after the vote.

According to him, in the selection process, physical and moral preparedness will be taken into account first, experience and knowledge of a foreign language will be considered as well.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov stated Kazakhstan regularly allocates financial resources to UN peacekeeping missions. Thus, money is used to support various peacekeeping operations around the world.

"We are not talking about the classic peacekeepers, but about observers in military missions. Kazakhstan takes these issues very seriously. Our peacekeepers cannot go to UN missions comprehensively; military observer missions are in a different category. They do not take direct part in military actions," Idrissov said.

Logistics Hub Takes Shape on Chinese Border

By Asset Kalymov

ALMATY REGION – Recently, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy organised a press tour of the Zhetisu district on the Kazakh-Chinese border, which is experiencing a construction boom.

Altynkol Station became the second node after Dostyk International Border Crossing in a new transport corridor with China. There is a railway station, centralised electric infrastructure, wagon and engine maintenance facilities, a trans-shipment terminal and temporary warehouses.

Vyacheslav Mironov, the new head of the railway station, said this strategic facility processed more than 1.5 million tons of cargo. This number is nowhere near

capacity. By 2020, turnover at Altynkol is expected to reach 12 million tons.

The Zhetysay – Korgas line shrank the length of railroad between China and Southern Kazakhstan and Central Asia by 500 km. The commissioning of this railway improved transport service for the local population and created about two thousand permanent jobs and has helped set social norms.

Near the border sits Nurkent, a village with fully furnished cottages and apartments, a school and a kindergarten. All engineering utilities were paid for by the state and houses and social facilities were heated and hooked up to water and electricity using state funds as well.

The Altynkol – Altynkol train de-

livers passengers to ICBC Khorgos. We visited the huge cross-border cooperation centre. In the Chinese part of the centre, the Jian Yuan and Zhong Ke trading houses, an ethnographic park of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) countries and an international tourist centre have been built. The checkpoint, which is able to handle 10.4 thousand visitors a day, has modern equipment. Visitors enjoy a 30-day visa-free regime. Goods imported to Kazakhstan are not subject to customs duties if their value does not exceed 1,500 Euros and their weight is not more than 50 kg.

The first Kazakhstan-China trade fair, titled "On the Silk Road to Khorgos" was held there. The event was attended by more than 11,000 people. Now, people from Almaty, other parts of Kazakhstan, the CIS, Europe and Asia visit the complex for tourism and to shop.

At the briefing, Vice-President of ICBC Khorgos Erik Yessenbayev noted that now they are actively working to attract investments. Contracts have already been signed on 22 projects worth 35.8 billion tenge (US\$232.5 million) out of a total 111 planned projects. A hotel network, tourist and shopping malls and cultural and sport complexes will be built in Kazakhstan.

The 5,740 hectare SEZ Khorgos - East Gate is being built in the Panfilov district. Chemicals, steel products, foods, textiles and other goods will be manufactured

in a special economic zone there. Investors from Singapore, South Korea, Japan, the UAE and other countries show particular interest in the Khorgos dry port.

The main objective is to create a unique global transport, logistics and industrial hub. The Almaty – Khorgos motorway, part of the Western Europe - Western China road corridor, is already under construction. In the future, an ultra-modern business city with an international airport and a population of 70,000 will characterize the area.

The full commissioning of the ICBC is scheduled for 2018. The centre's management invites domestic and foreign investors to take the remaining vacant niches in the Silk Road project.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Leaders from across the world congratulated Kazakhstan on its Independence Day on Dec. 16. In his message to Kazakh President Nazarbayev, Russian President Vladimir Putin praised the country's successes in social, economic, scientific and technical development and the growth of its international clout. He noted the successful development of Russia and Kazakhstan's strategic partnership, expressing hope that the recent Treaty on Good Neighbourliness and Alliance in the 21st Century would serve as a basis for the further expansion of bilateral and multilateral ties within the Customs Union, the Common Economic Space, the Commonwealth of Independent States and other organisations. In his message to the Kazakh leader, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko wrote, "Kazakhstan has reached impressive results in its development and has become a fully-fledged and respected member of the international community. Belarus-Kazakhstan relations have reached the level of strategic partnership and continue to become more substantive and dynamic year on year." U.S. President Barack Obama wrote "Although the partnership between our countries is young, it continues to develop, reflecting the cooperation between our governments and people. In the past year, Kazakhstan's hosting of the P5+1 discussions was key in making progress on the international community's concerns with Iran's nuclear programme. Let me also commend Kazakhstan for its ongoing, substantial contributions to the security, education and infrastructure of Afghanistan. Twenty-two years since independence, Kazakhstan continues to draw strength from a diversity of ethnicities, languages, and religions. The government and the people have created a market economy that shows tremendous potential. The people of Kazakhstan have much to be proud of in these achievements."

The "Eurasian Integration: Information Challenges" international conference took place in Minsk, Belarus, on Dec. 12-13, with the participation of a delegation from Kazakhstan. Delivering a speech at the conference, Deputy Director of the Central Communications Service of Kazakhstan Eldar Tolganbayev noted, "It is important for us to participate in building dialogue in the Eurasian space, in the sphere of information in particular. We hope for cooperation in this sphere and we are always open for dialogue."

According to Tengrinews.kz, three new frontier posts, Sortobe, Otegen and Qasyq, were opened on Dec. 23 in the Zhambyl region on the Kazakhstan-Kyrgyz border. The frontier posts were opened as part of the Korday border detachment of the Ontustik regional command of the Kazakhstan National Security Committee (NSC). National Security Committee Chairman Nurtay Abykayev handed over a symbolic key to the head of the division when opening the Sortobe post, noting that another step had been made in the implementation of Kazakhstan's large-scale programme for arranging its borders. This year, 20 border posts meeting modern requirements were put into operation. At the ceremonial opening, the head of the committee distributed keys to new apartments to the frontier border guards.

Representatives of the Committee of Tourism of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of Kazakhstan took part in a meeting of the working group on tourism of the Turkic Council, which took place in Istanbul at the headquarters of the Turkic Council Secretary General on Dec. 24. Experts in tourism of the council member states – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey – attended the meeting. At the meeting, representatives of the member states discussed the establishment of a common tourism package "Silk Road," improving the qualifications of civil servants in tourism, holding of a tourism festival "World Games of Nomads" in 2014, promoting cultural heritage of the council member states and others. It was also noted that Kazakhstan enters a new stage of development in simplification of visa procedures and development of its tourism industry.

In Guinea and Ethiopia, FM Idrissov Promotes Ties with Islamic and African States

By Ulan Zhanabek

ADDIS ABABA – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov took part in the 40th session of the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Council of Foreign Ministers (OIC CFM) during a two-day visit to Conakry, Guinea on Dec. 9-10. The council focused on international efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the situation in Syria, Iran's nuclear programme, assistance to Afghanistan, normalisation of the situation in Mali and other topical issues.

Idrissov met President of Guinea Alpha Conde on the eve of the anniversary session. The brief meeting took place before the departure of the Guinean leader to South Africa to participate in the memorial service for Nelson Mandela. Idrissov was among the three foreign ministers who met the head of the country before his departure.

At the meeting, the parties first discussed issues of mutual trade and investment, the main topic of interest for the African state.

Trade between Kazakhstan and Guinea in 2010 was extremely low, which the Kazakhstan foreign ministry attributes to the lack of contact between the business communities of the two countries, as well as a lack of direct transport routes. Guinea, however, has rich reserves of diamonds, gold and other valuable minerals. Diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and Guinea were established on April 4, 1992; however, economic



Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov (l) and President of Ethiopia Mulatu Teshome (r) discussed issues of expanding mutual trade and investment.

and trade relations have not been developed.

In the meeting, Conde also noted the relevance of Kazakhstan's proposal to institutionalise the process of ensuring food security and praised the contribution of Kazakhstan and President Nursultan Nazarbayev to the global process of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

While addressing the OIC audience, Idrissov said Kazakhstan attaches great importance to relations with Islamic states and noted that Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the organisation in 2011-2012 fostered dialogue between Western countries and the Muslim world and contributed to the fight against Islamophobia and anti-Islamic stereotypes.

He also thanked the OIC states for their support of Kazakhstan in its bid to host EXPO 2017, expressing hope that Kazakhstan's bid for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for 2017-2018 will enjoy similar support.

"First, we have to sadly admit that the OIC is unable to stop the bloodshed in Syria, as Syria's membership in the organisation, unfortunately, has been suspended," Idrissov told his colleagues. "Second, the situation in Afghanistan should remain one of the most important items on the OIC agenda. Third, the priority for the Ummah [the Islamic community] and the world remains the issue of Iran's nuclear programme. Kazakhstan has always recognised the right of any country, including

our Iranian brothers, to develop its own peaceful nuclear industry to meet its economic needs. In this regard, we welcome the agreement reached in Geneva on Iran's nuclear programme between Iran and the six international negotiators."

During the event, a ceremony of signing the OIC Charter on Food Security took place. Vice-Minister of Agriculture Muslim Umiryayev was Kazakhstan's authorised signatory to the organisation's document, which will establish its headquarters in Astana. The foreign ministers expressed unanimous support for the initiative of President Nazarbayev to create a new organisation, having received its charter in the past session.

During his stay in Conakry, Idrissov also met Foreign Minister of Guinea Lucien Fall and held numerous bilateral meetings with heads of delegations of the OIC states.

After the OIC council, the Kazakh foreign minister went to Ethiopia on Dec. 11-12 to meet with that country's government and the leadership of the African Union, whose headquarters is in Addis Ababa.

Idrissov met Ethiopian President Mulatu Teshome, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, becoming the first Kazakh foreign minister to pay a visit to that country. Officials explored potential for economic cooperation in areas from metallurgy to chemical industry to agriculture.

According to Kazakhstan's foreign ministry, President Teshome

used to be a non-resident ambassador of Ethiopia to Kazakhstan and expressed "special emotional affinity" to Astana. Idrissov discussed with his interlocutors Astana's plans to build up the presence in Ethiopia, including by opening an embassy in Addis Ababa next year, and to use this presence as a gateway to Africa. Until recently, Kazakhstan only had one resident embassy on the continent, in Egypt, and only last month announced the opening of its embassy in South Africa.

Earlier, Idrissov visited the headquarters of the African Union where he met deputy Chair of the Commission of the African Union Erastus Mwencha. In November, Kazakhstan became an observer in this organization, a sign of Astana's continued quest to expand its economic and political outreach to areas previously outside of its traditional sphere of interests. Idrissov told Mwencha he believed cooperation with the African Union will help promote the relations not only between countries in Africa and Kazakhstan, but also with Central Asia as a whole.

In his address to permanent representatives from the 54-member African Union, Idrissov specifically highlighted the prospects of Kazakhstan's cooperation with African nations in areas such as agriculture, mining, chemical industry, oil and gas, education and others.

Calling Africa "a continent of opportunities", Idrissov said his visit was meant to open doors for Kazakhstan's businesses to African markets.

Cold Climates, Warm Relations

Continued from Page A1

Active industry groups also participated at a Canada-Customs Union seminar at this year's Farm Fair in Alberta, Canada.

With the transfer of animals and genetic materials also comes the transfer of knowledge and technology in farming, feed growing, breed development and other practices. "By all means, bringing livestock could not be considered without [also bringing] the necessary infrastructure and knowledge in cattle farming that would help ensure the further sustainability and success of the project," Millar said.

Canadian farmers are very concerned with their cattle's treatment after export, Millar said. "This is why we support the Canadian exporters [who] also provide post-sale and farm management training services," he explained.

Canada and Canadian companies and educational institutions also support a number of their knowledge exchange endeavours. This year, the Canadian Hereford Association made a financial contribution to the Almaty Farm School to help local farmers develop their knowledge of international best practices, and Canadian industries are also actively contributing to the improved traceability of the Kazakh cattle identification system, which also helps to track the imported Canadian cattle after its delivery to Kazakhstan, the ambassador reported.

"We also support a few Canadian cattle manager specialists who travel across Kazakhstan and teach the local farmers the best Canadian practices in cattle farming," Millar said. Canadian Lakeland College is also currently working on a memorandum of understanding with the Kazakh Agrarian University in Astana. "I believe the project would become an excellent starting point in training the trainers and building another important component of the partnership," he added.

The memorandum of understanding between Canada's Department of Agriculture and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Agriculture currently provides the framework

through which cooperation in research, information and knowledge exchange is conducted. It also aims to foster an ever closer and more active partnership between the two countries, he said.

The strong climate and soil similarities to Canada, Millar said, mean that many of Canada's best agricultural practices can be introduced here successfully. It also means that Kazakhstan, with its own growing market and its proximity to others, has the potential to become another leading livestock producer and a supplier of quality meat to its neighbours. "I therefore hope that the Canadian cattle imported to Kazakhstan for reproduction purposes will help increase the breeding and productivity potential of local Kazakh herds. It is important to note that some of the local breeds, such as Kazakh Whitehead, have roots linked with Hereford, a widely produced breed in Canada."

Beef may be king in the West, but Kazakhstan has another major meat market: horse. A Kazakh delegation visited Canada last year to explore the possibilities of acquiring Canadian breeding horses for Kazakhstan's horse meat industry. Right now, Millar said, the governments of Kazakhstan, Canada and other Eurasian Union members are working out market access conditions for Canadian horse breeds. Canada is already a leading supplier of processed horse meat products to Kazakhstan. Live horses, he said, are likely to become another area of cooperation.

"The active interest expressed on behalf of some local business groups towards the Canadian horse industry makes me believe that the range of opportunities is really diverse. More and more Kazakh industry representatives are expressing an interest in the Canadian meat processing industry's capacities." Horse and meat processing could be another area of cooperation in the future, Millar said. In general, the ambassador said, Canada and Kazakhstan have only scratched the surface of their potential agricultural cooperation. With so many similarities, the possibilities for exchange are as vast as the two countries' prairies.

Roundtable Says Post-2014 Regional Cooperation for Afghanistan Critical

By Julia Rutz

ASTANA – A roundtable discussion titled "Stability and Security in Central Asia: Cooperation between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan" took place at the National Academic Library on Dec. 11.

The event, attended by deputies of the Volesi Dzhirga (lower house of the Afghan parliament), headed by Vice-Speaker Mohamed Selih Saldzhuki, Ambassador of Latvia to Kazakhstan Juris Maklakovs, Deputy Chief of the U.S. Mission to Kazakhstan Michael Klecheski, Deputy Minister of Defence of Kazakhstan Bakhitzhan Abdriyym, military attaches of foreign countries accredited in Astana and experts, was organised by the Astana-based Centre for Military and Strategic Research.

The meeting focused on Afghanistan's future development after the upcoming presidential elections and the withdrawal of the main divisions of the International Security Assistance Forces.

Mazhilis member Bakhitzhan Yertayev, who is a retired general and who fought in Afghanistan during the Soviet times in the 1980s, noted the success of the visit of an Afghan delegation to Kazakhstan, during which Afghan deputies visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and met with Afghan students studying in Astana at the invitation of the Kazakh government.

In his speech, Saldzhuki said terrorism is not a local problem anymore as it has spread around the globe, threatening the security of many countries. Speaking about the situation in Afghanistan, he noted that the number of terrorist groups is growing mostly because of radical religious schools in the northern part of the country. Saldzhuki emphasised the importance of finding a united solution with other Central Asian states in order to solve one of the most pressing problems of the contemporary world.

"We are all concerned about the future of Afghanistan after 2014,

but we continue to work to prevent the worst case scenario after the withdrawal of ISAF troops. The country is now preparing for presidential elections scheduled for April 2014 and President Karzai will oversee this process," explained Saldzhuki.

He also mentioned the necessity to modernise the Afghan Army and its armaments. Especially important is the air force, as it will assist other government bodies in retaining control over the country, he said.

Bakhitzhan Abdriyym named two factors which hinder the further development and stabilization of Afghanistan. One area that needs the most attention is the nation's young people, he said. According to Abdriyym, they need to be educated in order to prevent them from getting brainwashed and involved with extremists.

"That's why our government established a programme to let 1,000 young Afghan people study in Kazakhstan," Abdriyym added.

The diverging approaches of the U.S., Russia, Pakistan and Iran in solving Afghanistan's problems was the second factor mentioned by Abdriyym.

"It is most important for these countries to find a compromise and develop one united solution that will embrace the interests of Afghanistan and other international actors involved in the issue. Kazakhstan wants to see Afghanistan become a self-sufficient member of the international community," Abdriyym concluded.

Ambassador-at-large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Timur Urazayev spoke about the transparent policy Kazakhstan is pursuing towards Afghanistan. He mentioned the Almaty Declaration that was approved in April as part of the so called Istanbul Process. It was created to promote discussion of regional issues.

"We want to involve Afghanistan in the economic life of Central Asia by establishing transport logistics projects," Urazayev explained.

According to him, the Afghan ag-

ricultural sector should be subsidized so that crops besides cannabis are grown. He also suggested further development of cooperation between the intelligence services of two countries and that lists of suspected terrorists and information about their translocations be exchanged.

Ambassador Maklakovs, who also represents NATO in Kazakhstan, announced NATO's decision to continue assisting Afghanistan. He stressed that the future political and economic progress of the country will be a particularly important part in achieving stability in Afghanistan. At the same time, he made note of the visible progress made by the Afghan National Security Forces.

"We understand that, while helping Afghanistan, we should take into account the country's specifics. NATO is going to assist in training projects. We do not expect that stabilization will be a peaceful process, so we have to be ready for that," concluded Maklakovs.

In his turn, Klecheski stressed U.S. commitment to the region, which will remain for many years after 2014: "Our highest priorities will remain the same – the strengthening of Afghanistan's sovereignty and the defeat of Al Qaeda. We see Kazakhstan as an important regional partner in all issues of regional security."

It was noted that despite the fact that the armed forces of Afghanistan are experiencing difficulties in providing the necessary armaments, the army and the police are ready to take control over the country after the withdrawal of foreign troops. This requires the support of the international community. Saldzhuki proposed developing a joint project to protect the borders of Afghanistan, not only in the North but also in the South.

Summing up the roundtable, the president of the Centre for Military and Strategic Research, Kozy-Korpesh Korbuzov noted the need for a collective response to key threats of stability in the region. Such issues can be solved only by joint efforts based on bilateral and multilateral partnership, he added.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

Manufacturing Sector Remains Priority

By Aidar Bekov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan has entered the top 20 countries in receipt of foreign direct investment. The inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) fell sharply in 2008 due to the global financial crisis. Although the volume of financial investments is still showing a negative trend worldwide, in Kazakhstan, the rate of FDI remains stable.

"In 2012, the gross inflows of FDI in Kazakhstan reached a record figure of US\$28.8 billion, which is 8.9 percent or US\$2.4 billion more than in the previous year. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Kazakhstan took 19th place among the top 20 leading countries in terms of attracting foreign direct investments," Deputy Chairman of the National Agency for Export and Investment KAZNEX INVEST Kairat Karmanov said at a press conference.

However, he said, the dynamic of change in the total of investments is not a key indicator; since the main purpose of the nation's industrial strategy is to diversify the economy through the development of manufacturing. Positive results can be seen here too. For the first half of 2013, the gross inflow of FDI in the manufacturing sector totalled US\$1.6 billion, which is 5.2 percent higher than in the same period last year.

The trajectory of growth for this indicator during the implementation of the industrial programme has changed significantly. According to the Kazakhstan National

Bank, during the SPAID years, the gross inflows of FDI in the manufacturing sector amounted to US\$12.9 billion, or 68 percent of all foreign direct investments in the manufacturing industry since 2005.

A large share of investments (77.8 percent) directed to the manufacturing sector, is in metallurgy, a sector in which FDI increased by 16 percent and amounted to US\$1.3 billion. In food manufacturing, investment inflows increased by 78 percent and reached US\$234 million; in the manufacturing of rubber and plastic products FDI increased by 79 percent to US\$31.5 million; in the production of chemical products FDI went up 43 percent to reach a total of US\$22.3 million.

KAZNEX INVEST works to showcase investment opportunities in Kazakhstan. For example, this year, three road-shows were held in Japan, the U.S. and Brazil to establish contacts with foreign investors. More than 330 foreign companies participated in the events. The fact that they took place in these countries was not by chance. Japan and the U.S. are the world's leaders in technology. Leading industrial entities with significant investment potential are concentrated in these two countries. Also, foreign investors from Turkey, Italy, the UK, Germany and Switzerland in the automotive, chemical, energy, transport and logistics industries took part in the events.

The agency also promotes a positive investment image of Kazakhstan in the international arena.

Famous director, Timur Bekmambetov's company made a video clip about investment opportunities in Kazakhstan this year. It was played more than 1,500 times on leading international TV channels CNN, Euronews and Bloomberg.

The international publications FDI Magazine and Machinery Market Magazine published articles about investment opportunities in the country and infographics were published in online editions of the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg Business Week's iPad edition.

This marketing campaign increased visits to the nation's marketing website by more than 50 percent (from 10,000 to 15,500 visits per month). In total, since the Internet page was put up, more than 270 thousand visits have been registered. The number of requests received via online resource from potential investors grew by more than threefold.

As the deputy head of the agency noted, according to 2012 research carried out by a major business channel, Kazakhstan's PR campaign has made the country one of the most recognised nations amongst foreign business audiences in the United States (15th place) and Europe, the Middle East and Africa (5th place).

"Both this and last year, over 20 promotional events were held for investors, this includes business forums and exhibitions, which resulted in 180 documents being signed worth US\$15 billion," Deputy Chairman of the Investment Committee of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies,

Ruslan Tasbergenov said.

"In order to attract investments to the more provincial areas of the country, we built a system in which investors are put in contact with central state bodies, that then organise meetings between them and local authorities," he continued.

To automate this process, the Committee for Investment created an online database. It contains three types of projects: implemented, ongoing and promising.

"Particular emphasis is on attracting large investors. This year's major headline in investment news was Toyota and Peugeot's entry into Kazakhstan. These campaigns are "beacons" for other investors, as they show that Kazakhstan can successfully do business," Tasbergenov said.

The same day, the first award ceremony for the best foreign investors hosted by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Industry and New Technologies, Asset Issekeshv, ambassadors and representatives of international organisations was held. The event was held on the Day of the First President of Kazakhstan.

Eight companies that are expanding production in provincial Kazakhstan and reinvesting in projects were given awards by the MINT investment committee and KAZNEX INVEST.

The most active foreign investors are the French company Alstom (assembly of engines in Astana and production of electric switches in Almaty), Vicat Group (construction of a cement plant in the Zhambyl region) and Danone

(construction of a dairy plant in the Almaty region), the German company Heidelberg Cement (modernisation of a cement plant in East Kazakhstan, construction of a cement plant in the Mangistau region and construction of four concrete plants in Astana, Almaty and Aktau) and Knauf (production of construction materials in Almaty and Atyrau regions), Polish Polpharma (construction of a new and modernisation of an existing factory belonging to Chimpharm in Shymkent), Toyota Motor Corporation (assembly of the Fortuner model in the Kostanay region) and General Electric of the United States (assembly of engines in Astana).

The deputy prime minister, in his welcoming speech, stressed the commitment of Kazakhstan to the creation of an open economy and formation of a favourable investment climate in the region. He reminded that the head of state annually holds meetings of the Foreign Investors Council and the government's Commission on the Investment Climate and that he set up the institute of an Investment Ombudsman.

"Thanks to the efforts and support of foreign investors, the qualifications of domestic personnel have improved and investors are actively involved in social projects. In the second five-year period of the industrial development programme, special attention will also be paid to attracting investments to projects oriented towards new technologies," Issekeshv said.

He expressed hope that investors will continue to participate in projects in priority sectors of the economy.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

The Akim (Governor) of Kostanay Oblast (region), Nurally Saduakasov discussed the region's investment potential at a Central Communications Service media briefing on Dec. 19. "This year, over 177 billion tenge (US\$1.5 billion) was invested in the region's economy. About 70 percent of these investments are private. It is worth noting that the official statistics do not count investments made by non-residents of Kazakhstan. If their investments are included, the total volume of foreign investments would exceed 10 billion tenge (US\$65 million)," the head of the region said. In discussing how to attract investments, the governor said that the Tobol Social Entrepreneurship Corporation has been helping to increase the flow of investments. "The corporation is currently implementing 47 investment projects worth 4.5 billion tenge (US\$29 million)," he noted.

In total, 69 facilities worth 101.2 billion tenge (US\$658.5 million) were put into service as part of the Industrialisation Map programme in the Kostanay region. "Over 4.3 thousand new jobs were created; labour productivity in the processing sector of the region increased 1.3 times. The region holds 2nd place in the country in terms of the number of opened facilities and investment projects currently underway. Plants producing polyethylene pipes, prefabricated reinforced concrete, cardboard and oil are among the newly launched factories," he said. According to Saduakasov, out of 58 enterprises launched this year, 38 enterprises reached their intended capacity. The production volume of these enterprises exceeded 42 billion tenge (US\$273 million) this year, or 20 percent of the total volume of the processing industry. "The key goal of the Industrialisation Map is the realisation of investment projects, the introduction of modern equipment and the launch of production of new types of products," the regional leader said.

The multifaceted economy of the Kostanay region attracted 8 percent more investments this year compared to last year. The total amount of investments attracted totalled 177 billion tenge (US\$1.12 billion), deputy head of the regional department of economy and budget planning, Yerlan Ospanov said in an interview with ortcom.kz on Dec. 20. "Both agriculture and industry are well developed in our region. The share of these two sectors in our gross regional product (GRP) is about 20-25 percent. It is also worth noting that the processing industry was given an impetus for development by the dynamically developing engineering sector," the representative of the region said. He also informed that investments in stock capital equalled 177 billion tenge (US\$1.12 billion), which is 8 percent more than the previous year. Foreign trade turnover reached US\$1.8 billion. Exports were US\$1.7 billion of this figure and the imports – US\$1.1 billion. "Most of the foreign trade turnover is with the Customs Union member states – Russia and Belarus. China is also one of our main partners. These countries account for about 22 percent of our total trade. We closely cooperate with Switzerland, Ukraine, Germany and Japan," he said.

Another aluminum smelter will be built in Kazakhstan soon. "Our industrialisation should revolve around processing our nation's raw materials. "You are the pioneers of such processing. You must work on the construction of a second plant for an additional 250,000 tons of aluminum jointly with the government. I hope, we will be discussing the successful openings of such establishments in future meetings," said Nursultan Nazarbayev during his teleconference with Pavlodar region officials on Dec. 20. Earlier in the teleconference, president of the "Kazakhstan Electrolysis Plant," Almas Ibragimov said that an aluminum smelter with a capacity of 250,000 tons per year will soon be built, as requested by the head of state.

Atasu-Alashankou Oil Pipeline Set to Reach Full Capacity in 2014



By Sergei Buyanov

On the eve of Independence Day, KazTransOil and the Kazakhstan-China Pipeline put two oil pumping stations into operation in the Karaganda and Almaty regions. The new oil pumping stations No. 8 and No. 10, located on the Atasu-Alashankou oil export pipeline, are designed to help reach its design capacity of exporting to China 20 million tons per year.

The owners of the Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline are the Kazakhstan-China Pipeline, KazTransOil and the Chinese company CNDCC. Since the launch of the Atasu-Alashankou in 2006 to the present day, 52.1 million tons of oil has been transported to China. The capacity of the pipeline increased from 2.2 million tons in 2006 to 10.4 million tons in 2012.

Atasu-Alashankou is part of the

Kazakhstan-China trunk-pipeline system, which is being constructed in two phases. In the first phase, the Kenkyak-Atyrau and Atasu-Alashankou pipelines were constructed in 2003 and 2006 respectively. The second phase included doubling of the existing capacity of the system in accordance with a May 17, 2004 agreement signed between the governments of Kazakhstan and China for the development of comprehensive oil and gas cooperation.

Chief Engineer and First Deputy Director of the Eastern office of KazTransOil Meirambai Kozhanov said the commissioning of the new stations will increase the capacity of Atasu-Alashankou from its current 12 million tons per year to 20 million tons in 2014.

Also, 124 new jobs have been created at the new stations. Most employees are local residents.



Two oil pumping stations No. 8 and No. 10 were put into operation to help the Atasu-Alashankou oil export pipeline to export 20 million tons of oil to China per year.

Many professionals, especially engineers with the necessary skills and education, have come from other regions. Kozhanov also noted that all employees passed special training prior to the launch of the new stations.

The construction of the stations was funded by the Kazakhstan-China Pipeline. The actual costs of the work, excluding VAT, reached

9.3 billion tenge (US\$60.5 million) at Station No. 8, and 11.6 billion tenge (US\$75 million) at Station No. 10. The facilities are equipped with modern automated remote monitoring and control systems (SCADA), commercial electricity metres and fire and gas alarms.

Several subcontractors, including some Kazakh companies, helped build the oil pumping stations.

Generally, KazTransOil implements large-scale projects every year. There is a steady annual increase of oil turnover and net profit. The company has obtained a national operator status for Kazakhstan's main oil pipelines, it successfully participated in the People's IPO programme and has contracts with new partners for oil transportation and many other projects.

In Seoul, Kazakh PM, South Korean President Discuss Trade and Economic Cooperation

Continued from Page A1

During his visit, Akhmetov also met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and Finance of South Korea Hyun Oh Seok. The sides discussed the prospects for mutually beneficial projects in various sectors of the economy, including transport en-

gineering, renewable energy, high technologies and light industry.

Akhmetov noted the current intensity of trade and economic cooperation and stressed the need to further strengthen and expand mutually beneficial ties.

"Kazakhstan is committed to sustainable growth through accelerated industrial-innovative devel-

opment. We are interested in mutually beneficial investment and technological cooperation with Korea," he said.

In addition, Akhmetov expressed interest in studying the Korean experience of hosting EXPO 2012 in Yeosu and invited Korean companies to participate in EXPO 2017 in Astana.

Following the meeting, a number of bilateral documents were signed, including an agreement between the two governments on cooperation and mutual administrative assistance in customs matters and a memorandum of understanding between Samruk Energy and South Korea's Hyundai and Samruk

Green Energy and Hyundai's subsidiaries.

In addition, the sides signed a memorandum of understanding between the Chambers of Commerce of Kazakhstan and South Korea.

In Seoul, Akhmetov attended Samsung's D-Light exhibition complex to learn about its innovative technologies.

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

President Nursultan Nazarbayev toured the Tau-Ken Altyn Gold Refinery in Astana on Dec. 20 as well as Kazakhstan Aselsan Engineering, a Kazakh-Turkish enterprise that produces electronic and optical devices. During his visit, the head of state inspected production lines, viewed sample products and talked to staff. The main area of the plant's focus is the electrochemical refining of precious metals. The enterprise has an area of 3.4 hectares and is located at the Astana – New City Industrial Park Special Economic Zone. The factory is expected to produce 25 tons of refined gold a year, which could be increased to 75 tons thanks to the introduction of innovative technologies. The project incorporates the ways of the best practices worldwide. During the visit, Mayor of Astana Imangali Tasmagambetov discussed current events at the industrial park. Overall, 49 projects are being carried out at the park with a total volume of investments reaching 181 billion tenge (US\$1.2 billion), 11 of them are currently functioning, 8 are being launched and the rest (30) are being developed. Kazakhstan Aselsan Engineering was established in 2011 in accordance with an agreement between the President of Kazakhstan and the President of Turkey. It is planned to increase Kazakhstan's share in the enterprise from 30 percent at the initial stage to 67 percent in the near future.

Prosecutor General Askhat Daulbayev and Chairman of the Presidium of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs Timur Kulibayev signed a memorandum of understanding in Astana on Dec. 23. Daulbayev said the cooperation between the Prosecutor General's Office and the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs will help implement the programme to support business set by President Nazarbayev in the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy. The memorandum adds to the recently established cooperation between prosecution agencies and the business association. The sides are working to resolve issues in business development and prevent entrepreneurs' rights from being violated.

There are currently 36,000 small and medium-sized businesses in the Kostanay region. The number of people employed in this sector increased by 1.9 percent compared to last year to a grand total of 134,455 people. The share of people employed in SMEs is 15.5 percent of the employed population and 25.4 percent of the economically active population. This year, SME entities produced goods and services worth 313.271 million tenge (US\$2 million). The state entity that issues business loans contributes to the development of the SME sector. As of Oct. 1, second tier banks extended credits totalling 37.656 million tenge (US\$245,000). Non-banking credit institutions, such as rural credit associations and micro-crediting organisations are active in the region.

Kostanay region is in fifth place nationally for providing housing. Akim (Governor) of Kostanay region Nuruly Saduakasov said at a CCS media briefing on Dec. 19. "Investments in housing construction are increasing year by year and this year, the amount of investments totalled 14 billion tenge (US\$91 million)," the akim told. The head of the region also talked about the implementation of the Affordable Housing Programme. "More than 4 billion tenge (US\$26 million) was allocated to the programme this year. Approximately 212,400 square metres of housing was commissioned. This is 3.7 percent more than last year. However, the issue of housing affordability still remains relevant despite all the measures that have been taken," Saduakasov noted. "More than 17,000 people are on the akimat's housing waiting list. Over 50 percent of these people are from vulnerable social groups. Therefore, we need to increase the amount of housing commissioned per year to a minimum of 300,000 square metres," Saduakasov stated.

Factory in Astana to Build Armoured Vehicles and City Busses



Specialised vehicles for military and civil purposes which are going to be manufactured at the new capital-based plant will meet international standards.

By Aynur Kembayeva

ASTANA – A new plant producing specialised vehicles for military and civil purposes will be built in the capital. Defence Minister Adilbek Dzhakysbekov and the Akim (governor) of the capital Imangali Tasmagambetov helped lay a capsule in the foundation of the future plant.

While opening the ceremony, the defence minister stressed the importance home production of armoured vehicles has in President Nursultan Nazarbayev's Kazakhstan 2020 strategy. According to Kazakhstan law, the President is the Supreme Commander of the country's Armed Forces.

According to the strategy, by 2020, state orders for defence products will be 80 percent satisfied by domestic producers. The new facility, which will be capable of producing 120-360 specialised vehicles a year, is scheduled to be launched in 2015 and will be located at the Astana – Zhana Kala Industrial Park.

Modern robotic equipment will

be used in the full cycle of manufacturing for tasks such as cutting and welding armour plates, painting and assembling vehicles and providing quality control. The project encompasses production of not only military equipment, but also busses for civilian purposes.

State owned Kazakhstan Engineering, the Paramount Group (South Africa) and Kazakhstan Engineering Distribution, which signed a tripartite memorandum on the production of combat vehicles and their maintenance in Kazakhstan in November of this year, are taking part in the project.

This project is the first of its kind in Central Asia, it will create a highly profitable joint venture and is a huge boost to the defence and engineering industry. It is planned to bring local assembly of vehicles with parts and equipment manufactured in Kazakhstan and other Customs Union members up to 50 percent of production. The project also involves the creation of more than 150 jobs, the sharing of tech-

nology and procedure as well as the training of more than 50 engineers and technical specialists both in Kazakhstan and abroad.

An engineering department and service centre at the plant will allow for the further modernisation and maintenance of equipment according to specific customers requirements.

All products manufactured at the plant will meet international standards written to ensure strong sales in both the domestic and foreign markets. The armoured vehicles that will be produced in Kazakhstan are recognised as some of the best in their class in many regards; they successfully passed demonstration tests in May and June of this year at several Kazakhstan military installations.

Miles Chambers, director of business development at the Paramount Group, said his "company is interested in participation in this large-scale project, which includes not only the production of vehicles, but also research and development."

New Plastic Plant Opens in Shymkent

By Lyubov Dobrota

SHYMKENT – The country's first polypropylene sheet and plastic product factory has opened in Shymkent.

"Our new innovative factory has broad sheet material production capabilities," director of SouthRegionPlast Mikhail Fedosov said.

Modular floating platforms assembled at the plant, which can serve as passages across rivers, leisure floats, piers or jetties are able to withstand water at up to 3-5 points. The pontoons are made from high density polyethylene and the weight of each pontoon is only 6 kg.

Platforms with such a long service life are extremely durable, their colour does not fade in the sun, they can withstand extreme temperatures and are environmentally friendly. The platforms are assembled from 4 pontoons and have a support weight of up to 350 kg. One can even float a house on them.

SouthRegionPlast became one of the most successful projects.

The first order came from Kyrgyzstan. The plant currently is working on an order from Aktau. An oil company intends to use one of the devices as a floating repair facility. The production capacity of the plant is 200 pontoons.

Solid propylene sheets are also in great demand in the chemical, petrochemical, metallurgical, electronic and radio industries because of their resistance to harsh environments. They are able to replace metal containers, which cost several times more. Propylene sheets are also very useful when building fish farms. Plastic is easily sawed, drilled, planed and cut manually.

Sheets can be connected quickly with welding.

The project costs 336 million tenge (US\$2.2 million), of that amount, 144 million tenge (US\$935,000) were obtained from the Business Road Map 2020 programme, which is part of the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (SPAID). In addition, the plant was built in the Shymkent Industrial Zone, which afforded the project use of its existing engineering infrastructure.

The capacity of the plant allows production of 124,800 square metres of propylene products a year, including pontoons and propylene sheets, plastic window and cabinet parts, consumer goods, boxes and pallets for vegetable production. The enterprise employs fifty workers who trained at Russian enterprises.

SouthRegionPlast became one of the most successful projects of the Industrialisation Road Map. There are 150 projects totalling 447.9 billion tenge (US\$3 billion) in the South Kazakhstan region. In total, these factories will create more than 19,000 jobs. Today, 66 projects worth 109.2 billion tenge (US\$709 million) have already been implemented. Currently, in the industrial zone, there are 32 enterprises. More than 44 billion tenge (US\$286 million) of investments have been made in the strategic vision. Such industrial zones exist in all districts and towns of the region and were built to create favourable investment conditions.

The emphasis is on the development of small and medium-sized businesses reliant upon innovative technologies. The rate of industrialisation in the region is high. Last year, the gross domestic product in the South Kazakhstan Oblast was 1.8 trillion tenge (US\$11.7 billion). It is assumed that by the end of this year, it will exceed 2 trillion (US\$13 billion) tenge.

Heavy Truck Production Begins in Kostanay

By Valery Vedenko

KOSTANAY – The production of Iveco heavy trucks has started in Kostanay. The Iveco-682, known for its power and reliability, will be assembled and maintained in Kazakhstan.

Iveco S.p.A and the SaryarkaAutoProm plant, which is part of the AllurGroup group of companies, have launched an assembly line at AgromashHolding JSC. The new equipment will be added to the existing Iveco PowerDaily line, which has been producing commercial vehicles since March 2013. The trucks assembled in Kazakhstan will be much less expensive than imported Iveco vehicles, as they won't incur customs fees and foreign exchange costs.

The expansion of the partnership between Iveco S.p.A and SaryarkaAutoProm was announced by Chief Operating Director of Iveco S.p.A Franco Fuzinyani and First Vice Minister of Industry and

New Technologies Albert Rau. Now, in addition to cars, vans and light trucks, heavy haulers will be produced in Kostanay.

President of AllurGroup Andrey Lavrentiev noted that the demand for heavy trucks in Kazakhstan is growing rapidly and expressed confidence that working with the Iveco-682, the company will be able to meet customers' demands.

The Iveco-682 has a complete optimised configuration for driver comfort. Power steering and dual air-brake systems provide manoeuvrability and protect the driver from injuries and shocks. The trucks' cabs have passed strict crash tests. The truck's frame is made of stainless steel that is 20 percent thicker than that of other vehicles in its class. Its capacity is 20 tons.

The production of Iveco's heavy trucks will bring modern industrial technologies and high standards of design and production engineering to Kostanay and Kazakhstan in general.



The production of Iveco's heavy trucks will bring modern industrial technologies in production engineering to Kostanay.



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EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

Out of Soviet Ashes, Into a Better Future? The Kazakhs Say 'Yes'

Among the people in the former Soviet republics there's a famous expression: If you don't lament the collapse of the Soviet Union, you have no heart. If you do, you have no mind.

Indeed, the shadow of the once mighty USSR still haunts the former Soviet republics in different ways. Some republics continue to struggle economically and have become impoverished, they continue to fight corruption, and the myriad of other problems. For some, the transition was catastrophic. But others have managed to break through the uncertainty of the post-Soviet era.

And, in addition to natural resources, a lot depended on how quickly the leadership in those countries could overcome those problems," Peruashev told this newspaper.

"In Kazakhstan, President Nursultan Nazarbayev did an impressive job in terms of crisis management, quickly introducing much needed economic reforms: privatisation, attraction of foreign investment, introduction of national currency, as well as the transfer of the capital to Astana which spurred economic development and construction industries in its own way," Peruashev explained.

Only six months after independence, Kazakhstan adopted a new law on the protec-

tion in the U.S.). And, in addition to natural resources, a lot depended on how quickly the leadership in those countries could overcome those problems," Peruashev told this newspaper.

A recent opinion poll by Ipsos MORI seems to support the overall positive expectations of the people in Kazakhstan. It showed widespread satisfaction with the direction of the country and a majority of citizens with a positive attitude towards the economy.

The research results produced by Ipsos MORI showed strong support among ordinary Kazakh citizens for the general direction of policy in the energy-rich Central Asian country. Eighty-six percent of a nationwide sample of respondents said they felt "positive" about Kazakhstan in general, and 35 percent said they felt "very positive." Seventy percent of citizens said they felt positive about the country's economy, while 81 percent said they felt the country had become a better place in which to live over the past ten years.

In the survey, Kazakh citizens indicated they have become significantly more satisfied with nearly every aspect of everyday life in the country—from the identification and elimination of corruption to overall quality of life and general standards of living—in recent years.

Respondents were also asked to rate life in Kazakhstan 10 years ago and to rate life in Kazakhstan today. The increase in perceived satisfaction over this 10-year period ranges from double to nearly six-fold in certain cases, including sizeable improvements in job opportunities (18 percent say they were "good" 10 years ago; 36 percent say they are "good" today) and transport infrastructure (6 percent to 36 percent).

When asked about the main challenges currently facing Kazakhstan, 26 percent of respondents identified jobs as the most pressing issue, while 15 percent said housing and 11 percent said economic growth. Five percent and 2 percent of respondents respectively identified human rights and democratic reform as among the main challenges facing Kazakhstan.

The three traits most predominantly associated with Kazakhstan by respondents were its hospitality (50 percent), its stability (35 percent) and its peacefulness (34 percent). The top 17 descriptive terms associated with the country are all positive.

Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of citizens agreed that their children's

and support of private entrepreneurship, a major U-turn for a country where private businesses were all but prosecuted by law until December 1991. And in the mid-1990s, President Nazarbayev signed more than 100 decrees with the legal force of law, solidifying the foundation of economic market reforms. "In the end, a class of entrepreneurs was established, and this movement acquired a nationwide character. ... Today, Kazakhstan is clearly a country with a civilised economy and political system," Peruashev added. "We had our share of mistakes and problems, but only he who doesn't do anything doesn't make mistakes. We try to foresee problems and preempt them. That is why I look positively at steps, such as the establishment of a Ministry of Regional Development and the adoption of a programme to develop small cities."

"The result of the survey doesn't surprise, really," Dosym Satpayev, 39, a PhD of political sciences and the director of the Almaty-based consulting organisation, Risk Assessment Group, said in an interview.

Older Residents See More Harm in Breakup

In general, did the breakup of the Soviet Union benefit or harm this country?

	Benefit	Harm	Neither	Don't know/Refused
Aged 15 to 30	30%	33%	16%	20%
Aged 31 to 44	29%	45%	17%	9%
Aged 45 to 64	19%	61%	15%	5%
65+	11%	76%	8%	5%

Results across 11 former Soviet republics surveyed in 2013. This question was not asked in Uzbekistan, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia.

GALLUP

"There have been a lot of changes in Kazakhstan in the past 22 years, the mentality has changed, a new post-Soviet generation has grown up. We need to keep this demographic in mind whenever we analyse anything," Satpayev said, highlighting several points that need to be considered.

"The first point is the emotional state that is tied to the definition of 'independence'. Many thought that Kazakhstan gained complete independence, became a self-efficient unit after the collapse of the USSR," Satpayev said. "The second factor is economical. Many of those who support the break-up of the USSR think that Kazakhstan was exploited and did not receive enough in return and that today an independent Kazakhstan can decide for itself about what to do with the natural resources it

generation will have more opportunities than their own, and that they are optimistic about the future of the country, with figures of 77 percent and 80 percent respectively.

[See related story on Page A2.]

It is no wonder then that the majority of the people in Kazakhstan think the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the country have been good for themselves and the their country.

Yet, while there are many reasons to be happy, there are also many reasons to be concerned about the future, such as the still high dependence on extraction industries and the still high level of corruption. It is important that the country's leaders realise this and continue to work to resolve problems pre-emptively.

65 Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Kazakhstan's Contributions

By Marat Sarsembayev and Daniyar Sarsembayev

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the adoption of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights on Dec. 10, 1948. This declaration became the first official international document in the field of human rights and freedom.

The document consists of 30 articles and covers almost all fundamental aspects of human rights. Kazakhstan, having become an independent state in 1991 and having joined the UN in 1992, made substantial efforts to incorporate these universally recognised human rights into its founding documents. Almost all the ideas of the declaration and its subsequent covenants and conventions have received legal mandate in the Constitution and legislation.

Pursuant to the provisions of the declaration, Kazakhstan has joined and executed about 60 multilateral, regional and bilateral treaties and agreements on human rights, it has adopted no less than 50 codes, laws and other rights/freedom related acts.

Article 3 of the declaration states that "everyone shall have the right to life, freedom and personal inviolability." Kazakhstan guarantees citizens the right to life and has an active policy of ensuring this right by reducing mortality, including maternal and child mortality, mortality on the roads and work related and crime related mortality as well. Kazakhstan also stands for the phased abolition of the death penalty. It should be emphasised that the death penalty has been absent from Kazakhstan for quite some time. From 2010 to 2012, the death rate dropped by 37 percent. Comparing 2012 to 2011, mortality decreased by 18.7 percent.

Freedom of speech and expression as a human right is enshrined in article 19 of the declaration: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of opinion and free expression." As it is known, freedom of speech can be realised by establishing the proper conditions. That's why as of January 1, 2012, 2,740 media outlets were operating in the country, of which, 439 (16 percent) were state owned, non-state media outlets totalled 2,301 (84 percent). 91 percent of media outlets are newspapers (1,662) and magazines (832), 8.5 percent are electronic outlets; there are 50 television stations, 43 radio stations, 134 cable television operators and 6 satellite broadcasters; 0.5 percent of these are news agencies (13). Citizens have broad discretion to exercise this freedom individually; they control most of the information flow in the country.

Article 18 of the Declaration provides every person with "the right to freedom of conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change one's religion or beliefs and the freedom to manifest one's own religion or belief, either alone or in a community in regards to public or private doctrine, worship and performing religious and ritual ceremonies." All religious communities in the republic were re-registered under a 2011 law titled "On Religious Activities and Religious Associations." There were 3,088 religious associations representing 17 denominations.

In accordance with Article 21 of the declaration, "everyone shall have the right to govern their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives." During the presidential election (in 2011) more than 8.279 million people exercised their right to vote. The right to vote in the parliamentary elections (2012) was exercised by more

than 7,018,900 citizens. In August 2013, in all 14 regions of Kazakhstan, 2,457 akims (mayors) of villages, rural districts and towns were elected to serve in posts governing more than 7 million Kazakh citizens. The competition was quite fierce. In this election, 6,738 candidates participated. That is more than 2 candidates per each akim position.

"Everyone shall have the right to peacefully assemble," says article 20 of the declaration. Peaceful meetings and gatherings in the country are regulated by the law titled "On Organising and Holding Peaceful Meetings, Rallies, Marches, Pickets and Demonstrations." From 2010 to Sept. 30, 1,222 different campaigns were held. They were attended by more than 250,000 people.

"Everyone, according to article eight of the declaration, shall have the right to effective legal rehabilitation by competent national courts when fundamental rights granted by the constitution or law are violated." Almost 400 Kazakh courts have been involved in making this right a reality. These courts consider civil, administrative and criminal cases. Their effectiveness can be seen in their handling of civil cases. In 2010, national courts considered 549,212 civil cases and in 2011 the number was 582,491, in 2012, the number of civil cases reached 597,307. The growth of appeals in civil cases suggests constant growth of the population's trust in the judiciary. In order to further improve the justice system, the law "On Mediation" was adopted, which created an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. During the first three months of 2013, 79 civil and 182 criminal cases were handled by mediators.

The human right to health care provided by the declaration has been assured by the Unified National Health System since the system was introduced in 2010. More than 550,000 people used the right to be treated in hospitals routinely, 36.3 percent of these people were rural residents. The healthcare system took on its modern form in 2010. By the end of 2012, 780,000 people exercised this right. 46 percent of them were living in rural areas. In 2010, 65 new diagnostic and treatment technologies were introduced, and in 2011 123 were made public. In 2010, about 750 surgeries were carried out in the provincial areas of the country, in 2011, about 1,900 were executed.

According to Article 26 of the Declaration, "Everyone shall have the right to education." This right is guaranteed in Kazakhstan by 139 higher educational institutions, with a total enrolment of 571,691 students, 610 colleges (520,370 students), 184 professional lyceums (64,814 students) and 7,636 day schools (2,533,000 students). The number of evening schools in 2012 was 85 (17,600 students). One of the most successful education reforms is the Bolashak international scholarship programme put forward by the President. From 1993 to 2013, 7,500 Kazakh students studied at prestigious universities around the world thanks to the Bolashak award.

Kazakhstan plans to build more institutions to promote these basic human rights and freedoms in the future.

The authors are Marat Sarsembayev, expert of the Commission for Human Rights under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a doctor of juridical science and professor and Daniyar Sarsembayev, the director of Bolashak Consulting Group and UNDP expert on human rights.

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18a Pobeda Avenue Astana, 010000
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Department of Advertisements: +7 7172 44 51 74
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Missionary Activity in Kazakhstan Expanding

By Serik Ospanov

The missionary activity of traditional religions in Kazakhstan has a long history. Missionaries' work was long disorganized and limited by objectives of teaching, creating conditions for spreading and gradually involving people living in the region into the missionaries' faith. The effectiveness of implementation of this task was associated with specific historical processes and events which created favourable conditions or obstacles for it.

A more organized missionary work took place during the 19th and 20th centuries, with the activity in the region of the Russian Empire and Kazakhstan's accession to it. With the emergence of the military settlements on the territory of the country not only cultural interaction, but vigorous activity of Russian Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran churches began. Accordingly, the main conductors were migrants, with the majority being Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Czechs, Germans, Austrians, and others.

During that period, missionary activity was realized in its traditional form. Spiritual missions were set up, Russian Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran churches were built, and missionary schools in Kazakh language were opened. Sermons were carried out and church literature was published in the native language of the locals. However, after the 1917 revolution, missionary activity by all religions in Kazakhstan has virtu-

ally ceased: parishes were closed, churches and other religious buildings were partially destroyed, some members of the clergy were repressed.

Since Kazakhstan regained its independence in 1991, there have been radical changes in all fields. Communist ideology was replaced by ethnic, religious values. Of course, multi-ethnic, multi-confessional composition of the population has made its own contribution to the development of the religious situation.

The change of the place and role of religion in the life of the people was due to the uncertainty of ideological priorities after the collapse of USSR, the crisis in the socio-economical sphere, loss of former philosophical ideals, the emergence of ideological vacuum, search for a new ethno-political, civil and ideological identity.

The secular character of state that guarantees the rights of citizens to freedom of conscience, speech and expression was confirmed in the Constitution of Kazakhstan. Such democratic position contributed to the fact that in the two decades of existence of an independent Kazakhstan, under the influence of internal and external factors in the confessional sphere and interfaith relations, certain trends appeared, which directly helped expand the missionary activity and affected the level of national security of the republic, including in the negative sense. In the initial period, lack of attention of public authorities to this issue and a low level

of religious literacy among many citizens of Kazakhstan made a certain impact. In particular, part of the younger generation fell under the influence of various missionaries, including those promoting destructive religious ideas. The problem required a comprehensive analysis, including the study of the contemporary religious situation in the country, the existing legislation in the sphere of religion and the development of appropriate preventive measures.

Studies of the dynamics of missionary activities which have been held for 10 years (from 2003 to 2013) showed quantitative growth of missionaries and their "qualitative" influence on the religious situation. Currently, the number of missionaries arriving to Kazakhstan continues to increase. While in 2003, only 89 missionaries were registered in Kazakhstan, as of October 1, 2013, the total number of registered missionaries already reached 407 people coming from 27 countries.

Thus, the number of missionaries has increased fivefold in 10 years. At the same time, the number of Islamic missionaries (8 people) indicates that for registered Muslim religious associations it is uncharacteristic to attract foreign missionaries, whose number remains small and tends to decrease.

On the contrary, the number of missionaries of the other traditional denomination – Russian Orthodox Church – tends to grow and has reached 80 representatives. This may indicate the increase of

activity of the Orthodox community of Kazakhstan and a desire of the Russian Orthodox Church to resist the expansion of congregations that are not traditional for this region.

The greatest part of the existing foreign missionaries corps is composed by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. Of the 381 registered missionaries in 2012, the amount of Catholic missionaries was 263, or 69 percent. Catholic missionaries mostly come from Poland, Slovakia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, the US, South Korea, Kenya and other countries. The number of missionaries exceeds more than twice the number of religious associations.

Such kind of rate means the Vatican tries to solidify its presence on the territory of Kazakhstan. Church representatives substantiate this fact by the need to serve the needs of religious believers, not by the intensity of their missionary activities. Since the status of a missionary is given to all foreign priests, Catholic priests are the most numerous among missionaries. This figure confirms the growth of foreign Catholic priests against the backdrop of the negligible number of parishioners of the Catholic Church in the country.

As for the Protestant missionaries, available data indicates a high level of their activity. In 2006, the greatest number of Protestant missionaries was registered and reached 160 foreigners. The missionary activity of Protestant and nontraditional preachers

frequently had been carried out without official registration. Numerous complaints from citizens are the evidence of this, as well as convictions and penalties against members of such associations as Evangelical Christian Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, New Life, etc. Violations mostly are due to non-traditional missionaries, forcing relevant state authorities to take administrative measures within the limits of legislation on all these facts.

Recently, there has been a small modernization in the missionary activity of the Protestant movements. New programmes include a flexible learning format for potential evangelical missionaries and do not require any registration or the permanent residence.

For example, the School without Walls programme in the countries of the CIS has become a broad movement which applies new and informal approaches via the Internet and focuses on the younger generation.

The analysis of activities of missionaries shows that most foreign religious associations pursue systematic attempts to expand their presence in Kazakhstan, which includes increasing the number of missionaries and mentioned statistics serves as confirmation. Therefore, the statements of some human rights organizations on the limitations to the missionaries in the new Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Religious Activity and Religious Associations" can be considered as incorrect.

The following is a proof of this: in 2011, there were 301 missionaries and in 2013 there were 407 missionaries.

In fact, the work on transparent regulation of the religious field of the country has been conducted with the adoption of the Law in October 2011. In this case, among other measures, the Standard of the state service "Carrying out Registration and the Re-Registration of Persons Performing Missionary Activities" was approved by the Order of the Government of Kazakhstan from February 7, 2012 of No. 211 aimed at setting clear requirements for the registration process and the activities of religious missionaries in Kazakhstan.

Now, only a person who has received an appropriate certificate indicating the time and territory of activities can perform missionary activities in Kazakhstan. These regulations are not a novelty. In the international practice, there are stricter approaches to missionary activities and in some countries missionary activities are banned altogether.

Since the enactment of the new law, the Agency for Religious Affairs has seen no evidence of the refusal of entry to foreign missionaries. The above statistics show that the law did not restrict the activities of religious associations. It only regulated the procedure and identified a clear mechanism for registration (re-registration) of persons carrying out missionary activities.

The author is Director of Department of Analysis and Strategic Planning of the Agency for Religious Affairs of Kazakhstan.

Energy Policies of Kazakhstan and China

By Usen Suleimen
and Gulnara Baikushikova

The break-up of the Soviet Union resulted in serious financial, transit, management and political problems for its former states. The emerging relationships between its former constituent parts were initially shaped by the unrealistic commercial expectations of the newly-independent governments, hungry for extra budget revenues at a time of political and economic turmoil.

Fortunately, Kazakhstan's economy regained momentum at the beginning of the 21st century. Since then, rising energy exports have become the engine that drives the country's economy.

Since 2010, China has been the world's second largest economy after the United States, with its nominal GDP amounting to US\$5,879 billion, a figure totally unthinkable three decades ago. Similar to Kazakhstan, China has undergone transition from Communism to what may be seen as 'its own' form of capitalism, what the Chinese call "Socialism with Chinese characteristics".

In tandem with its economic reforms, China's real GDP has grown rapidly, with an average annual growth rate of 9.8% during 1978-2007. Apropos of economic structure, industrialization has been the main source of economic growth; in 2010, industry contributed 48.6% of China's GDP, an increase of 7.3% over 1990.

The above increases in China's own domestic consumption and investment, the relocation of many manufacturing processes from other parts of the world to China, and the country's burgeoning exports have all contributed to the dramatic increase in the production of energy-intensive goods.

Energy policy in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan, as a newly-independent state, faced several alternatives in the energy policy field. The country could take the road of full nationalisation of its extractive industry, as has been usual in the Middle East and other oil producing regions; or, it could transfer some energy assets to the private sector. However, all scenarios posed risks. For example, Kazakhstan could become a "banana republic" - a raw material appendage

of Russia or the West; or, it could become internationally isolated and squander its energy potential.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev made a wise decision: he chose a third road. In the interests of exploiting its oil fields, Kazakhstan opted to engage in joint ventures and production-sharing agreements with foreign investors. But, at the same time, Kazakhstan limited the role of foreign capital by tightening its investment law. The Kazakh government preferred to work with internationally recognised companies; i.e. those that showed interest in developing long-term projects and were ready to consider the country's domestic interests. They were expected to highlight environmental safety programmes, train local staff, and exercise corporate social responsibility. Transnational companies, including Agip/Eni, British Group, ChevronTexaco, Exxon-Mobil, Impex, Royal Dutch Shell and TotalFinaElf, among others, emerged as the winners in this race.

More recently, Canadian, Middle Eastern and Russian companies have been rapidly establishing a presence in the Caspian region.

China's need to strengthen its role became more obvious in 2005 and 2006, which saw Russia's presence on the increase and the American influence on the wane. When Chinese and Indian extractive and financial corporations have entered the scene, the interests of all major world players were represented in the Caspian region. In order to realise the full potential of its oil fields, Kazakhstan had to establish export routes that would guarantee its ability to meet the West's and China's demand for "black gold". Nazarbayev was fully aware that respecting the interests of all of the major players in the Caspian region, namely the West, Russia and China, would improve the stability of the energy sector in Kazakhstan. This approach, as well as promoting a balance of power in the region, kept the major players in check.

Kazakhstan's energy policy objectives feature in several documents, one of the most important among which – the Development Strategy of Kazakhstan until 2030 – focused on energy as one of the country's priority sectors and stressed the necessity for a "rapid increase of production and export of oil and gas to receive revenues that would contribute to lasting economic growth and an improve-

ment of the living standard of the people".

As opposed to the former orientation towards large-scale energy production, heightening the efficiency of energy consumption and energy conservation has become the top priority of the energy strategy. The new structural policy for energy sector development over the next 15-30 years provides for:

- growth in oil production, more efficient oil use, increased domestic consumption and export of oil;
- more efficient natural gas use, increased domestic consumption of natural gas;
- prioritising the refining and complex use of hydrocarbon raw materials;
- improvement in the quality of coal products through increased volumes of high calorific coals, and stabilisation and further increase of coal production rates (mostly by open mining) by introducing ecologically acceptable technologies; and
- intensified development of local energy resources (e.g., hydropower, minor deposits of hydrocarbons), greater use of non-conventional and primarily renewable resources (wind, solar, geothermal energy, mine methane and biogas).

China's energy security strategy

China's energy security was not a popular issue until 2000, when the country's oil imports doubled and the bill tripled. A search of the "China Economic News" library of China Infobank, a Chinese periodicals database, revealed that the term 'energy security' appeared in only 41 publications between 1994 and 1999; but, for the period 2000 to 2007, 1,862 mentions of the term were noted. Daniel Yergin, the author of *The Prize*, reads the objective of energy security as "to assure adequate, reliable supplies of energy at reasonable prices and in ways that do not jeopardize major national values and objectives". Thus, one dimension of energy security for China is access to sufficient energy supplies to protect the leadership's core objectives of continued economic growth, the prevention of Taiwan's independence, China's continued emergence as a global power, and the survival of the Chinese Communist Party.

In the case of China, energy security policy overwhelmingly focuses

on oil, because oil is the only form of energy that can meet China's demand for massive net imports.

China became a net importer of oil in 1993; today, almost half of its oil has to be imported due to stagnation of the domestic output and skyrocketing oil demands.

Secure delivery of energy imports is unarguably another part of China's energy security; but, there are a number of energy import-related problems that Chinese leaders feel uneasy about. For example, more than 80% of total oil imports have to be shipped through the Strait of Malacca, a very narrow, busy chokepoint threatened by frequent pirate activities. More than 90% of oil imports by sea are shipped by non-China-flagged vessels.

The Chinese government and the national oil companies agree that the key to enhancing oil security lies in the diversification of oil suppliers and transport routes. In terms of oil suppliers, they have sought not only to expand the number of countries from which China imports oil, but also to decrease China's dependence on the Persian Gulf, which in 2005 provided almost half of China's crude oil imports. Chinese and international energy experts expect that the country's reliance on the Persian Gulf will remain substantial because of the region's large oil reserves.

China has achieved considerable success in diversifying the sources of its oil imports. In 1995, the Persian Gulf and the Asia Pacific regions supplied almost 90% of China's oil imports, with Indonesia alone accounting for 31%. Over the past decade, China's oil imports from the Persian Gulf have hovered just below 50%; at the same time, growth in the share of supplies from Africa and Russia has offset a dramatic decline in the contribution of the Asia Pacific region to China's oil import mix. In 2005, the Persian Gulf and Africa accounted for more than three quarters of China's crude imports. Russia, China's fourth largest supplier of crude oil, provided 10%.

Energy production, consumption and trade

Kazakhstan's combined onshore and offshore proven hydrocarbon reserves have been estimated at between 9 and 40 billion barrels (comparable to APEC members Algeria on the low-end and Libya on the high-end). The Reserves

and Production ratio in 2007 was 73.2, which means that even if no added proven oil reserves are found, Kazakhstan can uphold the current crude oil production level for 73.2 years.

Between 1990 and 2010, Kazakhstan's oil production almost doubled from 26.1 million tons to 46.8 million tons, making the country the world's 19th largest crude oil producer and the second largest after Russia among the former Soviet republics. Over the next 15 years, Kazakhstan can reasonably expect crude oil and liquid production to increase more than threefold and reach between 3.0 and 3.5 million barrels per day (Mb/d). At 3.0-3.5 Mb/d oil production, Kazakhstan is expected to be one of the world's top 10 producers, behind the Gulf States and Russia but on a par with North Sea production at its height.

According to BP, in the first decade of the millennium, Kazakhstan's proven reserves of natural gas amounted to 1.9 trillion cubic meters (tcm), figures that are comparable to those of Canada and Kuwait. Domestic natural gas production increased over six times from 162.4 billion cubic feet (bcf) in 1999 to 1,201.2 bcf in 2010. Since Kazakhstan's gas production has been hampered by the lack of infrastructure, for some time, leading oil producers have had to flare gas instead of using it. The Kazakhstan Government forecasts the gross production of natural gas will reach 106.1 billion cubic meters (bcm) by 2015. However, much of this gas will be re-injected into the ground, to help oil extraction by maintaining wellhead pressure.

Kazakhstan is also one of the top ten coal producers in the world. Its reserves and mines are the third largest in the CIS, and its income from coal mining per capita is the largest in the CIS. With proven coal reserves of some 34.5 billion tonnes of mostly high quality anthracitic and bituminous coal, Kazakhstan has the eighth largest reserves in the world, amounting to four per cent of the world's coal, the most valuable of which are energy-rich and coking coals.

Approximately 0.5% of world's fossil energy resources are found in Kazakhstan, equal to 90 billion tonnes of oil equivalent (toe).

The increase in China's domestic consumption and investment, the relocation of many manufacturing processes from other parts of the world to China, and bur-

geoning exports all underpin the dramatic increase in the production of energy-intensive goods. China's oil demand in 1990 was only about 25% higher than it was in 1978. In 2010, China's oil consumption reached 390.5 Mt which is approximately four times the 1978 level. Industry and transport have together shared 77% of China's total end-use demand.

China's demand for natural gas has also increased remarkably from 15,250 Mcm in 1990 to 69,523 Mcm in 2007. As a result, its natural gas imports have also increased sharply. China imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) 950 Mcm for the first time in 2006; subsequently, it reached 1,200 Mcm in 2010. It is projected that China's natural gas imports will reach 2,800 Mcm and 12,800 Mcm in 2015 and 2030 respectively.

China's oil production, however, has seen slow growth. China, the largest coal producer in the world, reported coal proven reserves of 114,500 Mt at the end of 2007; that is, approximately 13.5% of the world's proven recoverable reserves with an R/P ratio of 45.

A country's demand for energy mirrors the size of its economy. China's primary energy consumption increased rapidly, faster than its primary energy production in the same period. Due to the above, the balance of overall energy in China has been reversed. Because the country's demand for energy grew more quickly than it could produce, China's self-sufficiency in overall energy could no longer be sustained post 1992.

Thus, Kazakhstan's priorities, including economic development, enhancement of political independence, and maintaining geopolitical balance, have significantly been promoted in the Central Asian region due to rich reserves of its hydrocarbons.

As for China, Kazakhstan, along with its role of supplier of energy resources, is also very important in political terms. Priorities of China, along with energy security, include facilitation of bigger political influence in Central Asia and stabilization of the situation in its western regions with the help of Kazakhstan.

Usen Suleimen, Ph.D is an ambassador-at-large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. Gulnara Baikushikova, Ph.D is a professor at Al Farabi Kazakh National University. This article is written with the support of the "Samruk-Kazyna" Sovereign Wealth Fund.

For full version see story online.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

FM Idrissov Says Relations with Traditional Partners Important, New Regions Come into Focus

By Ruziya Ospanova

ASTANA – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov reported on the preliminary results of the Foreign Ministry's activity in 2013 focusing on relations with key international partners, trade and investment cooperation, the need to develop cooperation with new countries in Latin America and Africa and other topics at the Central Communications Service (CCS) briefing on Dec. 19.

Idrissov began by describing Kazakhstan's close relationship with Russia and highlighted the signing of a new Treaty on Good-Neighbourliness and Alliance in the 21st Century, between the two countries. The agreement reflects all directions of Kazakhstan and Russia's bilateral cooperation, not only reaffirming current agreements but also noting the new challenges and trends of the modern world. The agreement is currently awaiting ratification in Kazakhstan's Parliament.

Idrissov commented on the new leadership in China. "It is important that we established a partnership and trusting dialogue with new Chairman Xi Jinping," he said. "The leaders of Kazakhstan and China met twice in 2013 – within the Boao Forum and during the state visit of Xi to Astana, where he made a historical speech and first announced China's foreign policy strategy towards Central Asia. An important



outcome of the visit was the signing of 23 bilateral documents totalling more than US\$35 billion."

According to Idrissov, Kazakhstan's Central Asian foreign policy is focused on the most pressing issues of ensuring regional security and enhancing economic cooperation among regional states based on mutually beneficial and friendly relations.

"In 2013, in Central Asia, we carried out four visits at the level of heads of state, two visits at the level of the prime ministers and three visits at the level of the foreign minister. We signed 12 bilateral documents, including a strategic partnership agreement with Uzbekistan, sectoral agreements, cooperation programmes and joint statements with Central Asian states," Idrissov explained.

He also noted the continuation

of the strategic partnership with the U.S. based on the institutionalisation of bilateral cooperation, which aims to systematise the relationship between the two countries. In July 2013 in Astana, a new mechanism of cooperation with the U.S., the Commission on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, was launched. He called the agreement on the issuing of five-year visas for citizens of Kazakhstan and the U.S. one of the important results of the year.

Regarding the EU, Idrissov said, "We continue to work on the conclusion of the partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU. In addition to innovation and technology partnerships, one of the important directions of the agreement will be the consistent work we are conducting on visa regime liberalisation."

The foreign minister also noted that the dynamic growth of political and economic development in Asia requires the expansion of bilateral and multilateral relations with the Asia-Pacific region. Based on that, efforts are focused on the maximum use of trade, economic and investment technological cooperation potential with Asia and the Pacific and expanding the Kazakh presence in the region by identifying new markets for Kazakh exports and agriculture. With such developed countries as Japan, South Korea and Singapore, cooperation is focused on the exchange of the latest technologies, the import and introduction of energy- and water-saving technologies and personnel training.

"We intend to continue to actively involve the constructive potential of regional dialogue mechanisms such as Central Asia-Japan and Central Asia-South Korea. In general, the expansion of cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region will be one of the key priorities of the foreign ministry in 2014. Evidence of increased interest in the region was the opening of a Kazakh embassy in Vietnam and the transformation of the Kazakh diplomatic mission in Thailand into an embassy.

The minister also described two new directions for Kazakhstan's foreign policy: Africa and Latin America. Two weeks earlier, President Nazarbayev signed a decree on opening an embassy in South Af-

rica. One will be opened in Ethiopia next year.

For Kazakhstan, as described in the state-of-the-nation address and the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, one of the most important foreign policy priorities is the development of economic diplomacy, which includes several tasks, in particular the promotion of foreign investment in the production sector and the priority areas of Kazakhstan's economy. Currently, Kazakhstan is one of the leaders in terms of foreign capital invested in the economy. From 2005 to the first half of 2013, Kazakhstan attracted US\$173 billion in foreign direct investment, more than US\$100 billion of which has come in the last five years. In other words, even during the global financial crisis, Kazakhstan's investment climate and the macroeconomic situation in the country remained stable.

In the context of regional and global security, the foreign ministry paid special attention to Iran's nuclear programme and the situation in Afghanistan. "In 2013, we hosted two rounds of international negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme in Astana, during which the participants laid the basis for subsequent meetings in Geneva and the signing of a joint action plan between the P5+1 countries and Iran," Idrissov said.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues have become part of the agenda of Kazakhstan's political activities. Seeking to push

this process on a global scale, Kazakhstan made a specific proposal for the adoption of the Universal Declaration on a Nuclear Weapons-Free World, which could become an important step toward the adoption of a Convention on the Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Kazakhstan's international ATOM Project, aimed at taking decisive action on a final and irrevocable nuclear test ban, is getting increasing support in the world. This year, the Foreign Ministry held more than 50 events to promote the ATOM Project abroad, including events in cooperation with the Parliament of Kazakhstan and major international organisations such as the UN, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly and others. So far, the ATOM Project's online petition has been signed by more than 70,000 people from 100 countries, and the number of signatures is steadily growing.

In accordance with modern requirements for improving the safety of travel documents, Kazakhstan began including biometric data and enhanced protection measures on diplomatic and service passports issued from Sept. 1 of this year.

At the briefing, hosted by CCS official spokesperson Altay Abibulayev, Idrissov also shared some interesting statistics.

According to Idrissov, currently, there are 67 embassies and foreign missions in Kazakhstan, as well as offices of 22 international organisations and 17 general consulates. Kazakhstan, in turn, maintains, 82 posts abroad, including 54 embassies, five permanent representative offices, three diplomatic missions, and 10 general consulates.

Kazakh-U.S. Convention Looks at Expanding Strategic Partnership

By Erik Sydykov

Relations between the U.S. and Kazakhstan are strong and will continue to grow stronger as mutual interests will continue to push the two countries together into an ever closer and wide-ranging strategic partnership, U.S. and Kazakh officials, members of both parliaments, scholars and business leaders noted during a conference in Washington, DC, on Dec. 11.

The one-day United States – Kazakhstan Convention at the Hyatt Regency Hotel brought together several dozen members of the U.S. Congress, administration officials, members of the Kazakh Parliament, as well as business and think-tank leaders. The Embassy of Kazakhstan in Washington, the Turkic American Alliance, Council of Turkic American Associations, the Kazakh American Friendship Council, the Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians, and Newsdesk Media sponsored the event.

More than a dozen members of Congress spoke at the convention, opened by Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the U.S. Kairat Umarov, emphasising the growing ties between the two countries and highlighting their own experiences with the Central Asian nation.

Speaking at the first session focusing on the strategic partnership, U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) identified security and human rights as critical shared interests between the two countries. She commended Kazakhstan for its role as the 2010 chair of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and in the NATO Partnership for Peace Programme, in addition to hosting the P5+1 negotiations with Iran over its nuclear programme earlier in 2013.

Richard Hoagland, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, in his remarks spoke about why the U.S.-Kazakhstan relationship matters for both countries.

"Looking back over the past two decades, it is easy to see that Kazakhstan has consistently overcome the challenges it has faced," Hoagland, who had served as U.S. Ambassador in Astana, said. "But at the moment of independence, Kazakhstan's future success was not at all predestined. It was a landlocked state that had not at all



been seeking the independence that history unexpectedly thrust upon it. In the immediate wake of independence, Kazakhstan's national leadership made three fundamental decisions that have paid off increasingly handsomely: 1) to pursue fundamental economic reforms, 2) to give up the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal in the world, and 3) to give highest priority to educating a new generation to ensure that Kazakhstan would eventually take its rightful place on the world stage."

According to Hoagland, "Kazakhstan's openness to economic partnership with the U.S. has helped the country achieve the highest per-capita foreign investment among members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. U.S. interest in the Kazakh economy will only increase as Kazakhstan finalizes its WTO accession. As Kazakhstan continues to develop a sound regime of intellectual property rights, introduces WTO and OECD standards, and ensures the even application of laws and regulations, investment in a broad range of sectors outside of energy should grow."

As an example of U.S.-Kazakhstan ties in nuclear security, Hoagland recalled a recent joint project which secured hundreds of nuclear weapons worth of nuclear materials. "In 2010, our two countries, with the assistance of the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom, transported highly enriched uranium and plutonium from the closed BN-350 nuclear reactor in Aktau to a secure long-term storage facility. This move insured that the fissile material in question – sufficient to make hundreds of nuclear weapons – could never fall into the wrong hands," he said.

Turning to education and peo-

ple-to-people exchange, Hoagland reserved special praise for the Bolashak scholarship programme and efforts to reform civil service.

"We share Kazakhstan's commitment to develop its human capital. We are proud to have hosted hundreds of Kazakhstani students who have since returned to serve their country," the U.S. diplomat said. "Of course, it is one thing to educate – it is another to ensure that an education is put to good use. Through its on-going civil service reform, Kazakhstan is reducing the influence of patronage in its government-appointee system, creating a merit-based senior executive service whose members have passed a rigorous examination process. The Civil Service Agency has signed an MOU with our own Office of Personnel Management, and a class of new senior civil servants will be spending a semester in the United States, partly at Duke University and partly at OPM's Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville. Through this and other ventures, the U.S. remains committed to continuing to work with Kazakhstan to foster democracy and good governance."

The convention also focused on the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy. Dr. Kerri-Ann Jones, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, noted knowledge sharing in science and technology as particularly important to the strategy. She showcased Nazarbayev University's partnership with leading U.S. higher education institutions, including Duke University, Carnegie Mellon, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Pittsburgh, and the University of Wisconsin. She also

talked about the importance of science and technology cooperation in meeting the demands of the 21st century.

"Our relationship in science, technology and innovation goes far beyond the pursuit of knowledge – it is a key component to strengthening our overall bilateral

relationship," she said. "It brings our scientific communities together and it links our businesses. Science is based on disciplines and values that transcend politics, languages, cultures, and borders."

Jones went on to list several specific results of bilateral collaboration.

"Kazakh scientists and researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture worked together to develop an experimental Hepatitis C vaccine. Your scientists, working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency researchers, developed a method to purify mercury-contaminated water," she said.

In June 2013, an inaugural joint committee meeting under the 2010 U.S.-Kazakhstan Science and Technology Agreement took place in Astana and identified shared priorities and established three working groups in the areas of biomedical research, green chemistry, and nat-

ural resources and mineral management. In all three directions there has been specific progress already, the U.S. official noted.

Additionally, the U.S. National Institutes of Health has been working with Kazakh scientists for many years in biodiversity and natural products. "Kazakhstan has unique plant species with potential as anti-cancer drug candidates. ... NIH is interested in working with Kazakhstan to help preserve the areas where they grow as "bio-repositories." A bio-repository would put Kazakhstan at the forefront of drug discovery and preservation of unique ecosystems," Jones said.

Convention speakers also included Atlantic Council President Fred Kempe, Johns Hopkins University's Central Asia and Caucasus Institute founding chairman Fred Starr, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence David Sedney, experts from Heritage Foundation, Carnegie Endowment, and others. Senator Serik Nugarbekov led a Kazakh delegation which focused on Astana Economic Forum, EXPO 2017 and other initiatives.



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Maxim Akbarov: Aliens Had Nothing to Do With Our Movie

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – The spirited Kazakh comedy “Aliens Have Nothing to Do With This” opened across the country on Dec. 5. Maxim Akbarov, one of the film’s stars, spoke to The Astana Times about the film and his plans for the future in an exclusive interview.

The 28-year-old Akbarov is well known to Kazakh audiences from his starring role as the spoiled Loko in the 2010 KazakhFilm Studio’s blockbuster, “The Tale of The Pink Bunny.”

“Now, I’m working in the film industry,” Akbarov said. “I have been working for the past three years as a public relations director for KazakhFilm Studio. Beside that, I star in movies; acting for me is more of a hobby. I also write scenarios for films that I would like to direct in the near future. I try to grow in different areas. I want to launch a new business next year.”

Akbarov studied for six months in Los Angeles, but focused on directing, not acting. He plans to launch an acting school next year that would facilitate study trips by Kazakh actors to American acting schools in Hollywood. “I have three favourite cities: Almaty, Los Angeles and Astana,” Akbarov said.

“Aliens ...” has received mixed reviews so far. Akbarov himself says he wasn’t thrilled about his role or the script at first, but that he decided to take part in the film – and shoot in Astana in -47 C temperatures –



because he believed in his friend and colleague, acclaimed director of “The Tale of the Pink Bunny” Farkhad Sharipov. “Aliens ...” was shot on a small budget by a private studio and a group of producers who decided to make the film at their own expense.

“I depict an 18-year-old man living in Astana, selling cell phones, who tries to open up his own business but just doesn’t have the money to make it,” Ak-

barov explained. “His father is a driver; his mother wants him to succeed. He reaches a breaking point, steals his father’s car, steals some money and finds himself on the loose in Astana, facing challenges and different types of situations. But this was one story: there are four stories in the movie that crisscross at one point.”

“This film tells a story about problems among young people, state bodies and state procurement

programmes. When people ask me what the movie is about, what aliens have to do with it, I answer ‘Aliens had nothing to do with the film and the film is about nothing,’” he said, smiling.

“Unfortunately, about 80 percent of people who have watched it don’t understand what it was about. It is not about something specific, but everyone can find something that appeals to him or her,” he said.

Continued on Page B3

UNDP Project Supports Rural Business in Eastern Kazakhstan

By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – A United Nations Development Programme’s “Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus and the Western CIS” project funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland supports small and medium-sized businesses in the region as a way to support human development. The project, which began in October 2009 and will end at the end of 2013, worked both regionally and individually with eleven countries in the Western region of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Shynar Imambekova, manager of the project in Semey, told The Astana Times about the project’s step-by-step implementation as well as the organisers’ goals and plans.

What were the different phases of the project?

First of all, we conducted research. Our management from the Bratislava regional centre came to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and met potential partners in the project. After that, we elaborated the work plans, including all the measures they wanted to have implemented in the East Kazakhstan region, which is the pilot site for such initiatives. In the first phase, they focused on women’s entrepreneurship and women’s initiatives, including workshops and consultations, which covered the training measures.

We also implemented microcredit programmes in the first phase through local microcredit organisation Bereke in Semey. [Bereke was founded in 2007 with UNDP support, but is now an independent organisation, working without UNDP assistance.]

What did you do in the different phases of the project?

We supported agricultural producers within the first phase. We did not limit ourselves to Semey, but worked in the whole region. We held various workshops and many partners of the Customs Union participated in the workshops and talked about launching businesses. Those workshops were both for new entrepreneurs and existing companies. The first phase was implemented from 2009 to January-February 2011.

In the second phase we decided to strengthen our trainings. We decided to focus on the sustainability of our measures. In the second phase, from May 2011 to now, we created a network of 13 business consultants, one in each district of the region. ... We increased the capacity of the local population, we employed specialists from the districts, people who can start working with akimats (city or regional administrations), because our national partners are the regional akimat, the akimats of Semey and Ust-Kamenogorsk and the akimats of districts and rural districts. Without their support, we cannot come to a district and say that we need something. We should cooperate with them.

How did you choose specialists?

The specialists were chosen from among the employed and unemployed populations, excluding civil servants. We looked for experienced people who could work with the population and render consulting services for rural populations on a permanent basis, writing business plans, helping with taxation and accounting issues and others. Of course, we trained them as well. We held trainings and workshops for them to get to know the basics and do further work. Of course, the akimats also helped us. The akimat provided us with an office and office equipment.

Continued on Page B4

Business Friendly Government Helps Grow South Kazakhstan, Says Regional Deputy Governor

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – South Kazakhstan is attracting investment, implementing industrialisation and creating new jobs for its citizens thanks to a thoughtful, business-friendly oblast government – and a personal touch – says Deputy Akim (Governor) Saparbek Tuyakbayev.

South Kazakhstan’s economy has doubled over the past five years, Tuyakbayev said in an exclusive interview, and the share of industry has grown from 15 percent to 24.5 percent. They’ll end this year having launched 100 Industrialisation Map projects, creating more than 10,000 new jobs.

South Kazakhstan is one of the leaders among the oblasts [provinces] in implementing industrialisation projects, which Tuyakbayev

attributes to the joint efforts of the akimat [local government] and the region’s entrepreneurs.

The akimat can’t directly fund business, but it can spend money on road shows, investment forums and setting up centres to support entrepreneurs, Tuyakbayev said.

The centre, a one-stop-shop for investors and entrepreneurs large and small, has been a key force in creating business, Tuyakbayev, who is 34 and who was educated at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara and at the University of Toronto, said. “The principle was that we tried to look from the point of view of business. No matter whether it’s government, private—what does business need?”

The key needs of business, it seems, are information, an efficient permissions process, access

to financing and a bit of personal attention.

“Many investors don’t know where to get government support – subsidies, land, other support,” Tuyakbayev said. “There are lots of programmes, but many people don’t even know their names, let alone their conditions. So we’ve concentrated all that information at this centre. ... Consultants at the centre help investors see what kind of government support is suitable for their projects. And when they decide, they don’t have to go somewhere else. ... They can be connected with [these programmes] through the centre.”

Then comes the often long process of getting permissions. All permissions documents are available at the centre, Tuyakbayev said, adding that they have halved the administrative time necessary to set up a

project. Construction projects, for example, are some of the most time-consuming, taking 160 days on paper but in reality often much longer. “We’ve made it 30 days,” Tuyakbayev said. “Thirty days, plus the time for preparing the project. That depends on the investor – the faster he prepares the project, the faster he gets permission. ... This increases the attractiveness of the region.”

The centre also houses representatives from the region’s private banks, as well as government financial institutions, Tuyakbayev said, and investors can compare their options, present their projects and gather information from whichever they choose. “It’s a concentration of all the resources,” Tuyakbayev said, “not just government resources.”

Continued on Page B4

Artist Enjoys Opportunity to Open New Gazeef Art Hall

By Natalya Valuisakaya

ALMATY – The cultural life of the city has been enhanced by the opening of a new gallery at the Gazeef Art Hall. The exhibition displays the work of Kazakh artist Vyacheslav Lyui-Ko.

Slightly dimmed light and the soft reflection of mirror-polished slabs and the contrasting lights and shadows give a clear one-on-one feeling with the thoughts and passions of the artist. Visitors sit on a sterile white sofa and immerse themselves in contemplation.

It is symbolic that the organisers called the first exhibition “The Island.” The gallery causes creative

energies to boil. Art critic Tatyana Martysheva said that the art exhibit is an on-profit project that puts on literary evenings holds lecture series and themed exhibitions for outstanding artists from Kazakhstan and that it presents albums, catalogues, calendars, as well as poetry books.

The gallery’s unique collection consists of paintings and drawings of Kazakh fine art from the 19th and 20th centuries. It is intended not only to pique the senses, but also to teach the viewer to distinguish professional art from surrogate works and promote the cultural life of the city.

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**THINGS TO WATCH
DECEMBER**

ASTANA OPERA HOUSE	
December 25 at 19.30	Christmas music concert
December 27, 28, 30 at 19.00	Romeo and Juliet Ballet
SPORT PALACE KAZAKHSTAN	
December 26 at 19.00	KHL regular Championship Game Barys vs Admiral
December 28 at 17.00	KHL regular Championship Game Barys vs Amur
KERUEN SHOPPING MALL	
December 10-26	World Press Photo 2013 exhibition dedicated to Human Rights Day
PALACE OF INDEPENDENCE	
December 20-February 23 at 10.00	“Napoleon Bonaparte: the life, the legend” exhibition
TILEP KOBYZ SARAY	
December 25 at 19.00	Kazakh folk ensemble Kok Tyrekter concert
ASTANA MALL	
December 31 at 22.00	2014 New Year Party

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

Preventive Medicine Is Key to Healthcare in Kazakhstan, Says Professor of Medicine

By Altair Nurmakhanov

In his 2012 state-of-the-nation address, President Nursultan Nazarbayev identified the development of preventive medicine as a key priority that "should become a major tool in preventing disease." President of the Kazakh Academy of Preventive Medicine Almaz Sharman spoke to The Astana Times about the value of preventive medicine.

How would you describe the main components of quality of life and what is the role of health in it?

We all want to be healthy, physically strong, enthusiastic and smart; to look attractive and young and to have peace of mind. In other words, we all would like to enjoy good quality of life. In many ways this can be achieved through healthy behaviour, in-person communication, spiritual enrichment and respect for the environment.

In today's world, quality of life has become a key priority. It is a broad concept defined by mental and physical well-being, the main criterion of which is health.

We began to realise that it is quite possible to manage our own health by adhering to healthy behaviour, ensuring early detection of signs of diseases and using modern medical technologies to treat them. By following these rules, people can prevent many diseases and, therefore, enjoy long and active life.

What in your opinion should be the role of the state in providing health services?

Health care in Russian is *zdravookhranenie*, which can literally be translated as protection of



health. It primarily means measures aimed at disease prevention. In most countries of the world, the governments take responsibility for that. Health protection is fundamentally different from medicine in a sense of intellectual and creative work, a craft and a complex profession dedicated to treatment of diseases. It's a craft because treatment of most diseases can be standardized. It's creative because each patient is unique and requires an individual approach with unlimited opportunities for technological innovations.

The governments are able to effectively mobilize human and material resources to prevent epidemics, ensure health and food security and to promote healthy behaviour. However, the governments are rarely successful in dealing with functions that require professionalism and individual creativity, which is a characteristic of patient care and treatment of diseases. This is especially true at a time when medicine is becoming more technological.

A sanitary inspector, for instance, can prevent food poisoning, but he cannot create delicious and healthy food. The same is with a health care official who is able to effectively monitor compliance

with safety standards. However, government bureaucrats intervening with professional work performed by doctors and the creative process in patient care may turn out to be counterproductive. Physicians are primarily responsible for the professional execution of their duties. Their performance should be judged by their peers and their patients. The level of financial compensation and demand, as in any labour market, should be determined by consumers of medical care.

In your opinion, what are the main parameters to be achieved in the national health care?

Current trends in health care can be characterized by a shift from disease-centric paradigm to a new paradigm that focuses on disease prevention and health promotion.

This can be achieved through strengthening primary health care that deserves priority funding. Unfortunately, while such priority is often declared it has rarely been effectively executed. Modern primary health care is not just sanitation and the work of doctor's assistants. The primary health care is a gateway that is supposed to be central in communicating with the other parts of the healthcare system. Primary care doctors are the ones who protect consumers from getting ill and help them navigate in the ocean of medical knowledge. For a layman, a non-medical person it is difficult to distinguish a good medical practice from incompetence and ignorance. In such environment, primary care is a bottleneck or a gateway that helps to identify islands of competence and to communicate with the

other parts of healthcare system. Such a role requires that a primary care doctor is an efficient, engaged, well-educated and empowered expert.

International experience demonstrates that hospital admissions may be reduced by 40 percent and health care costs by 30 percent if a country's primary health care system is strong. Around 70 to 80 percent of health care episodes in an individual's life can be identified by general practitioners equipped with basic instruments.

It is important to strengthen the role of primary care physicians by providing them with in-depth knowledge and modern technologies. Internet, social networks, portable echocardiography, medical applications for smart phones and other modern devices make medical technology available not only to doctors, but also to ordinary consumers of healthcare.

Close interaction, continuity and cohesiveness in health care can be provided by a relatively small group of managers through an effective and dynamic administration system. I believe it is necessary to provide doctors and practitioners with key levers of administrative and financial management and unlimited opportunities to innovate freely and to introduce modern methods for disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment according to the principles of evidence-based medicine.

Finally, a key condition is the joint responsibility of citizens. According to the World Health Organisation, about 40 percent of Kazakhstan's health care expenditures come from private sources. This means that citizens today are actively investing in their own

health. It is important to mobilize and rationalize the resources of private medicine in order to create an effective and harmonized health care system based to professional motivation for the interests of patients.

What do you think about public versus private medicine?

I think we should not demonize the right to pay for one's own health, and physicians' right to be properly compensated for their hard work.

In the eighteenth century B.C., Hammurabi's code instructed that a surgeon be paid ten shekels of silver every time he performed a procedure for a patrician—opening an abscess or treating a cataract with his bronze lancet.

What is called the government guaranteed health care benefit package which is perceived as "free healthcare" has a specific source of funding – the state budget, which is made of taxpayers' money. The question is what portion of healthcare expenditures should be guaranteed by the government? Very often unlimited expansion of guaranteed benefit package is not affordable to the public healthcare system. In addition, the public funded model in its essence is a monopoly with intention of controlling the taxpayers' money in providing healthcare services. And monopolies, as we all know, tend to suppress innovation and raise prices.

Kazakhstan's Constitution does not preclude public funding of private healthcare organizations. Mobilizing such resources has great potential in motivating healthcare workers, introducing innovations and providing quality medicine.

Patient care, like any other complex intellectual and creative work, deserved being well rewarded morally and financially.

What about the ideals of altruism and self-sacrifice of doctors?

The word "altruism" came from Latin and is literally translated as "other people." It was introduced by Auguste Comte, a French philosopher, who believed that individuals had a moral obligation to renounce self-interest and live for others. Frankly, I do not agree with this concept. I prefer the term of professional altruism which implies an opportunity for professional self-enrichment through servicing the others.

This concept is reflected in many cultures. In Hebrew, one says *tikkun olam*, a sort of taking the world in for repairs. In Hindi, they say *paropakari sewa* which is not selfless service but includes benefit for the one who gives. Regardless, what matters is that you own your own motives completely.

It is unreasonable to be altruistic by rejecting the fundamental principles of existence, the desire for personal success and happiness. A doctor is not able to fully take care of patients without caring for himself. The success of his or her service always involves a critical condition: satisfaction of internal needs in well-being, balance and harmony. Only through understanding what those internal needs are one can rationalize the conditions for their realization and dedicate himself to professional services. To be a truly moral human being one must act upon one's own rational self-interests.

Astana Opera's Orchestra Has Great Potential, Notes Director

By Ruziyeva Ospanova

Director Vladimir Kirajiyev of Bulgaria, who works in Austria, visited Astana Opera to see the largest theatre in Central Asia, built in just three years. He spoke with The Astana Times about his impressions.

How did you decide to be a director?

In my family we had no musicians. My father was an engineer, my mother a teacher. When I was six, I began to play the piano and then was part of pop groups. I took lessons in harmony, pitch and sight singing, and suddenly I got a chance to try conducting, which happened to suit me.

To learn how to conduct does not mean that you will become a director, however. At first I was a choirmaster, everyone in Bulgaria starts with this. Then I tried with an orchestra, worked in an opera house and started immediately on performances, but it was not easy. Later, I moved to modern music: I was invited to an orchestra that played only modern music. I learned how to conduct 15 years later.

When you are a pianist or violinist, you can practice on your instrument. When you're a conductor, no one lets you practice with their orchestra. I learned how to manage it over a long time; it is a long process.

You have been a guest director in many leading theatres; you know firsthand what international orchestras are like. Having had an opportunity to get acquainted with Astana Opera's orchestra, what do you think of it?

This orchestra has great potential. Take the international orchestras that have worked for many years: the average age of people there is 50-60 years old. Astana Opera's orchestra's average age is 25-30 years old. The potential



that these guys have is rare: after two or three rehearsals, they can learn anything. This orchestra has a great future. Some Western orchestras have a great past, a good present, but there is no future.

Do you have your own individual methods of working with orchestras?

I would say I have different methods for different countries. In Eastern orchestras they perceive you differently. Here, they show respect to you as a teacher. In the West, everything is different: people perceive you as a professional, they are silent when you enter, when you say something, they might respond or not. When I work with local orchestras, I see that they are trying to understand and immediately do, and every day they are better and better. In the West, it is better not to talk; showing with your hands is best. You don't know whether they will respond or not, so it is better not to talk. Regarding Astana Opera's orchestra, I must say, these guys did some things they should do.

Should the director be the rational head or should he provide the orchestra with enthusiasm?

The director a priori must have authority, but certainly he should inspire, because nothing can be done without motivation. Each team has its own energy. The director, as the motor, should move the orchestra to give emotion.

Don't you feel exhausted after rehearsals of emotional works?

This is absolutely true. Of course it takes a lot of energy; when I go to sleep and wake up around three in the morning, I feel exhausted. During rehearsals you can control the emotion, but still you should be energising everyone.

Where does your energy and inspiration come from?

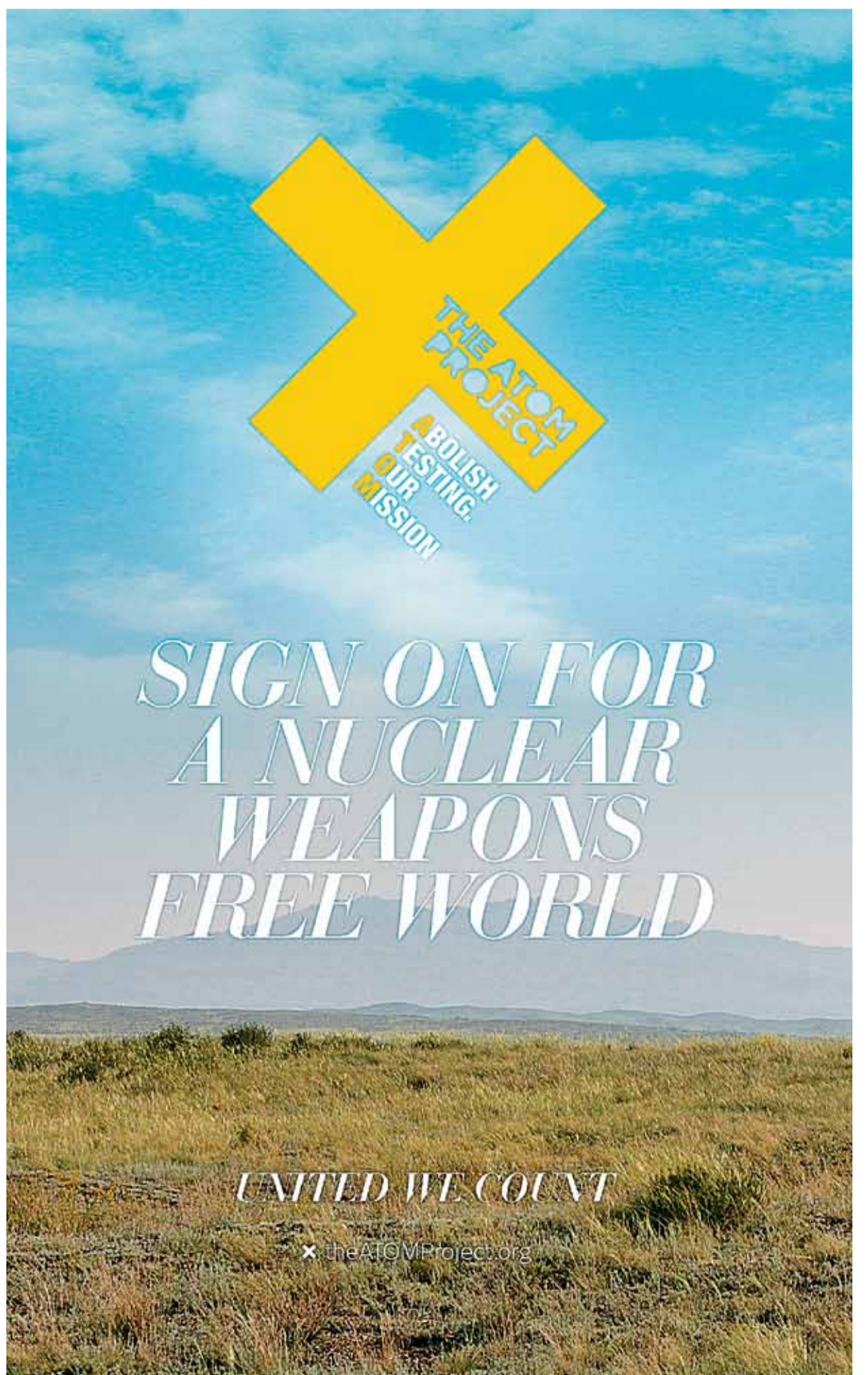
Inspiration comes from work, from meeting musicians, from new orchestras. Each new piece of music that is worked out gives me new enthusiasm. I'm at an age when much has happened already. I want to repeat works already done, but in another way, using a different experience, with other ideas and other concepts, in order to create a new artistic experience. Inspiration comes from being able to recreate pieces in a different way.

What else would you like to do, in addition to being a director?

We directors keep in mind two points: one emotional, the other rational. To be a good director, you need to find a happy medium. If you're seized with emotion, there is no control over the orchestra; if you follow only rationality, everything turns cold and dull. I teach a lot, I work in the Academy of Music in Vienna with young directors, do new versions of works. Those are activities outside of directing, but I still believe that it is karma to be a director, you cannot refuse it easily.

Is this your first time in Kazakhstan?

Yes, and I feel very comfortable here. I loved Astana Opera—it is chic, with wonderful acoustics. I did not expect that somewhere in the East there would be such a new city, where every street is 50 metres wide and it's 200 metres from one building to the next. I thought I was in Tokyo or Dubai. I thought I had wandered into a fairy tale.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

National Youth Arts Contest Held in Almaty



Gifted young people who participated in the Delphic Games impressed the jury with their abilities and their high potential.

By Marina Mikhailova

ALMATY – The Ninth National Youth Delphic Games were held in Almaty under the motto “Keeping Tradition.” This year, more than 500 talented children from 14 regions of the county, as well as Astana and Almaty came together for this high profile art forum.

The contest opened at the Kazakhstan State Circus with a bright theatrical performance about the history of the contest. The show was designed by the artists of the Abai State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet, the Kazakhstan state circus and the orchestra of military unit No. 5571 of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Internal Affairs. Young singer, Ali Okapov performed a song that he wrote specifically for the contest.

The history of Delphic Games, which initially was called the Pythian Games, is rooted in antiquity. These great ancient Greek competitions were held in the city of Delphi to glorify the god Apollo, who according to mythology, defeated the dragon Python.

This ancient tradition has survived to this day. In 2000, the first World Delphic Games of modern times were held and included 27 countries. Since 2002, the Youth Delphic Games have been held annually in one of the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States. They have become an international movement of creative artistic thought and a high cultural forum promoting the ideals of goodness and creativity. This is the only competition in the world which combines all types of art.

The first national Youth Delphic Games of Kazakhstan were held in 2005 in Astana. Then, the baton of the contest, which has become their hallmark, was taken through the cities of Ust-Kamenogorsk,

Shymkent, Taraz, Karaganda and Atyrau. Promoting the development of the Delphic Movement, these events support talented young people, contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage of Kazakhstan and promote tolerance and learning about other cultures in the young. The number of participants is increasing every year, which confirms that Kazakhstan is rich in talented young people and that they are interested in developing their creative potential. All contestants have won regional qualifying competitions.

At the 9th National Delphic Games, these young, talented people competed in 16 areas: photography, folk instruments, folk arts and crafts, accordion, fine arts, piano, academic singing, violin, TV journalism, saxophone, DJing, pop singing, modern dance, folk dance and web design.

The contest was divided into two age groups – 15 years and younger and from 16 to 21 years.

“This year, we focused on classical genres, primarily on folk instruments and folk crafts, because these most recent Delphic Games were held under the aegis of Keeping Tradition. The new category – DJing – as a new genre of contemporary art will reflect our aegis on one hand and on the other, is a new contest tradition,” executive director of the National Delphi Committee Sazhida Saytbaeva said.

Requirements for participants of these contests are very high and are not any less stringent than those of other world competitions. The jury is also highly qualified: they are mainly honoured artists. The skills and talents of participants of the ninth contest were evaluated by USSR People’s Artist Bibigul Tulegenova, People’s Artist of Kazakhstan Yeskendir

Khasangaliyev, Honoured Artist of Kazakhstan Anatoly Gaisin and other well-known figures of art and culture.

The gifted young people impressed the jury with their abilities. The participants of the academic singing contest demonstrated good vocal training and very high potential.

“We are very happy that there are so many talented people in this area able to represent our country,” Tulegenova, the chairman of the academic singing jury said. Fine arts and folk crafts had the greatest number of participants.

The most exciting moment of the contest was the announcement of the winners. Almaty was the first in the number of awards - 20 medals, including 7 gold medals. In second place was the Akmola region with 11 medals, including 4 gold medals. Third place was taken by contestants from the capital who won 3 gold, 8 silver and 5 bronze medals.

Among the holders of gold medals is the Pirouette dance troupe from the East Kazakhstan region, the Shabyt ensemble from Astana, the Neposedny dance group and other participants.

The winners will represent Kazakhstan at the International Delphic Games, which in 2014, will be held in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). Kazakhstan’s national team was invited to participate in the first European Open Youth Delphic Games to be held in early May 2014 in Russia as part of the Delphi Volgograd - 2014 cultural project.

The National Delphic Movement is supported by the Kazakhstan Ministry of Education and Science, the general sponsor of the contest is the Samruk-Kazyna National Welfare Fund.

Artist Brings Kazakh Felt to Modern Objects

By Lyubov Dobrota

SHYMKENT – Zhupar Beisenova, a teacher at the Kasteyev College of Art in Shymkent, has expanded the possibilities of felt in making souvenirs and functional items that can still make a statement. Necklaces and earrings, bracelets and bags, slippers and umbrellas, scarves and cases for mobile phones, all made from felt, bring the material’s unique colour, texture and warmth to humdrum objects.

A special place in her collection belongs to apples, one of the images of Kazakhstan. Her ruddy-yellow fruits look like the famous Almaty Apot, and at first glance, it’s hard to tell that they’ve been made from felt.

Beisenova grew up in an artistic family. Her father, Amangeldy Tursunov, is a famous painter. Beisenova, who received introductory lessons from her grandmother, has been working with felt since her childhood. Her first pictures and tapestries were made



with traditional hot felting techniques, but she now uses more modern, cold methods to process her materials.

Beisenova has created UNESCO-certified artwork. Her woolen cushions, melons and curtains

of felt became famous through her participation in the Sheber international craftsmen’s competition. The reward for her victory in that competition of masters was the chance to participate in a crafts festival in Malaysia.

Artist Enjoys Opportunity to Open New Gazeef Art Hall

Continued from Page B1

Visitors will see the creative works of the founders of the Kazakh visual arts: Aubakir Ismailov and Sergey Kalmikov, our contemporaries: Yevgeny Sidorkin, Gulfairus Ismailova, Aisha Galimbayeva, Zhanatay Shardenov, Kenzhebay Duisenbayev, Saken Bektiyarov, Nicholay Gazeyeva and Gani Bayanov.

The collection of paintings and drawings was gathered by famous collector, Serik Ustabekov. He also writes poetry for Lyui-Ko’s illustrations. The collector chooses paintings based on creative intuition and preferences. This is seen in the current retrospective exhibition.

Landscape and fantastic abstract compositions, unprecedented journeys, ritual dances and knightly battles, portraits of sailors and fishermen – all of these represent the artist’s various perceptions of the world. You will not see banal themes and subjects here and the

audience is invited to co-create and participate in the event. Conveniently sitting on the white sofa, waiting for guests, the author told about the secret subtext of the Island.

“You can connect everything here: independently collected art and the person who owns it. I would describe the exhibition as a small excursion into the past. Many things were written in the last century before other things were stored in personal collections,” he said.

“I cannot create impressionist works with complex colours, I am far from being an impressionist,” he added.

What is the exhibition? Is it a tribute to fashion?

Not at all. Otherwise, I would be engaged in contemporary art, but I’m conservative. Contemporary artists do installations and stuff like that. Let them do that. Classical artists are raised on different values and they do not defy them.



Are you by nature an open person?

I am in a narrow circle. I’m like everyone, something is always missing. Trips help me pass the time and inspire my paintings.

What is the incentive behind life and creativity?

Creativity is a way of life. It is most important that one’s family life is good. My audience consists of intellectuals, readers, the inquisitive and those interested in something more than just making money. At Abay Kazakh Pedagogic Institute, where I studied, I met people enthusiastic about their craft. I “entered the stream” and worked hard. I cannot stop. We were mainly self-educated and I consider those who introduced me to classical paintings to be my teachers. I read lots of books and saw many works. The Renaissance is close to me – especially the Flemish and German contributions. Still, I’m still discovering immutable truths, portraying them as symbols and images on canvas. The story behind a painting is hidden. It is not about impressionism, nor about the fact that it only captures one fleeting moment in time. You know the Bible’s Tower of Babel, to make assumptions is the right of every viewer and is an almost never-ending process.

What is your island?

My island is what the viewer sees in my pictures. My island broke off from the rest of the world and if to exclude television, includes my city, my family, friends, house and where we spend time together frying kebabs. Life is dear to everyone.



One of the film’s stars, Maxim Akbarov, shown here with singer Dilnaz Akhmediyeva, described the film as one with mixed emotions.

Maxim Akbarov: Aliens Had Nothing to Do With Our Movie

Continued from Page B1

“Many friends of mine from different walks of life called me and said they liked certain moments, different moments from the film. It is an ironic comedy that could have been a miniseries; we could have filmed so much more. The first director’s cut ran two hours, 20 minutes.

The second cut came to one hour, 55 minutes. I think it is too long for a film. In any case, it is filmed now, it had been released

and it has gotten some good reviews and some bad ones. Some say it was positive, some say it’s a heavy load, with so many life problems. ... I would describe this film as a film with mixed emotions,” he said.

“I would like to express my appreciation to one man who has sort of helped evolve Kazakhstan’s cinema industry today, a man who believed in the younger generation: Yermek Amanshayev, the director of the KazakhFilm Studio,” Akbarov said.

“Until recently, young hopefuls and professionals starting out in this industry were not even allowed to touch the cameras,” Akbarov explained. “This man said that we need to promote the youth because they’re our future. Of course, we respect our older generation of filmmakers, certainly, but why should young men study to become filmmakers and actors if they are not to be entrusted with any responsibility? He continues to believe in youth and continues to promote younger actors.”

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UNDP Project Supports Rural Business in Eastern Kazakhstan

Continued from Page B1

What did the project achieve?

In the second phase in the region we opened 32 online centres, so in 32 villages local libraries are now equipped with the necessary office equipment. We chose 32 schools according to the criterion of supporting schools ... and tried to expand their access to information. Local libraries hadn't been popular before, though they existed, but now within the joint UNDP programme for raising the competitiveness of the region ... there are 32 online centres equipped with laptops, projecting cameras, screens and printers and any person can come and use the Internet.

What was the goal?

The first goal was the support of businesses. We lined up the work in coordinating the online centres controlled by one consultant. We see that now people really get information from governmental websites; they have access to e-services. They can do some work from the village and they don't have to go to a city to submit documents and get a list of necessary documents for social issues. Students can easily come there and work on papers.

What else was implemented within the second phase?

Within this phase we also planned the grant programme. We deviated a little from the microcredit programme, because it involves interest rates, pledges,

etc. Everyone knows that not every bank will take a pledge from a rural citizen against his house. Not every entrepreneur has other options for obtaining a loan. We created a mechanism of implementation of the grant programme in close cooperation with the state Business Road Map 2020 and Employment Road Map 2020 programmes. This was the pilot experience. We invited the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Fund to help us, and we exceeded the initial indicators we set. We initially planned two projects; now we have 16. We exceeded fivefold what we had. We had \$100,000, which is not a big amount, and we attracted \$545,000 more. The Business Road Map has a grant programme which provides 3 million tenge [US\$19,470] for innovative projects. The innovative projects are new for our population in the region, but we supported the idea. We had a goal that these should be not just innovation but socially valuable projects.

So we supported two projects within the Business Road Map. New businesses were opened for processing waste paper, producing toilet paper, automating stations of technical servicing, etc. The Department of Entrepreneurship and Industrial and Innovative Development provided us with the list of projects. They gave us information and we could choose other entrepreneurs to give grants to. We created a grant committee to choose projects.

Other projects were approved

in accordance with the employment programme. They give microcredits to those who can pay and pledge 10 percent of their own contribution. They gave us a list of six entrepreneurs and we approved them. They are more social projects – a sewing shop, a heat insulation shop, etc. – which are needed in a rural settlement. Next year, they also expect further financing from us and people learned through their countrymen that the process wasn't difficult.

Does the project support other measures?

Other measures advanced the training of civil servants. We understand that there is a passive dialogue, so to speak, between business representatives and civil servants who work with businesses. We invited both sides to workshops to talk and identify problems and obstacles in obtaining information.

We also researched the development of internal trade models—analytical research for developing commodity markets. Our experts discussed public procurement, problems, how to participate in the procurement process [and] how to get information. We held workshops for interested parties.

Who sits on the grant committee?

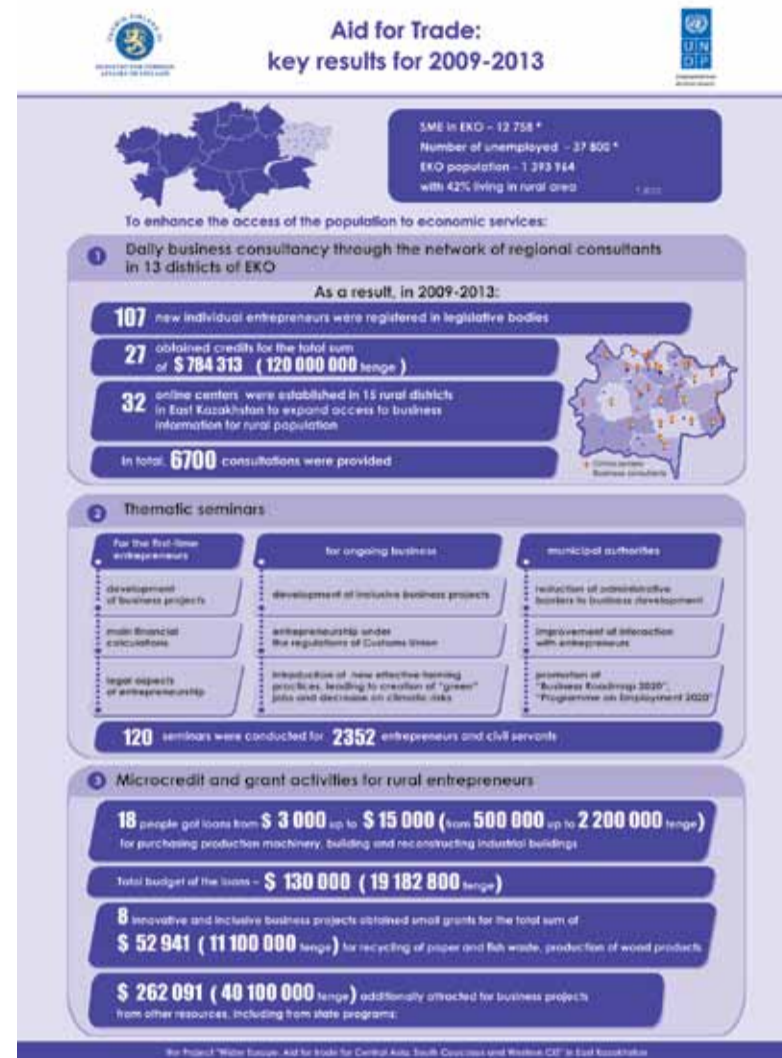
Representatives from our national partners, the Department of Entrepreneurship and Industrial and Innovative Development of

the East Kazakhstan Region and its Department of Coordination of Employment of Social Programmes; UNDP representatives, the Damu Fund for Entrepreneurship Development, representatives of the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Ust-Kamenogorsk.

How will entrepreneurs be supported after the project ends?

As I said, we aim for sustainability. We have a joint programme from 2011 to 2015 in the region and in that programme we have the third component: social and economic development. Social and economic development is also aimed at vulnerable groups of entrepreneurs. In the third component, we plan to continue the business consultants' network; we plan to continue our work with 32 online centres.

We also plan to monitor their activity in online centres as well as the number of applicants to them. We know as of today that more than 150 people have opened their businesses with the assistance of business consultants. This is a good indicator. More than 9,500 people were trained and got consultations during the entirety of our project. We plan to continue the grant programme. For now, our budget is under consideration. I think we should continue the pilot project. We also plan advanced training for our consultants. We want to strengthen our focus on



the Damu programme for the support of women's entrepreneurship. This is our initiative and idea. Next year, we plan to hold a joint workshop during which their specialists will train our consultants.

Why is the Foreign Ministry of Finland funding the project?

Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs wants to assist trade and support business in rural areas in particular.

UNDP Project Seeks to Aid Village Entrepreneurs



By Aigul Bidanova

SEMEY – The UN Development Programme's Wider Europe: Aid for Trade project seeks to help villages in Central Asia, the South Caucasus and the western countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States develop business. The project was launched in East Kazakhstan in 2009 with the financial support of the Foreign Ministry of Finland.

In choosing the territory to promote the project, organisers took into account East Kazakhstan's unique identity as a centuries-old trade crossroads. The Silk Road connecting China and Europe passed through the territory, bringing with it some of the world's first attempts at doing business.

Today, East Kazakhstan has a population of 1.3 million and more than 10,000 enterprises. Unfortunately, not all aspiring entrepreneurs have access to financing or information about the rules of doing business, which greatly hinders the development of business, especially in rural areas.

A number of government programmes are attempting to change that situation. The Aid for Trade project has also made a contribution. Through this programme, dozens of villagers have started their own businesses using loans provided by the Bereke microcredit organisation, which works with the support of the UNDP. In selecting projects, Bereke acts in the interest of borrowers and has supported projects that have paid for the reconstruction of distant

pasture facilities or purchased livestock or production equipment.

Sarzhai Village is located near the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. The area sees no heavy snowfall and cattle can graze all year round, which greatly helps local farmers. But the area's weather is unpredictable and in 2010, severe frost and heavy snowfall killed almost half of the region's agricultural livestock. Locals didn't have time to deliver feed and hay to their farms.

Head of a local farm Nurzhan Aukashev suffered losses and decided to apply to the microcredit organisation to get back on his feet. With financial assistance, Aukashev, who mostly produces horses for making kumis (fermented horse milk) bought 150 animals and a tractor to harvest fodder. Aukashev manufactures kumis year round, milking 13 mares in the winter and 60 in the summer. Aukashev receives orders from the neighbourhood and also sells kumis in bulk in Semey.

Zhanargul Duisenovna is now the owner of a small farm and a grocery store in Karaul Village, also located not far from the former test site. Her family lived hand to mouth until she decided to start her own business. With the two million tenge (US\$12,985) she borrowed from Bereke, Duisenovna bought Kazakh White Head cattle and has increased her sales of meat and dairy products significantly. Today her family has about 300 animals and plans to build more paddocks.

Like many other villagers, Dui-

senovna attended training workshops organised by the UNDP that focused on credit, taxation, sales promotion and legality issues in doing business. The organisers of the workshops often invited successful entrepreneurs from the East Kazakhstan oblast involved in the Wider Europe: Aid for Trade project as trainers. The workshops also attracted the owners of stable businesses who were interested in pursuing growth.

Irina Darmina, one seminar participant, now plans to open a sewing shop in addition to running a department store.

Mukhtar Toregeldy from Kalbatay Village in the Zharmin district received a loan for the development and expansion of his business this year. Toregeldy has a farming partnership, a food store and a mini-bakery. He grows 60 hectares of soybeans and plans to start processing them. To do this, he took a loan from Bereke to purchase the necessary equipment.

So far, all entrepreneurs who have taken loans have repaid them, and Bereke is continuing to support farmers in the region using the returned funds.

This year, the trade facilitation project has implemented a grant programme aimed at supporting inclusive and innovative business ideas in rural populations. Information stops, waste paper recycling facilities and automated service stations are among the proposals that have been suggested.

Young businessman Nasypan Samgau from Shygyys Village also received grant assistance through the UNDP project. His business idea, worth 1.5 million tenge (about US\$9,740), is to open a modern plant for producing leather shoes using automated small-operation technology to increase the quality and quantity of production. Samgau hopes that in two years he will be able to double his production volumes.

The young innovator also received help from the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Fund, a consulting partner of the UNDP with an extensive network of consultants. Today, its online centres, established in 32 settlements, provide consulting services, in addition to other useful information and free Internet access for socially vulnerable populations.

Business Friendly Government Helps Grow South Kazakhstan, Says Regional Deputy Governor



A worker of Baltexile LLP mans imported machinery at the factory in Shymkent. Baltexile is one of the projects benefiting from the support of the regional government.

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The centre has been open for just over a year and has accepted more than 20,000 entrepreneurs who have been able to have their needs met 95 percent of the time, Tuyakbayev said, adding that nearly US\$227 million has come through the centre as financing.

To help smooth processes for bigger investors, the oblast has also set up an industrial zone in Shymkent, where factories can be dropped in and connected to all utilities and communications through one company in a process that Tuyakbayev said saves time and cuts out corruption. They are also financing a training centre in the industrial zone to train exactly the types of workers the new ventures will require. They plan to repeat these zones in all the small cities in the oblast. The first zone has created over 3,000 jobs in two years and unemployment in South Kazakhstan is now at 5.5 percent, Tuyakbayev said. Unemployment for young people has also dropped over the last few years from 6 percent to 3.3 percent.

The programme has also sponsored investment opportunity road shows abroad, including shows in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Rus-

sia, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Malaysia and Turkey. The shows have resulted in 20 large projects totaling US\$1.6 billion.

The projects include high-technology production facilities for making electricity transformers with Chinese partners, producing LED lighting, water pumps and solar panel components with German partners, and others.

"You have to work with investors individually," said Tuyakbayev. "I spend more than 50 percent of my time each day meeting with investors. ... We are people; we are not robots. Despite all their calculations, they still have to believe in us. That's why I have to work personally with them. Besides all the stuff I organise – tariffs, land, money – they should believe in me. That's why I spend so much time with them. That's why we have so many projects."

In a few years, he said, when the projects starting today are open, there will be two or three times more production in the region than there is today. "Before, we had small and medium business. But now, we've started to build big factories."

Much of the revenue from all this development is earmarked for the oblast's social sphere, Tuyak-

bayev said. There are already not enough schools in the oblast, and the rapidly growing population – one in four children born in Kazakhstan is born in South Kazakhstan – is outstripping their ability to build more. Despite opening 50-60 new schools and health centres per year, they need more. So infrastructure, roads, schools and health centres are the priorities in the oblast budget. "We are investing 80 billion tenge [US\$519 million] in this each year. It's the biggest budget among the regions in social and engineering infrastructure."

As for the economic future, the oblast's priority sectors are the food industry, primarily the intersection of agriculture, food processing and logistic. Other priorities include tourism, pharmaceuticals and, in the more distant future, metallurgy and agrochemicals. There are currently big projects underway in most of these spheres, including a US\$200 million warehouse complex for food products, a new winter sports resort centre 50 kilometres from Shymkent and the refurbishment of the region's pharmaceutical factory and academy with Polish partner Polpharma.

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“Harry Potter” Series to Be Translated into Kazakh in 2014

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Harry Potter will be the newest literary character to learn Kazakh, according to Marketing Director of Russia’s Azbuka-Attikus publishing house Dmitri Yaronov.

Tengrinews reported that Azbuka-Attikus plans to begin translate J.K. Rowling’s entire seven-book series about young wizards into Kazakh in 2014.

Azbuka-Attikus is the official publisher of the series in the Commonwealth of Independent States and already distributes a Russian translation of the books. Kazakhstan’s Meloman, which already markets “Harry Potter” toys and other products, has asked for finan-

cial assistance from the publisher in creating its Kazakh translation. The company is hoping to sign an agreement with a copyright licensing agency to publish the series as soon as possible.

“The most important thing for Kazakhstan is to have a high quality translation,” Yaronov said. The books will be distributed by the same agency that distributes films in the Kazakh language, and Yaronov said they have high hopes for good sales. Kazakh officials have already discussed including the modern classics in school curricula.

In 2011, Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Culture and Information created an online contest to submit and vote for books to be translated into Kazakh, as well as to draw

attention to reading and literature. In 2012, President Nursultan Nazarbayev suggested the idea of creating a national list of 100 popular books to receive modern Kazakh-language translations. The 100 Books website currently lists Rowling’s series at number three, behind J.R.R. Tolkien’s “Lord of the Rings” series and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s complete “Sherlock Holmes” collection.

The “Harry Potter” books have already been translated into 70 languages and dialects. Other books slated for translation into Kazakh earlier this year by the Foliant Publishing Company included 10 encyclopaedias and 13 of the “Walt Disney’s Golden Classics” series.



Kazakh Professors Attend Seminar at German University



By Jan Furst

Lecturers from the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan attended a training course Dec. 9-13 at the Potsdam Center for Policy and Management within the University of Potsdam, Germany on modern methods for teaching social sciences and applying research in the learning process.

The Potsdam Center for Policy and Management has developed a curriculum in accordance with the needs of the academy, paying great attention to balancing practical examples and best practices for teaching and research.

Seminars and lectures were delivered by the leading lecturers of Potsdam University, which is considered to be among Europe’s best higher education institutions in the field of public administration and management. Scholars shared their experiences in teaching and conducting research on public policy and public administration.



Potsdam University is considered one of Europe’s best higher education institutions in the field of public administration and management.

Issues related to civil service reform were discussed during the course, taking as an example the case of Germany and other countries. Participants also considered issues related to supporting education and curriculum reform in universities.

Lectures by Professor H. Fuhr, Dr. M. Seyfried and Dr. J. Franke regarding modern methods of teaching, development and preparation of postgraduate master programmes and applying methods of the social sciences in research activities were of particular interest to participants. They also discussed the continuous improve-

ment of lecturers’ teaching skills. In addition, the presentation about the civil service system of Germany presented comparatively with France and Britain by Dr. Joachim Vollmuth, who has more than 40 years of experience in civil service area in Germany, sparked great interest among attendees.

The programme provided participants with information about modern methods of research, modern teaching methods, outcome-based learning and quality assurance of training and qualification development of civil servants. Organizers agreed to continue cooperation in 2014.

New Commemorative Coins Issued for Year of the Horse

By Alla Demytyeva

ALMATY – On Dec. 3, commemorative gold and silver coins from the Oriental Calendar series called “The Year of the Horse” came into circulation in Kazakhstan.

This is the fourth pair of coins of proof quality from the Oriental Calendar series. The coins, which are 500 tenge [about US\$3.25] each, are made in the form of a dodecahedron and have twelve sides. On the obverse of the coins are mythological symbols of constellations and the star map on the sky; on the reverse side is a horse, the symbol of 2014.

Five thousand silver coins of 925 purity and 3,000 of 999 purity high-carat gold coins have been issued. The Kazakhstan National Bank has said that the 500 tenge commemorative coins must be accepted at their nominal val-



ue throughout the country for all types of payments, as well as for crediting accounts, deposits, letters of credit and for transference. They are not limited for exchange in the country’s banks.

The commemorative coins are sold at collection cost, packed in gift boxes and provided with a numbered certificate of quality by the Kazakhstan National Bank in Kazakh, Russian and English.

World Press Photo Tour Reaches Astana

By Julia Rutz

ASTANA – The annual World Press exhibition following the World Press Photo Contest kicked off at Keruen Shopping Mall on Dec. 10. The 56-year-old event is acknowledged as the world’s premier photojournalism exhibit. It was dedicated to Human Rights Day and showcased scenes of violence against humanity in different parts of the world.

The exhibited pictures were divided into nine categories such as general news, how news topics are covered and their aftermath. Topics included politics, economics, conflict, social tension, relief and crime through the lenses of spot news, witnessing breaking news and unfolding events, as well as contemporary issues, documenting issues affecting people’s lives and society today. Social, environmental, health and economic issues were major focuses. An independent jury gathered in Amsterdam in February this year to choose the best pictures from 103,486 photos sent from different parts of the world.

“We chose the winners according to two requirements. First

of all, pictures should reflect the global meaning of the competition. Secondly, each judge could express his or her feelings about the picture. That helped us pick the best of the best and stay unprejudiced,” explained the president of the jury, Vice-President and Director of Photography of the Associated Press Santiago Lyon.

The first place for general news was taken by Italian photographer Alessio Romenzi who took a picture of refugees trying to escape by illegally crossing the border between Syria and Turkey for Time Magazine. It was reported that the number of refugees reached 2.5 million people in November this year. Most of them moved into Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

Another winner in the spot news category was Bernat Armangué from Spain whose photograph was taken in Gaza and is of the aftermath of an Israeli bombing. The military operation called “Cloudy Pillar” was targeted against Hamas military and missile depots and executed on Nov. 14, 2012. Hamas military commander Ahmed al-Dzhabary was killed on the first

day of the operation. However, the military operation continued with the bombing of civilian areas. A ceasefire agreement was signed on Nov. 21, 2012. The picture was taken for the Associated Press on Nov. 18.

Photographer Dania Jan Grarup won first place in sports by capturing Somali women playing basketball. Despite UN protection over the capital city, Mogadishu, there are still Al-Qaeda militants in the town. They prohibit women from playing sports. Members of the women’s national team for basketball were repeatedly threatened for violating Shari’ah law. As a punishment, every woman who plays basketball is to lose her right hand or left leg.

The 2012 World Press Photo of the Year was taken by Sweden’s Paul Hansen. It depicts the funeral procession of two little children killed during the “Cloudy Pillar” military operation in Gaza.

“This picture shows the true and complex character of the Gaza sector. This character finds its response in your heart, mind and soul,” Lyon said.

Apart from supporting high standards in photojournalism and

documentary photography worldwide, World Press Photo is striving to generate wide public interest in photography as well as in the free exchange of information.

“When I look at the winners’ pictures I see the first class photo shoots. These are strong and powerful pictures you won’t forget for long. I also believe they will become an icon for young photographers who learn how to document world events and inform the world community about current situation in different countries. Our understanding of modern and complex world depends on the results of their work,” explained Lyon.

World Press Photo is an independent, non-profit organization with an office in Amsterdam, where it was founded in 1955. World Press Photo receives support from the Dutch Postcode Lottery and is sponsored worldwide by Canon. World Press Photo holds official accreditation for good practices from the Central Bureau on Fundraising (CBF).

The exhibition tour programme takes place in approximately 100 cities in 45 countries of and is still expanding. The exhibit will remain in Astana until Dec. 26.



A photo by Paul Hansen, depicting the funeral procession of two little children killed during Operation Pillar of Cloud in Gaza, was recognised by the international independent jury as the 2012 World Press Photo of the Year.

NATION&CAPITAL

TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

Drying Reservoir Reveals Ancient City

By Lyubov Dobrota

SHYMKENT – The sharp drop in water levels at the Shardara Reservoir, about 200 kilometres south-west from Shymkent, has had one benefit: it has led to the discovery of the remnants of an ancient settlement under the dried-up parts of the lake.

Local residents and fishermen first spotted the grass-covered hill, which the low water levels allowed them to access. Archaeologists have now been able to explore the site and are convinced that the mound holds evidence of an ancient city. Under a 10-metre water column they found not only pottery and human and animal remains, but also a clay water pipeline. Its tube goes deeper into the water, out to the middle of the reservoir.

Nurlan Smailov, director of the district museum, said that in 1958, archaeologists from Moscow and what was then called Alma-Ata conducted excavations on the island, which appeared just 50 metres from the shore of the reservoir. For five years, the scientists conducted digs on the fort, known as Aktobe-2, or "White Hill." The name was chosen because the settlement had been built from white stones.

The scientists then found several scattered settlements dating to the middle ages. The construction of the Shardara Reservoir interrupted the excavations, and Aktobe-2, with the mounds of Aktobe-1 and Zhaushykum, fell into the flood zone and became part of a man-made lake bed. After that, there was little more that could be learned.

Smailov does not exclude the possibility that the water-washed skeletons could be the remains of ancient Kangly or Samanids (Turkic and Persian peoples), who came here after the fall of the Western Turkic Khanate. It is also possible that the Qarakhanids ruled there before the Mongol invasion. The founder of the Kazakh school of archaeology, academician Alkey Margulan, believed that these settlements dated back to the Kangly state that emerged in the third century B.C.

The falling waters may now allow archaeologists to return to the study of the region's ancient cities and find answers to their questions about its ancient history. However, time will soon run out again: more water is set to fill the reservoir, and a unique ancient monument once again will be hidden under it.



The pottery, human and animal remains, as well as a clay water pipeline were discovered at the Shardara Reservoir located 200 kilometres south-west from Shymkent.



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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

Kazakhstan's Women's Rugby Team Wins International Tournament in Dubai

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Dynamo Almaty, Kazakhstan's national women's rugby team, took first place at the Emirates Airline Dubai Rugby Sevens Invitational Tournament held from Nov. 28-30 in Dubai.

Dynamo Almaty, both Almaty's club team and the country's national women's team, beat South Africa's SA Select Women 36-12 in the final. Teams from South Africa, the U.A.E., Switzerland, Germany, Kenya, Russia and Sweden competed in the tournament.

Hard work got them the victory, Dynamo's head coach Dmitry Pichugin told The Astana Times. "It was no luck—the games were tough; all the national teams were playing at the tournament. The U.A.E., Kenya, Germany and Switzerland presented their best line-ups, so the opponents were not easy to beat." Beat them Almaty's women did, however, in a series of victories that pitted them against Moscow's team in the semifinals and then the South African team in the finals.

There were 60,000 spectators watching the final game, Pichugin said. "The girls were more nervous about the pressure of the spectators than the opponent. The stadium was crowded and packed with people."

"I must say, they are all young and good players," Pichugin said of

his team. There are a few standouts, though. One is Liliya Bazeruk, who has been playing for only six months. Despite being a newcomer to the sport, "she has helped us win in every game," her coach said. "She took her game to a good level right off the bat; playing in the defence, she scored a lot of points."

He singled out Yelena Yevdokimova and captain Anna Yakovleva as other players to watch, but emphasised that Dynamo's wins come from team efforts.

Dynamo Almaty is the reigning women's rugby sevens champion of the Asian Games, a title they will defend in Incheon, South Korea, next year. The team's most important upcoming tournaments, the coach said, are the Hong Kong Sevens on March 30, 2014, and then the Asian Games from Sept. 14-23. "[The Asian Games] is probably the most important event for us, since as champions we automatically make it to the group," Pichugin said. "We hope that we will get proper attention from the Sports Agency."

Pichugin said he hopes their most recent victory will contribute to the push to include rugby sevens in the Olympic Games. Rugby sevens is a variant of rugby union in which teams field seven players instead of 15 and the matches are shorter. It has been played for more than 100 years and is popular around the world.



Hard work got Kazakhstan's national women's rugby team an anticipated victory.

Kazakhstan Hockey Upsets U.S. in Semis, Wins Silver in Trentino Winter Universiade

By Jan Furst

Kazakhstan's national Universiade team finished in 15th place in the medals standings at the Dec. 11–21 Universiade in Trentino, Italy with two gold medals, two silver and one bronze.

Kazakhstan's hockey team also attracted attention by beating Canada and the United States in the early rounds and nearly beating Canada again in the finals.

The Kazakh hockey team went undefeated until the finals, beating Ukraine (4:2), Japan (3:1), and even Canada (4:2) in the round robin before knocking out Latvia in the quarters (6:1) and the U.S. in the semifinals (5:1) to face Canada again in the finals.

The confidence level of the Kazakh team was high at the start of the final game with Alexander Shin

scoring 14 seconds into the contest assisted by Yevgeniy Rymarev. However, the Canadian team rose to the challenge. From the fourth to the eighth minute, the Canadians scored three times to finish the first period. Mike Cazzola, Josh Day and Mathew Maione scored Canada's first-period goals.

In the second, Kazakhstan tried to come back, but failed. After the second intermission, the score was 5-1 with goals by Canada's Chris Culligan and Nick MacNeil.

In the third, despite the game being seemingly out of reach, the Kazakhs continued to press and scored one more goal, but it was too late. The Canadians scored one more goal and took the gold medal with a 6 to 2 victory. Kazakhstan took the silver and Russia took home the bronze.

Kazakhs who won gold medals

included skier Tatyana Ossipova and the men's cross country ski team (Alexander Malyshev, Sergei Malyshev, Gennadiy Matvienko and Mark Statostin) who won in the relay. Mark Starostin also won silver in an individual race. And the women's cross country ski team (Olga Mandryka, Marina Matrossova and Tatyana Ossipova) took home a bronze medal in the relay.

Russia placed first in the overall medal count with 50 medals, including 15 gold. The Russians were followed by South Korea at 24 medals, including eight gold, and Poland with 23 medals, including 10 gold. A total of 30 nations participated in the games.

The next Universiade will be held in Spain in 2015 and then in Almaty in 2017.



Skier Tatyana Ossipova (centre) is one of the two gold medallists from Kazakhstan who participated in the Universiade in Trentino this year.

Shumenov Returns to Ring, Successfully Defends Title



Spectators witnessed a victorious come back of Kazakh professional boxer, Beibut Shumenov during his recent fight against Slovak Tamas Kovacs in San Antonio, Texas.

By Alex Lee

Kazakh professional boxer, Beibut Shumenov (14 wins, 1 loss, 0 draws, nine knockouts) returned to the ring in San Antonio, Texas, on Dec. 14 after a year and a half hiatus to successfully defend his WBA light heavyweight champion belt against Slovak Tamas Kovacs (23 wins, 1 loss, 0 draws, 14 knockouts).

Shumenov knocked Kovacs down twice in the first two rounds before knocking him out in the third round.

Kazakhstan has demonstrated that it is a boxing powerhouse in recent years through its boxing at the Olympics in Athens in 2004 and in London in 2012, by introducing Gennady 'GGG' Golovkin, who recently upset Steven Curtis at Madison Square Garden on Nov. 2 to the American audience and by the Astana Arlans semi-professional boxing team performance. The Astana Arlans just saw their first loss this year after a success-

ful run with three series wins last weekend 1-3. They were beaten by a Cuban team.

Beibut Shumenov continued the buzz in the international boxing

news by defeating Kovacs in the U.S.

Shumenov lost one bout before the match and Kovacs had seen no losses in his career, but the Kazakh boxer tried to draw his lines in the ring at the very first second. After some light exchanges, Shumenov knocked Kovacs down with a powerful straight to his face with only 13 seconds until the bell rang in the first round. Kovacs got up fast, but was stunned. Shumenov demonstratively marched him into a corner. At that moment, he knew he was not on the same page with his opponent.

Round two started with Shumenov seeking that one last punch. The Slovak tried to avoid Shumenov's power shots. But the hard punching Shymkent-born Shumenov landed another hard one that sent Kovacs down with less than a minute to go. By the end of round two, it was scary to watch. Athletic, agile and speedy Shumenov looked lethal and the fight could have stopped at any second at that moment.

As anyone could guess, round three appeared to be too predictable, Shumenov was playing cat and mouse with Kovacs and with 10 seconds to go, he knocked him down yet again. Three knockdowns in three rounds were enough for the ref and he stopped the fight.

Shumenov defended his title and now might face 48 year old Bernard Hopkins (54-6-2, KO 32) of the U.S. next.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2013

Chess Princess Joins Barys at People's Favourite Ceremony

By Ilya Lobster

ASTANA – Politicians, officials, business people, bohemians, and the media got together on Dec. 19 for the third annual ceremony of awarding prizes “People’s Favourite 2013”.

Numerous nominations included the best politician, pop star, official, journalist, blogger, businessman, public figure, political scientist, and online media were chosen. Overall, 367 nominees competed for 14 nominations.

Omarov asked Abdumalik, “Did you believe in Santa Claus when you were a child?”

She replied “Yes”, and Helminen, coming from the Santa Claus’ homeland of Lapland, presented her with a Barys jersey with her favourite number 12 and her last name.

The voting for the People’s Favourite contest was held in two stages during the two months. At the first stage, people in Facebook and other social networks could put forward their nominees. The

At the ceremony, Helminen and Omarov asked Abdumalik, “Did you believe in Santa Claus when you were a child?” She replied “Yes”, and Helminen, coming from the Santa Claus’ homeland of Lapland, presented her with a Barys jersey with her favourite number 12 and her last name.

Zhansaya Abdumalik, the 12-year-old Kazakh chess prodigy became the best athlete, or, rather the winner of nomination “Respect Sportsmen”.

Raimo Helminen, a coach of the Barys hockey club and an athlete who took part in six Olympic Games and Ilyas Omarov, president of the Sport Press Association handed over to Abdumalik a diploma and the newly minted People’s Favourite statuette, shaped in the “Like” sign of the Facebook fame. At the ceremony, Helminen and

second stage took place at the official website of the National Award “People’s Favourite 2013,” where four finalists who scored more votes in the first stage competed.

Galym Baituk, the president of the Respublika-Region-Razvitiye public foundation, has been organising the contest for three years. This year, in addition to traditional organisational problems, he also had to contend with Astana’s first ever major blizzard this winter which disrupted travel around the country and in the city.



Top: Ilyas Omarov (l) and Raimo Helminen (c) present goodies to Zhansaya Abdumalik in recognition of her remarkable sporting successes on Dec. 19 at Rixos President Hotel in Astana. Bottom: Galym Baituk and his colleague Saltanat Murzalinova-Yakovleva also doubled as the masters of ceremonies.



Auction Raises Money for Montessori Room for Disabled Children

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – The Dara Foundation, which supports children from vulnerable groups, held a charity auction with partner Has Sanat Gallery on Dec. 12. The auction raised enough money to equip and train teachers for a Montessori room at the centre for disabled children the foundation helped open in Astana in September.

“We hope to get enough money to create a Montessori room in the centre for disabled children. ... The Dara Foundation helped to refurbish the centre, to get all the necessary equipment and literature. [The only thing missing] is the Montessori room,” Madina Bakiyeva, director of the Dara Foundation said at the event. “We will provide equipment and our partner centre ... in Almaty agreed to teach the teachers from this centre for disabled children how to work in the Montessori style.”

For sale at the auction were clothes by different Kazakh designers as well as paintings donated by famous Kazakh painters, including one donated by Kazakh artist Leyla Mahat. Also on display was artwork by some of the children with disabilities supported by Dara’s programmes.

The children whose work was displayed are mostly from Astana’s School No. 65, where Dara is implementing a project funded

by the Embassy of Finland to promote inclusive education. “We’ve organised an inclusive art studio, which means children with disabilities and without are working together. And also we have a theatre studio in the same school, also for children with disabilities and without. They are learning how to make art.”

This was Dara’s first auction fundraiser in Astana; they have held others in Almaty. The fundraiser was success, Bakiyeva confirmed later, raising enough money to outfit the Montessori room and train its teachers.

School No. 65 is a pilot inclusive school, and Dara works with it in a number of ways. “[School No. 65 is] the only school that provides inclusive education, where disabled children can sit in the same classroom as [children without disabilities],” said Bakiyeva.

“We purchased special equipment—because mainly there are deaf children in that school – so we bought this modern equipment that will help deaf children who have implants listen to the teacher, so background sounds don’t interfere. We’ve already installed the system in the school and the deaf children are doing very well.”

Astana’s Has Sanat Gallery has paintings by well-known Kazakh artists as well as up-and-coming talent. It also hosts temporary exhibits of Kazakh and foreign artists. “The Has Sanat Gallery is our partner gallery, they help us organise different events with them, mainly fundraising events,” said Bakiyeva.

This was Dara’s first auction fundraiser in Astana; they have held others in Almaty. The fundraiser was success, Bakiyeva confirmed later, raising enough money to outfit the Montessori room and train its teachers.

The Dara Foundation will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year. “We work with institutions mainly: we work with schools, we work with orphanages, we work with centres for disabled children. We try to help children to get high quality services within those institutions. We help with equipment, we help with knowledge, we help with training those institutions. So as many children as those institutions serve, Dara serves,” said Bakiyeva.

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