



Going to Sochi to Participate and Hopefully to Win



Kazakhstan's national Olympic team went to Sochi, Russia, to participate in the 22nd Winter Olympic Games and to win some medals. With a team of more than 50 athletes, the country's national team is among the largest at these games and is represented in such sports as speed skating, skiing, biathlon, mogul, luge and others.

Kazakhstan Announces Currency Devaluation

By Aidyn Temirbayev

ASTANA – The official rate of the Kazakh tenge (KZT) fell to 185 per U.S. dollar with a range of three tenge on either side on Feb. 11. The devaluation was announced by Kazakhstan's National Bank on the same day.

The National Bank decided to stop supporting the exchange rate at the previous level of 155.56 per dollar as of Feb. 10 in order to decrease

currency interventions on the market and stop interference with the formation of the tenge exchange rate.

According to Chairman of the National Bank Kairat Kelimbetov, the bank will now take measures to maintain the national currency at about 185 tenge per dollar.

"We will continue to level the sharp surges. The National Bank is well positioned to defend the new equilibrium rate," Kelimbetov said. Kelimbetov said he sees no con-

nection between this devaluation and the one held in Kazakhstan in February 2009.

He also stressed that the National Bank and the government will aim to ensure that this year's inflation rate fluctuates between 6-8 percent.

According to the Almaty-based National Bank, the country's economy is closely integrated into the global economy and therefore must take into account changes in

global financial and commodities markets. Currently, as a result of quantitative easing in the U.S., capital is flowing from developing markets to developed ones, leading to increased pressure on the currencies of those countries. Amid uncertainty over the further development of the world economy, volatility on global financial and commodity markets has increased.

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President Calls for Stronger Int'l Cooperation in Implementing Kazakhstan 2050

By Alibek Zhunussov

ASTANA – To effectively implement the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, the country seeks stronger dialogue and wider mutually beneficial cooperation with all foreign partners, President Nursultan Nazarbayev told foreign ambassadors and head of offices of international organizations during his annual grand meeting with them on Feb. 5.

Addressing the gathering, which included more than 80 ambassadors, charges d'affaires and heads of representative offices of such organizations as the United Nations and the European Union, the President said Kazakhstan is interested in such cooperation especially in the fields of "investment, technology, innovation and expertise, and in growing the exports of Kazakhstan."

"I encourage foreign entrepreneurs to actively invest in Kazakhstan, to establish production facilities, and build successful, mutually beneficial businesses, not only in the sector of natural resources and advanced processing, but also in infrastructure, agriculture and many more," he told the assembled diplomats. "Implementing its industrial policy, Kazakhstan will further create all the conditions so that businesses are able to gain profits for their own and for our country. We hope

for understanding and support from your governments and seek a constructive relationship across these areas."

In his extensive remarks at the Akorda presidential residence, Nazarbayev covered in detail the top priorities of his Jan. 17 state-of-the-nation address and the newly approved Concept of Foreign Policy for 2014-2020. The President was keen to stress the mutual benefits of the country's pursuing its development priorities and achieving its goal of becoming one of the world's top 30 most developed economies by 2050 for both Kazakhstan and its foreign partners.

Mutually Beneficial Economic Cooperation Is the Word

Listing areas such as extracting and deep processing of raw materials inside the country, manufacturing, electronics, chemical, agriculture and food processing, automobile and aircraft industries, among others, as promising for cooperation, Nazarbayev reconfirmed the country's commitment to ensuring some of the best environment both foreign businesses.

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In Astana, Dutch FM Focuses on Bilateral Ties, Nuclear Summit Preparations

By George D. Gleboff

ASTANA – Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans visited the capital of Kazakhstan on Feb. 3 for a series of high-level meetings focused on expanding economic cooperation and building up the framework of joint efforts in working towards a world without nuclear weapons.

The second area of interest bears special importance and urgency as The Hague is preparing to host the Third Global Nuclear Security Summit on March 24-25 with the expected participation of about 50 heads of state or government and leaders of international organizations.

In Astana, Timmermans was received by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Speaker of the Senate of Parliament Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Deputy Prime Minister Bakhytzhan Sagintayev, and met with his counterpart, Erlan Idrissov.

During a meeting at the Ak Orda presidential residence, Nazarbayev and Timmermans focused on the March summit in which the Kazakh leader is expected to participate as well as looked at spheres where economic cooperation can be expanded further.

"The Netherlands is the largest investor in Kazakhstan's economy and trade and economic partner for us among the countries of the European Union," Nazarbayev said.

"My first mission for this visit is to officially pass on an invitation from the King of the Netherlands for you to visit our country and to take part in the Nuclear Security

Summit in the Hague," Timmermans said during the meeting, according to the Kazakh presidential press service. "We also plan to have bilateral meetings with our Prime Minister. We believe that we as country with access to open seas and developed port infrastructure, and Kazakhstan, as a country with huge potential, can achieve major results if we pool our efforts together."

Welcoming Timmermans at Kazakhstan's foreign ministry for their own meeting, Idrissov called ties between the countries "outstanding, especially in the economic sphere."

"Dutch investment in Kazakhstan stands at almost \$50 billion, which is about a quarter of all foreign investment in Kazakhstan [since independence]," Idrissov said. "Our trade with the Netherlands stands at almost \$10 billion, which is among the highest in terms of bilateral trade turnover for Kazakhstan. There are more than 1,000 companies with Dutch capital participation registered in Kazakhstan, of which around 700 are actively working. And it is important that the spheres in which they work include not only energy, but also agriculture, pharmaceuticals, design and others."

"Europe is Kazakhstan's number one partner in terms of trade and investment, and within Europe, the Netherlands occupies a leading position," Idrissov told a media briefing after his meeting with Timmermans. "This visit has a special significance because both Kazakhstan and the Netherlands

stand for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation."

"Our countries are partners and friends. Our economic ties are of great importance to my country. And our economic ties, I am sure, will deepen and grow in the next couple of years," Timmermans said at the same briefing in English. He began his comments in fluent Russian, recalling the thrill of skating at the Medeu rink outside of Almaty on his first private trip to Kazakhstan in 1990.

"We are deeply honoured that President Nazarbayev has accepted the invitation to attend the nuclear security summit and we are deeply honoured that he has accepted our invitation to have a bilateral visit on the same occasion," Timmermans continued.

"Kazakhstan is a country that was heavily burdened by the past of the Cold War because of nuclear testing on its territory," the Dutch foreign minister stressed. "Today, Kazakhstan is a global leader in trying to reach nuclear disarmament and trying to reach a nuclear weapons-free world. The Netherlands wants to be Kazakhstan's partner in eliminating nuclear weapons from this world and also in creating possibilities for the peaceful use of nuclear energy."

Kazakhstan and the Netherlands have already worked together to promote the nuclear disarmament agenda on the global level. In October 2012, the Hague-based Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) hosted the first foreign presentation of

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"Densify, Intensify, Diversify and Discover" Is French Ambassador's Formula for Success

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – The new French ambassador in Kazakhstan says he has a clear vision for improving bilateral ties during his tenure in Astana: "Densify, intensify, diversify and another D-word, discover."

"Densify means we want to make our political dialogue more dense and meaningful; intensify means we want to intensify our economic and trade partnership; diversify means our common focus on diversifying economic ties into new areas; and discover, because this is a huge country and so is the challenge of discovering it," said Ambassador Francis Etienne, who arrived in Astana in September 2013 and officially began his mission in October 2013.

Etienne's top priority is "fostering what we call the strategic partnership in every meaning of the word, pushing for more political dialogue on every level, promoting ties between French regions and Kazakh regions, promoting economic partnership [and] exchanges in culture and education."

Political exchanges occur at the highest levels, with a number of presidential visits between the countries in the past two decades. President Nazarbayev paid at least six visits to France, the first one in 1992 and the most recent one in November 2012. He has met and worked with Presidents François



France is working with its European partners to support the negotiations between Kazakhstan and the EU over a new enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement, Ambassador Francis Etienne said.

Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande. Presidents Mitterrand and Sarkozy visited Kazakhstan. Current President Hollande has a standing invitation to visit Kazakhstan, Etienne said, and the possibility is being considered although no precise timing can be fixed yet.

France is also working with its European partners to support the negotiations between Kazakhstan and the EU over a new enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement.

Kazakhstan, five times larger than France in terms of territory, with a population of 17 million, is the main trading partner for France and the European Union in Central

Asia. France is also the third largest foreign investor in Kazakhstan, after the Netherlands and the U.S., according to the French Embassy in Astana.

France is currently the third largest foreign investor in Kazakhstan, according to the French embassy, and Kazakhstan is their biggest trading partner in Central Asia. The two countries have enjoyed growing trade in recent years due to increasing sales of transport machinery (which makes up 48 percent of the total export volume), industrial and agricultural machinery, cosmetic and chemical products and pharmaceuticals by France to Kazakhstan.

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NATION

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Senate Chairman Visits Mangystau, Discusses President's Annual Address



Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

By Tokayev Aryn

AKTAU – Senate Chairman Kassym-Jomart Tokayev visited the Mangystau oblast on Feb. 4 to discuss President Nursultan Nazarbayev's state-of-the-nation address, "The Kazakhstan Way 2050: Common Goal, Common Interests, Common Future."

In Aktau, the administrative centre of the region, Tokayev addressed a public gathering of the region's prominent personalities, entrepreneurs and the general public. In his speech, he underscored the historical significance of the country's strategy for entering the world's 30 most developed countries by 2050.

"This is no exaggeration, since we are talking about the successful development and eventually the prosperity of our nation in this restless and complex world," Tokayev said. "As the President has rightly pointed out, strong nations rely on strategic planning rather than a policy of survival. All successful countries are guided by future-oriented strategies."

According to Tokayev, implementing the Mangilik El ("Eternal Nation") idea will require the whole society to work "extremely hard." In the coming 15 years, Kazakhstan has to ensure sustainable development by creating a science-driven economy, a very complex task that will lead the country to becoming part of the post-industrial world.

Speaking on the role of Parliament with regard to the implementation of the country's long-term plans, Tokayev underlined the need for timely and qualitative legisla-

tive support for the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy.

"The Parliament holds a unique place in the country's political system. Compared to many other nations, the legislative body of Kazakhstan is endowed with significant powers," Tokayev noted. He stressed that the interests of the country's regions are efficiently represented through the Senate, which is the chamber formed mainly by representatives from regions.

In his speech, Tokayev pointed out the special role of the Mangystau region in the country's economic, cultural and spiritual development. Gross regional product per capita is high in this region. Rich oil and gas reserves have made Mangystau a zone with a concentration of serious financial interests of big domestic and foreign companies. According to Tokayev, the region has huge economic potential in petrochemicals, petroleum processing, transport and other spheres.

The Senate Chairman also elaborated on issues in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. He emphasised the importance of ensuring the rule of law, fair competition and a high level of jurisprudential culture.

During his visit to Mangystau, Tokayev also met with members of the Nur Otan party's regional branch and representatives of its youth organisation, Zhas Otan. He also spoke to students and faculty of the Yessenov Caspian State University of Technology and Engineering and visited the MagaBread bakery plant.

First Reading of Draft Penal Code Approved by Mazhilis

By Akerke Khassanova

ASTANA – At its Feb. 5 plenary session, the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) approved the first reading of the draft Penal Code.

Mazhilis Speaker Nurlan Nigmatulin chaired the session and summed up the assessment of the bill, noting the importance of this new legislation.

"The new Penal Code offers mechanisms that should certainly contribute to enshrining the principles of fair punishment for crimes without infringing on the rights of prisoners. This is a global practice. We need to come to this optimal, balanced option at the second reading," he said.

The draft Penal Code changes the mechanism for the execution of punishments, primarily in terms of imprisonment, to a progressive system. It also creates a legal basis for the mechanism of probationary control and provides for the rendering of necessary social, legal and psychological assistance to inmates.

On the same day, the Mazhilis also approved associated amendments to some constitutional laws and a number of legislative acts relating to the Penal Code.

Presenting a report at the plenary session, Ramadan Sarpekov, head of the group working on the bill, noted that it held 21 group meetings with representatives of the Office of the General Prosecutor, the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Council, law enforcement agencies, ministries and departments, as well as the general public and international organisations.

The provisions of the draft Penal Code were also discussed with Astana's Department of Courts and Department of Internal Affairs, the National Bar Association and the

Committee on Legal Statistics and Special Accounts of the Office of the General Prosecutor of Kazakhstan.

The draft Penal Code simplifies procedures for launching criminal proceedings, restricts the powers of investigative agencies to launch inquiry by independent decision on legal proceedings which may affect the constitutional rights of citizens and extends the participation of a lawyer from the beginning of pre-trial proceedings.

In criminal proceedings, the plea bargain provision has been introduced for the first time. People under investigation will be able to reach an accord with the prosecution on reducing the punishment for their deeds in exchange for active cooperation with the investigation. In this case, court proceedings are to be simplified and accelerated, as there won't be a need for major investigative and judicial actions.

It is proposed to regulate the order of investigative measures within the framework of criminal procedures, especially in relation to so called unannounced investigations. At the same time, the approval of such actions by the prosecutor would protect citizens from violations of their constitutional rights to privacy.

In order to expand judicial control over pre-trial proceedings in a criminal procedure, the institution of an investigating judge was introduced. Besides authorising certain investigative actions, an investigating judge will also be able to consider complaints and petitions at the pre-trial stage.

Issues regarding the investigation of criminal infractions introduced by the draft code are also regulated.

It also stipulates the instruments that allow the state to impound money earned illegally, including



Nurlan Nigmatulin

from persons who flee before trial, pursuant to court order.

The Mazhilis approved the associated draft constitutional law, "On amendments to some constitutional laws of Kazakhstan" on its first reading. The bill proposes amendments to the constitutional laws, "On elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan," "On the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the status of its deputies," "On the Constitutional Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan," "On the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan—Leader of the Nation" and "On the judicial system and the status of judges of the Republic of Kazakhstan." The amendments are aimed at bringing them in line with the draft Penal Code.

The Mazhilis also approved the accompanying bill, "On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on improvement of the criminal procedural law" on its first reading. The bill proposes amendments to the civil procedure code of Kazakhstan, the code of Kazakhstan on taxes and other obligatory payments to the budget, the code of Kazakhstan on customs affairs and 36 other laws.



Kazakhstan 2050 Movement Seeks to Promote Patriotism

By Nargis Saginova

During the Nov. 29, 2013 forum of graduates of the Bolashak scholarship programme, dedicated to the programme's 20th anniversary, President Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed creating a national movement to support the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy.

Within a week, young professionals representing the business, engineering, medical and public service sectors came together to create such a nationwide movement, which officially kicked off on Dec. 6, 2013.

The mission of the movement is to ensure Kazakhstan's entrance into the top 30 most developed countries of the world by supporting the policy of President Nazarbayev set out in the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy.

The movement stands for the inviolability of values underlying Kazakhstan's statehood, including national unity, ethnic and religious harmony, civil equality, tri-unity of languages, tolerance and for the rich tradition and culture of Kazakh people, according to a statement issued by the movement.

"We believe the most important element for further development of the country is the involvement of the wider public and their sup-



port for the idea of national technological breakthrough based on science, innovation and entrepreneurship. Our movement advocates the transformation of social consciousness and the formation of a civic culture in which every citizen of Kazakhstan understands the importance of being a member of the Society of Universal Labour, where each individual is responsible for his own life and the achievement of the national goal of Kazakhstan of joining the list of top 30 most developed countries of the world," the official statement by the movement said.

The movement is open to every citizen of Kazakhstan who shares its values and ideology and is ready to take an active role in achieving

the goals set out in the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy.

The movement focuses on three key areas:

1. Public involvement in the values and ideology of the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy;
2. Development of proposals and recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy's implementation;
3. Civil monitoring of the effectiveness of the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy.

Currently, there are about 200 registered members in the movement. Among them are students, business people, engineers, civil servants, doctors, journalists and representatives of many other groups. They joined the movement for different reasons, they say. What unites them, however, is the belief that the future of Kazakhstan depends on its citizens.

Dmitry Gorbunov, head of the children's cardiac surgery department of the National Cardiac Science Centre and a famous pediatric cardiac surgeon said, "For further development, our country needs an idea that will unite all of us and lead in one direction. For me the national movement Kazakhstan 2050 seems to be the public platform for developing such an idea

or ideas. As a doctor and a citizen, I am not indifferent to the health of our society. Therefore, I have joined the Kazakhstan 2050 movement."

Mukhtar Mankeev, head of the Finnish Business Hub in Astana, said his main reason for joining the movement was the desire to involve every citizen of Kazakhstan in improving the situation around him each day—within his family, city and society as a whole. "We cannot just sit and wait for everything to be done for us and we will just accept it. We need to take the initiative in our own hands and prove that we deserve to be called citizens of young and independent Kazakhstan and are able to bear the responsibility for the development of our country," he said.

Gani Nygmetov, president of the Centre for International Programmes which oversees the Bolashak scholarship programme, joined the Kazakhstan2050 movement because he believes "the strategy of Kazakhstan's development until 2050 is our national idea, which I am sure we will be able to accomplish before the scheduled year. By 'we' I mean not only graduates of the Bolashak scholarship programme, but all of the young people who love their country, who want to live a good life, work, raise a family and be proud of the results."

Active members of the movement have proposed their ideas for the projects that it can implement in the year 2014. The projects that were selected out of many proposals cover various fields from devel-

oping crowd sourcing platforms to projects related to green economy. Members of the national movement are also planning to hold numerous informal conferences this year throughout Kazakhstan. The focus of these discussions will be questions regarding the future development of Kazakhstan as a country. The themes of the conferences are going to cover different fields of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy.

In the recent annual state-of-the-nation address, the head of state instructed the Administration of the President, the Government and the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan in cooperation with the Kazakhstan 2050 national movement to develop and adopt the Patriotic Act Mangilik El (Mauritius En, Eternal Nation). The Patriotic Act will be the movement's biggest project in 2014.

The Patriotic Act is seen as a strategic document that will systematize the core values of Kazakhstan. The document will outline the values that must be protected and cultivated to ensure Kazakhstan's sustainable development and the welfare of its citizens. The Patriotic Act is intended to serve as a centerpiece for progressive forces of society, aimed at ensuring the conservation of Kazakhstan's independence and facilitating rapid progress. The ideological core of the document will be the idea of the eternal existence of Kazakhstan on the world map as an independent, prosperous nation.

The author is an activist with the Kazakhstan 2050 movement.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan will establish a centre tasked with studying and utilising the best global approaches in finding and creating the energy of the future, Environment and Water Resources Minister Nurlan Kapparov said on Feb. 4. Kapparov said Kazakhstan needs such an institution, which will improve the understanding of long-term prospects for energy development while minimising risks and securing the energy resources of the country. "One of the options is to establish the institute at the Centre for Energy Studies, operating under the Nazarbayev University and having a finished material and technical base, laboratories, personnel structure and established mechanism for attracting world-renowned scientists," the minister said. Kapparov also ordered two possible approaches to determining the institute's specialisation. "The first approach envisages the search for fundamentally new forms of energy based on thermonuclear synthesis and other methods. The second approach envisages the study of development issues of known renewable energy sources such as wind and solar energy and new forms of energy, as well as issues relating to further improving existing technologies and the generation, storage and transportation of energy," he said. He also noted that Kazakhstan plans to create an interdepartmental working group by involving representatives of interested organisations to develop a concrete action plan for the institute, including its financing and structure.

In 2014, Kazakhstan will launch three space vehicles from the Baikonur Cosmodrome for the first time in its history, the press service of Kazakhstan's Kazcosmos Space Agency said. "Kazakhstan will launch three spacecraft in one year for the first time in history. One is a communications spacecraft and two others are Earth remote-sensing spacecraft," the press statement said. According to Kazcosmos, ground infrastructure for the Earth remote-sensing system and high-accuracy satellite navigation systems is planned to be put into service as well. Karaganda's ambulance service has refreshed its vehicle fleet, adding seven new vehicles, Deputy Director of the Regional Ambulance Station Yuriy Bokach said. "We received seven new specialised vehicles. They all are equipped with advanced medical equipment. They have artificial respirators and equipment for electrocardiograms. The equipment will allow us to render medical aid meeting international standards," Bokach said. The ambulance vehicles were purchased with funds allocated from the national budget. One vehicle costs about 13 million tenge (about US\$83,600). The service also received 10 new vehicles in 2013.

The akimat (city administration) of Astana will provide financially disadvantaged residents of the city with social allowances for paying utility bills. Financial assistance will be paid if utility bills exceed 8 percent of a person's monthly income. According to Deputy Akim (mayor) Vasily Krylov, the decision was made by the maslikhat (local representative body) of the city. "This year, the city maslikhat made the decision to provide financially disadvantaged residents with financial assistance for paying for utility services," he said at a meeting of the Mazhilis (lower chamber of the Parliament) Committee for Social and Cultural Development. "Taking into consideration the rise in tariffs, we will pay allowances to citizens in the amount of 107 million tenge (about US\$688,000) starting from Jan. 1, and we also increased the number of aid recipients to 2,200," Krylov said. Heat and electricity tariffs were increased in Astana on Jan. 1. The heating rate was raised by 8 percent per square metre and the energy rate was raised by 8.29 percent.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, and Enrique Garcia Gonzalez, Permanent Representative of the Republic of El Salvador to the UN, signed a joint communiqué on establishing diplomatic relations between the two states on Jan. 30 in New York.

The ATOM project, an international initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, was presented on Jan. 31 at the United Nations in New York at the conference, "Promoting Peace through Education", put together by the Committee on Teaching about the United Nations (CTAUN). More than 700 activists, teachers and students took part in the event. Kazakhstan's mission to the UN presented the ATOM Project. Participants of the conference were able to learn about the tragic history of nuclear testing in Kazakhstan and its steps to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and achieve tangible progress in global nuclear disarmament. One of the organisers of the event, University of New Jersey professor Ruth Nielsen noted that "The ATOM Project is committed to stopping nuclear weapons testing, as well as building a greater awareness about nuclear disarmament, global nuclear arsenals, and nuclear weapons policy." During the conference, participants signed the ATOM Project's online petition calling on governments of the world to achieve the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

A Feb. 4 presidential decree appointed Kairat Sarybay as Kazakhstan's ambassador to Austria and made him permanent representative of Kazakhstan to international organisations in Vienna. Before the appointment, Sarybay was deputy minister of foreign affairs. Former Ambassador to Austria Kairat Abdrakhmanov has now become Kazakhstan's representative to the United Nations in New York.

Marat Tazhin, the former Secretary of the Security Council, was appointed Kazakhstan's ambassador to Russia by a presidential decree on Feb. 11.

Nurbakh Rustemov, Kazakhstan's ambassador to Hungary and concurrently to Serbia, delivered his credentials to President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolic at Serbia's National Palace on Feb. 4. After the ceremony, Nikolic and Rustemov spoke. Nikolic congratulated the Kazakh diplomat on his appointment and expressed his satisfaction with the state of bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Serbia, stressing the friendly nature of the political dialogue. The president said he was looking forward to President Nazarbayev's official visit to Belgrade. In turn, Rustemov expressed Kazakhstan's commitment to maintaining constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation with Serbia, intensifying trade and economic, investment, cultural and humanitarian cooperation. Serbia consistently supported Kazakhstan's bid to chair the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and supports Kazakhstan's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2017-2018.

Ambassador of Japan Masayoshi Kashiwara, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Shaikat Ali Mulkadi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman Saeed bin Mohammed bin Ali Al-Bars, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Henri Hubert Drisser and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Muhammad Farooq Baraki all presented their credentials to President Nazarbayev on Jan. 31. "I am confident your work will give a new impetus to multilateral relations. You are beginning your missions in Kazakhstan during a very important period for the country. We are currently working on a new model of development for the country. Two weeks ago, I proposed a plan for how to achieve the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy in it," the President told the diplomats. He noted that the key goal of the strategy is to become one of the 30 most developed countries in the world.

President Calls for Stronger Int'l Cooperation in Implementing Kazakhstan 2050

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"We will create most favourable conditions to attract foreign investment, which will help bring in new technologies and innovations," he said. "I encourage business captains of your countries and leading multinational companies to build factories and develop the service sector in our country."

According to the head of state, Kazakhstan today possesses the most powerful economic potential in Central Asia, and its economy is more than two times larger than the economies of its neighbours put together.

If recent economic performance is any indicator of future progress, Kazakhstan has a lot going for it. The figures for 2013 showed Kazakhstan's GDP growing six per cent, while unemployment was around five per cent. The gross international reserves of the country reached around \$100 billion.

"Kazakhstan has set and implements clear modernisation tasks," Nazarbayev said. "These relate, primarily, to the accelerated industrialization of the economy. In the course of implementing the development programme, 780 new enterprises were commissioned and 160,000 new jobs were created over four years. In total, the programme envisages the creation of 950 enterprises with 250,000 new jobs and the total value of \$70 billion. The plan is being effectively implemented; it is supported by necessary financing and resources. As an outcome, Kazakhstan will produce more than 250 new types of products."

Already today, Kazakhstan-made products are exported to 111 countries.

Caution Regarding Regional Economies, Afghanistan, Support for Syria Talks, Iran Settlement

Turning to foreign policy priorities and international relations in general, the President noted "some positive shifts in the global economic situation" and said these made him come up with two important considerations.

The first one relates to the cyclical nature of the global economy, of which everybody should be mindful, and the second has to do with the notion that "in times of growth, the importance of security issues increases."

"Unresolved social problems in countries of both the Old and

New Worlds still threaten to escalate into internal conflicts," he said. "See for yourself. Whatever the experts are saying about what is currently happening in Ukraine, the roots of the deteriorating situation lie in social issues. We are also facing some bleak predictions for individual regional economies."

"Afghanistan remains the critical issue in Central Asia's regional security, but a political solution is not beyond reach," he continued. "This year will be very important for Afghanistan: the next presidential election will be held, and international forces will be withdrawn."

"International forces have played an historic role in the stabilisation, not only of Afghanistan but also throughout Central Asia. For this, we greatly appreciate the contribution of the United States, Germany, United Kingdom and many other countries," Nazarbayev stressed.

"I suppose, a period of economic renaissance has begun for Afghanistan," he continued. "I think we are all interested in a peaceful, stable and developing Afghanistan, and we are ready to continue our work with the global community to stabilise the situation in the country. Kazakhstan will actively participate in the process. This will help maintain stability in the region."

Kazakhstan welcomes the start of the Geneva talks on a political settlement for Syria and hopes for their success. In its turn, Kazakhstan hosted two rounds of multilateral negotiations in Astana on the settlement of the situation regarding Iran's nuclear programme.

"We have been proud to contribute to the 'Geneva breakthrough' in this way, and give it our full welcome and support," the Kazakh President said. "My participation in the inauguration of the new President of Iran and negotiations held in Iran were aimed at [promoting the] peaceful resolution of the existing problem. Ka-



At the meeting with the diplomatic corps, President Nazarbayev noted that Astana remains faithful to its underlying foreign policy principles of "pragmatism, consistency and balance."

zakhstan voluntarily abandoned nuclear weapons, was recognised by the world community for this and became a good 'beacon' for countries such as Iran."

"Pragmatism, consistency and balance," and reasons for Eurasian integration

Speaking about Kazakhstan's foreign policy generally, the head of state said that Astana remains faithful to its underlying foreign policy principles of "pragmatism, consistency and balance."

In recent years, Kazakhstan has increased its cooperation with other countries and in multilateral format. In 2013 alone, leaders of Russia, China, the European Commission, the UK, Indonesia, Spain, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Finland and Latvia visited Astana.

Kazakhstan will continue to develop ties with its traditional partners, such as Russia, China, neighbours in Central Asia, the United

States and the European Union. Yet, it would also work to expand cooperation with countries in the Western Hemisphere, Southeast Asia and Africa. Already, last year new Kazakhstan embassies were established in Vietnam and South Africa and this year the embassies will be opened in Ethiopia, Mexico and Kuwait.

According to one participant of the event who had a chance to attend such meetings several years ago, one thing he noticed right away was the larger number of people in the room, evidence of both growing ties between Kazakhstan and other countries and growing interest among foreign countries in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan has also intensified its participation in multilateral efforts to strengthen global peace and security. Following parliamentary approval last year, 20 Kazakh military observers will be dispatched to UN peacekeeping missions in Haiti, Western Sahara, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

Kazakhstan also officially launched its campaign for election to a non-permanent seat on the UN

Security Council for 2017-2018.

March 2014 will mark 20 years since Nursultan Nazarbayev, in his famous speech at the Moscow State University, proposed the creation of a Eurasian Union.

"This year, symbolically, Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus are expected to sign an agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union," Nazarbayev told the diplomats, adding that several other states have also declared interest in joining this process.

"The Eurasian Economic Union is a common market. It will be a fundamentally new relationship for the 21st century, working on the principles of equality, mutual benefits and the interests of all participants," he explained. "It is estimated that through the Customs Union, Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus will achieve additional GDP growth of 25 percent, or more than \$600 billion, by 2030. Participants of the Eurasian Economic Union will not be shut off from the world and will continue to actively cooperate with all partners. We support the proposal of the President of Russia, regarding the formation of a future free trade area between the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union."

The Kazakh leader sought to allay concerns about integration processes in Eurasia and explained his views on these trends.

"We hear various expert opinions on the Eurasian economic union," he said. "I think it is necessary to make it clear that this is not a political organisation. Currently it is about economic cooperation, which is determined by the needs of our countries. I believe, it is necessary to shift from criticism and distrust to examining in details and understanding the essence of the union, as well as to seeking the ways of cooperation."



In Astana, Dutch FM Focuses on Bilateral Ties, Nuclear Summit Preparations

Continued from Page A1

The ATOM Project, an international education and online petition campaign launched by President Nazarbayev, which was attended by a vice-speaker of the Dutch Senate, members of its parliament and other officials. [Speaking to Kazakh reporters following his one day of meetings, Timmermans called The ATOM Project an "interesting" one.]

Earlier, in August 2011, the Netherlands and Kazakhstan jointly organised an international conference at the Peace Palace's conference facility in The Hague drawing many renowned experts from Germany, Norway, the U.K. and other countries for a discussion on what could be done to move the global nuclear disarmament forward.

Fielding questions from Kazakh and Dutch media after their opening statements, Idrissov and Timmermans expounded on the upcoming global event in The Hague and on the security of nuclear materials in Kazakhstan.

"The nuclear security summit



Foreign Ministers Frans Timmermans (l) and Eran Idrissov (r) discussed the upcoming global nuclear security summit at The Hague and expansion of bilateral ties.

is not about nuclear weapons, but about creating more security in the world, so that nuclear energy can be used in a peaceful way, without security risks, without terrorists getting the opportunity to put

their hands on nuclear materials and thus creating a huge threat to humankind," Timmermans said. "So Kazakhstan, having its experience in the past, with its strong commitment to a safe world in

terms of nuclear energy, is a global leader in this aspect, and we need Kazakhstan's contribution to make a success of the nuclear security summit in The Hague in March."

"We expect the summit to bring a real contribution in reaching a major goal of making the world safe from the nuclear energy standpoint," Idrissov told the gathering in his turn. "The main meaning of the upcoming meeting of heads of state is to create conditions and mechanisms and to develop a firm political will for nuclear energy to have only peaceful aspects and not pose a destructive threat."

"Since our first days of independence, Kazakhstan has worked with leading nuclear powers to ensure security in the nuclear sphere," Idrissov continued. "I think today, more than 20 years later, nobody has any doubts about Kazakhstan's unblemished track record in terms of ensuring the physical security of nuclear materials and in terms of introducing and ensuring reliable mechanisms of export control. Moreover, we are confident that, in cooperation with our foreign part-

ners, our human potential [in that area] has not been wasted."

Idrissov went on to list some of the specific efforts his country was pursuing to ensure stronger security for nuclear materials in the country and internationally, including a new bank of low-enriched uranium to be created at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant in Ust-Kamenogorsk under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He called it a "global effort aimed at maintaining calm on uranium markets internationally so that all countries can get access to sources of nuclear energy."

Another initiative is a nuclear training centre aimed at "expanding our capabilities and those of our partners in Central Asia in ensuring the physical protection of nuclear materials."

"We are also working to convert our existing reactors from using highly enriched uranium to using low-enriched uranium," Idrissov announced. "All of these are measures to make nuclear materials safe in Kazakhstan and in the region, and we will continue with them."

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Baiterek Holding Increased Activity, Saw Expansion in 2013

By Akerke Khassanova

ASTANA – Last year, the newly established, state-owned Baiterek National Holding, through its 10 constituent companies, accumulated four times more in profits than was expected. It is also expected to show strong growth this year, its director announced at the Feb. 6 expanded meeting of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies and the holding.

At a gathering which also included Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Iskeshev, Chairman of the Baiterek Holding Kuandyk Bishimbayev presented the main results of operations for 2013 and outlined plans for the coming year.

By the end of 2013, the planned total net income of its subsidiaries is expected to reach 40 billion tenge (US\$257 million). This is 415 percent more than expected at the time of its creation (6.5 billion tenge or US\$41.7 million) and 135 percent more than in 2012.

In 2013, the holding took a number of measures to increase activity among its subsidiaries. At the Development Bank of Kazakhstan, it cleared out toxic assets and ended 35 problem projects. It also began a support programme for the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial-Innovative Development (SPAID), financing second-tier banks. Under the programme, 177 projects will be funded, creating more than 15,000 jobs. The bank also approved financing for 10 projects worth more than \$1.3 billion and brought into production seven projects worth \$242 million.

Another subsidiary, Kazyna Capital Management, invested in three new projects totalling \$31 million in 2013.

The National Agency for Technological Development signed a memorandum with the Islamic Corporation to develop the private sector and create the Central Asia Renewable Energy Fund.

The Housing Construction Savings Bank of Kazakhstan signed more than 100,000 contracts on housing savings and housing loans in the amount of 61.2 billion tenge (US\$393.4 million). Under the Affordable Housing 2020 programme, it commissioned more than 300,000 square metres of housing in more than 4,000 apartments. For housing for young families, it commissioned more than 100,000 square metres of housing in 2,031 apartments.

Kazakhstan Announces Currency Devaluation

Continued from Page A1

Another reason the bank gives for the devaluation is the lingering instability of the Russian rouble. In 2013, the Russian national currency fell 7.1 percent against the dollar, with the downward trend persisting into January and February 2014.

Another contributing factor is the state of Kazakhstan's balance of payment. Despite the current account surplus, there has been an increase in imports, including imports of consumer goods.

To further cut inflation rates to 3-4 percent, the National Bank plans to shift to inflation targeting instead of tight regulation of the tenge exchange rate.

In the longer run, the tenge exchange rate will be defined by macroeconomic factors.

At a press conference in Almaty on Feb. 11, Kelimbetov provided

The Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund, another subsidiary, supported 3,275 projects, with 1,044 entrepreneurs getting support in the form of subsidies. Subsidies granted reached 27.5 billion tenge (US\$176.8 million), 40 percent more than in 2012, and 148 entrepreneurs received support in the form of guarantees.

In order to attract investment to the industrial and innovative development of the country, the Baiterek Holding will implement three projects in 2014: creating a centre to support public-private partnerships, establishing a fund for infrastructure projects and establishing a fund for startups.

Next year, the Development Bank of Kazakhstan will have more than \$700 million to provide for investment projects. It is considering projects in Shymkent, at the Aktau port, in Karaganda and rail and communications projects. The Kazakhstan Investment Fund will consider investing in projects in concrete products, cement, metal, processing of fish products, leather processing and other sectors.

To support small and medium-sized businesses, the state plans to provide support to more than 80,000 such enterprises, or more than 10 percent of the current market. Competence centres for small businesses will cover 209 cities and regions of Kazakhstan.

To support innovation, some existing industrial parks will be reorganised as technology business incubators and co-working centres. Support of \$1.8 billion is planned for 120 innovative projects.

The Housing Construction Savings Bank of Kazakhstan plans to increase the share of participants in housing savings to 5 percent of the economically active population. Through 2020, the bank plans to commission 4.5 million square metres of housing, including 1.5 million for young families.

In 2014, the Kazakhstan Mortgage Company plans to launch 171,000 square metres of rental housing, including 155,000 square metres through Affordable Housing 2020. Credit rental housing is planned, as is a programme of rent-to-own properties.

The Baiterek Holding includes 10 companies participating in the SPAID, Affordable Housing 2020 and the Business Road Map 2020. It was created last May by presidential decree with the role of providing long-term, cheap money to support economic development.

these reasons and gave additional comments on the new developments.

"The National Bank has all the capabilities to maintain the equally balanced exchange rate at 185 tenge [per dollar]," he added. "Recently, we published the Republic of Kazakhstan's balance of payments for 2013, we have conducted analytical work which highlighted several important factors to which the National Bank paid attention."

"All these changes are made in the context of improving the competitiveness of the tenge exchange rate and of Kazakhstan's producers. It is important to manufacturers of the agricultural sector, light and manufacturing industries. We believe this will allow our producers, both within the Customs Union and outside it in the general cooperation to strengthen their positions," Kelimbetov stressed.

EBRD Senior Economist Sees "Stable Growth" for Kazakh Economy in 2014

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) presented its annual Transition Report in Astana on Jan. 30.

The report, entitled "2013 Transition Report: Stuck in Transition," is the EBRD's flagship publication and provides an annual update on the progress of reforms and economic developments across 30 countries from central Europe and Central Asia and the EBRD's new focus region in the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

Attending the presentation was Senior Economist for Central Asia Agis Preimanis, who is engaging with governments, regulators and the private sector to formulate economic policies and structural reforms, including at the sectoral level, in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Preimanis is also overseeing the analysis of the economic environment and reforms in the region. Previously at EBRD, Preimanis was the senior economist responsible for the financial sector and private equity and venture capital sectors in Russia, Central Asia, Mongolia and the Baltic states, focusing on EBRD investments and developing EBRD's activities in financial sector regulation and venture capital and innovation ecosystems. Before joining EBRD in 2010, he was the senior consultant for financial services and corporate finance at Oxera, a U.K.-based advisory firm.

Preimanis discussed some of the positive and negative aspects of Kazakhstan's economic growth and that of neighbouring countries in an

exclusive interview with The Astana Times.

"Against the backdrop of a very difficult external environment, the 6 percent growth in the Kazakh economy in 2013 looks very robust. It's really on the back of strong investment growth and resilient consumption spending that Kazakhstan has been able to achieve these results. And going forward I see stable growth of about 5.5 percent for 2014," he said.

According to Preimanis, inflation "slowed down to 4.8 percent in December 2013. In 2014, it will go up toward the National Bank's range of 6 to 8 percent."

Neighbouring gas- and oil-rich Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are also experiencing strong economic growth.

"The growth in 2013 in Turkmenistan was stronger [than in Kazakhstan]. But a direct comparison of the drivers of growth and the reasons for differences in growth between these two countries needs to be done with caution, as Kazakhstan is much more developed, in terms of its economic institutions and the economy in general. Also, the income per capita is higher," Preimanis explained.

Preimanis sees advantages and challenges ahead for Kazakhstan. "I will give you two positives [in the Kazakh economy]. One is the green economy. A lot of progress is being made on legislation to facilitate growth in the green economy – it is a priority for the government and very concrete steps are being taken by the government. Steps are also being taken by the private sector and international financial institutions, including the EBRD," he said.

"We are actively participating in the development of this area, where



Agis Preimanis

real investment and real money is going into developing sustainable energy sources, energy efficiency and the efficiency of waste management. That [growth of the green economy] is a significant positive."

"Moving a bit off topic, every time I come to Kazakhstan, what surprises me is the potential the young people have here," the economist said.

"That is from education. Effort is being put into creating education in the country that is of a very high standard as well as sending people abroad to study. I think it's a critical part of developing Kazakhstan into a very strong country in the long term."

All is not rosy on the horizon, however.

"[In terms of negatives] it is the financial sector, the banking sector – that is an obvious one. It has structural problems at the moment and it is a drag on the economy and makes it more difficult for the country to diversify its economy. The re-emerged efforts to resolve those issues with the arrival of the new governor of the National Bank will help. So I certainly hope that in the next 4-5 years, what I call now one of the bleakest problems for Kazakhstan will be on the road to being resolved and the sector will help develop a more balanced economy here," he concluded.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

More than five million tonnes of grain have been exported by Kazakhstan since July 1, 2013, the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan reported on Feb. 6. "Around 5.3 million tonnes of grain, including flour has been exported by Kazakhstan between July 1, 2013 and February 1, 2014. This is 25 percent more than in the previous year," the ministry statement read. Agricultural products produced between January and November 2013 were estimated to have generated \$2.4 billion. This is a 27 percent increase compared to 2009-2011 averages. Exports to Customs Union (CU) countries increased by almost 65 percent in the first 11 months of 2013 compared to 2012 figures. "We plan to export nine million tonnes, which is 26 percent more than in the previous year," Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan Assylzhan Mambaybekov said.

Kazphosphate plans to invest about \$1 billion in the production of new goods and the introduction of energy saving technologies by 2020, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Iskeshev said at an enlarged session of the ministry board attended by Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov. At the meeting, the deputy prime minister reported on some statistics of the chemical industry's development in Kazakhstan. "Output increased by 3.3 percent in the sector. The production of sulphuric acid increased by 10.8 percent, ammonia – by 14.5 percent, abstergent – by 62.6 percent," he said. "Plans to improve and further develop the chemical industry have been adopted. Kazphosphate alone plans to invest about \$1 billion into new products and energy saving technologies by 2020," Iskeshev said.

Recently, 600 million tenge (around US\$4 million) was allocated to Aksu, Pavlodar region, as part of a programme to help develop single industry towns. The volume of industrial production there grew by two percent year-on-year. Thanks to the development of business and employment programmes, 954 jobs were created, including 397 permanent ones. The level of unemployment reached 4.8 percent. Along with the growth of employment, the number of families with income lower than the minimum living wage shrank. The average salary increased by 6 percent. Tax deductions to the budget grew by three percent, or by 212 million tenge (US\$1.4 million). Transfers totalling over one billion tenge (US\$6.4 million) have been approved for Aksu in 2014 within the framework of the programme on development of single industry towns. The main share of financing is planned for development of city utilities – 667 million tenge (US\$4.3 million); 240 million tenge (US\$1.54 million) will be used for entrepreneurship support and 185 million tenge (US\$1.2 million) for municipal landscaping. "The biggest task in redeveloping Aksu will be diversifying its economy and developing its small and medium businesses," Akim (Mayor) of Aksu Bulat Bakauov said.

According to Aidos Sadykov, the Akim (Mayor) of Ulan district of the East Kazakhstan region, social programmes had more of a positive effect on society in 2013 than was expected. BNews.kz reported, referencing the regional information centre. Originally, only 465 people were supposed to be employed by such programmes, but this number reached 847. The number of created jobs topped the target by 25, the press statement read. The number of people who received government sponsored jobs beat the target by nine. In social projects, 645 found work, which far exceeded the goal of 19. Also, 206,181,000,000 tenge (US\$1.84 billion) was allocated from all financing sources to support financially disadvantaged residents of the district.

KAZAKHSTAN UNITED FOR GLOBAL SECURITY

The Republic of Kazakhstan is seeking a seat on the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for 2017-2018. Our priorities within the United Nations reflect four primary issues facing the world today: Food Security, Water Security, Energy Security and Nuclear Security.

In the 22 years since our independence, Kazakhstan has worked tirelessly to address these issues in our own country and beyond. Among many other initiatives and achievements, Kazakhstan is currently:

- ▶ ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST GRAIN PRODUCERS AND WHEAT EXPORTERS. WE HAVE DISTRIBUTED WHEAT AND FOOD TO NATIONS IN NEED.
- ▶ A CONSTRUCTIVE INNOVATOR IN WATER SECURITY COOPERATION AND TECHNOLOGIES. WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN THE RESTORATION OF THE ARAL SEA.
- ▶ AN ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF DEVELOPING A GREEN ECONOMY AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES THROUGH OUR GREEN BRIDGE INITIATIVE AND AS HOSTS OF EXPO 2017, THEME OF WHICH IS "FUTURE ENERGY".
- ▶ A GLOBAL LEADER IN NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION, DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY. AN INITIATOR OF ADOPTING A UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD AND A SPONSOR OF THE ATOM PROJECT. A WORLDWIDE PETITION CAMPAIGN TO PERMANENTLY END NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING.

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

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

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Issues regarding development of small and medium business and implementation of related instructions of the President were discussed at a Jan. 22 media briefing with Mazhilis (lower chamber of the Parliament) Member and head of the Ak Zhol Party's faction in the Mazhilis Azat Peruashev. "The President called small and medium-sized enterprises the main instrument of industrial and social modernisation. It is much easier for small and medium-sized enterprises to respond to the current challenges. Their organisational expenses are less. Therefore, SME entities are the driving force of diversification and innovation in opening new sectors of the economy and enriching industrial output in all counties," Peruashev said at the Central Communications Service briefing. "The President has urged cancelling all inactive regulations hindering business development; our party will follow suit by pursuing similar reforms," he noted.

"I think it is necessary to establish a scientific and innovation centre under the Atyrau Social-Entrepreneurship Corporation and oil extracting companies should be involved in the work of this centre," said Akim (Governor) Baktykozha Izmukhambetov of the Atyrau region, according to a Jan. 22 report of the Kazinform news agency. "The President's state-of-the-nation address reads that one of the key tasks is creating a knowledge intensive economy and increasing the potential of the scientists of Kazakhstan. As noted, development of new knowledge-intensive spheres of the economy requires financing of science in an amount no less than three percent of GDP. This should be done in the Atyrau region. Financing of some specific scientific research impacting development of the economy should be taken into account," Izmukhambetov said. According to him, the region has about 40 oil producing companies. "However, it is difficult to say that all of them meet allocation requirements of one percent of the budget for scientific research. As a result of the loss of finance resources, scientists will be left without support. Therefore, I believe we need to establish a science and innovation centre under the Atyrau Social-Entrepreneurship Corporation where oil companies will be involved," he added.

A Pavlodar plant producing methyl tert-butyl ether and polypropylene is ready to start implementation of the second five-year phase of the Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development, the 24.kz TV channel reported. The enterprise has successfully reached its intended output and now plans to conduct comprehensive modernisation of the production process. A modern petrochemical facility is to be built there soon. The plant was launched five years ago and impressive results were achieved there over this period. The production of an enhance additive and polypropylene was launched at the plant. The second five-year stage of the industrialisation programme is aimed at developing extracting industries. The export potential of the oil and gas and mining sectors will be built up. In this context, the plant plays an important role. The plant holds great opportunities for development. It is planned to switch the plant over to operating on natural gas in order to make it more environmentally friendly.

An international conference "Current Issues in Planning Water-Supply and Wastewater Disposal Systems in Kazakhstan Municipalities" was held on Jan. 23 in Astana. The conference included a dialogue platform for the open discussion of how to increase the quality of planning in construction in Kazakhstan (legislation, efficient equipment usage) and issues of professional preparation of specialists. Representatives of the Committee for Construction Affairs and Housing Utilities, Kazakhstan's Vodokanalproekt company, Lev Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Kariskrona Company and international experts from France, Spain, Switzerland, Russia and Germany took part. The event was held at the Gumilyov Eurasian National University.

Hobby Grows into Expanding, Socially Conscious Business

By Zhubanysh Baigurinov

AKTOBE REGION – In Khromtau, what began as a hobby has turned into a major enterprise and an example of socially responsible commerce.

Sewing has been Antonina Galustova's favourite hobby since childhood, and after she finished her studies at Novotroitsk College in the Orenburg region, she decided to become a professional seamstress.

Returning to her native town, Galustova began work as a training foreman at Vocational School No. 164. The collapse of the Soviet Union, however, caused the school to close. Like many of its teachers, Galustova found herself out of work, with her planned career path suddenly in serious doubt.

Not one to give up or give in, Galustova rented a room in a former district consumer service centre, brought her old sewing machine there and, even in the difficult 1990s, made a business out of her hobby. Galustova sewed baby things, pillowcases, skirts, shorts—everything that was hard to find in shops in those days. Soon, her sewing workshop, the only one in the mining town, was flooded with orders, some of which even came from the Donskoi mining and processing plant itself, the



The hobby of Antonina Galustova (seated) turned into a major enterprise.

backbone of the town. With demand so high, Galustova sold her workshop and, with her brother, quietly bought larger premises and new equipment to expand produc-

tion and invited her former students from the vocational school.

Today, Galustova has a modern sewing workshop with the latest equipment. Over the years, she has

established good relationships with raw materials suppliers in the oblast centre. Among her clients are the Donskoi plant, TNK Kazkhrom, the local church, the mosque, a fitness centre, kindergartens and, of course,

the locals of Khromtau. A lot of orders have also come from the House of Culture of Miners, which hosts a variety of activities. They make suits for children and traditional clothes.

"The whole city comes to us, and we are thinking about expanding again. After all, we are the only dressmaker that works with leather and fur," Galustova said.

These days, she plans not only to expand production, but also to open a dry cleaning shop and a laundry and to provide these services to the mining-processing plant. The only barrier to these plans is a lack of space, but local executive bodies have promised to help: in the near future, a big, new business incubator for new entrepreneurs will be opened in the town, in which the authorities intend to allocate a suitable working area for Galustova.

With the expansion of production she wants to employ more workers and increase her production of industrial clothing and gloves. She says she will give preference to people with disabilities, who, despite good professional skills in sewing, cannot find jobs and receive meagre allowances.

"In his state of the nation address, President Nazarbayev stressed the need to pay more attention to people with disabilities. I'm ready to do this. Taking care of these people is our duty to ourselves and society," she said.

Astana Technology Leader to Be National Innovator



The Kazakh-Czech Technology Centre will become a high-tech domestic engineering facility.

By Doszhan Nurgaliyev

ASTANA – In the near future, the Kazakh-Czech Technology Centre (KCTC) in the capital, which was founded as a part of several investment projects, will become one of the best examples of high-tech domestic engineering.

Today, the centre is focusing on three areas. It is a platform for cutting-edge Czech technology and equipment; it also fills specific orders from domestic enterprises and provides training for personnel on how to operate such equipment. The KCTC is also a high-tech enterprise that deals with complex parts and tools used in machine building that has a training centre for engineers, operators, IT specialists, electricians and mechanics able to work with multifunctional class A and B machines.

KCTC specialists have successfully entered the market by filling the orders of railway enterprises. In particular, they manufacture

equipment for two Astana engine assembly plants. The total cost of such orders had reached 660 million tenge (US\$4.2 million) by the end of 2013.

Astana is among the top three regional leaders in attracting foreign investments to new business projects. Today, this zone of investment activity involves about 1,247 companies with foreign capital. The lion's share of the companies are from Russia with 408. Turkey boasts 167, Germany – 93, Netherlands – 47, the U.S. – 47 and China – 30.

At present, the manufacturing industry dominates capital's industrial sector. Its share of regional industry is 80.2 percent.

The share of machinery engineering in the manufacturing sector of Astana reached 51.3 percent thanks to the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (SPAID). This is also explained by the availability of two new factories in the industrial zone – a General Electric

engine assembly plant and a railway passenger car plant belonging to Talgo. These two unique factories today are steadily picking up production and establishing themselves.

The capital's railway and aircraft equipment industry, along with the other high tech items it

produces, stimulate certain sectors of the economy and the small and medium-sized business sector. The rise of industry in Astana has made the city a place where engineers and engineering workers come together.

The country plans to build "smart" factories through har-

nessing the latest technology and fostering local innovation. Demonstration platforms such as the Astana Technology Centre will help solve many economic problems associated with modernising enterprises and coping with industry personnel shortages.

The country plans to build "smart" factories through harnessing the latest technology and fostering local innovation. Demonstration platforms such as the Astana Technology Centre will help solve many economic problems.

"Today, the Technology Centre employs 42 specialists who trained in the Czech Republic. The labour productivity per person in 2013 was about \$65,000. In the future, the centre needs design and production engineers to further implement its plans," said KCTC Director Serik Maselov.

Everyone is sure that it is necessary to get the young people who are studying overseas as part of the Bolashak programme involved in order to diversify the industrial sector of the economy with qualified engineering and technical staff whose expertise is in key sectors of the economy.

KKB, Rakishev Buy BTA Bank from Samruk Kazyna

Staff report

Kazkommertsbank (KKB) and businessman Kenes Rakishev recently reached a final agreement to acquire 46.5 percent of the shares of BTA Bank from Samruk Kazyna each, according to KKB's press service. Samruk Kazyna will transfer the remaining 4.26 percent of shares in BTA that it holds to KKB under a trusteeship agreement, which will provide KKB with more than 50 percent of the voting

shares and operational control of BTA Bank. Samruk Kazyna will retain its current shareholding in KKB and an option agreement concluded in 2009 with the shareholders of this bank will be extended. "Purchase cost of 46.5 percent of BTA shares by KKB is 72.1 billion tenge (about US\$465 million)," according to KKB. The bank will pay 31 billion tenge (US\$199.2 million) by the [yet to be determined] closing date and 41.1 billion tenge (US\$264.1 million) no later

than July 1, 2017. The transaction was approved by the KKB Board of Directors on Feb. 5 and will be submitted for approval by the general meeting of its shareholders. "The acquisition and subsequent unification of BTA and KKB will create the largest universal bank in the region, a large-scale diversified institution with assets 1.5 times larger than those of its closest competitor," Nina Zhussupova, chair of the board of KKB said.

EDITORIAL&OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Complex Efforts to Create the Eurasian Economic Union

In a recent address to the heads of foreign diplomatic missions in Kazakhstan, President Nursultan Nazarbayev reflected on Kazakhstan's consistent move forward towards the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union.

The President reiterated that the establishment of such a union is based on pragmatism and the economic necessities of Kazakhstan.

"I would like to emphasise once again that this is an economic association," Nazarbayev said, adding that this year will be marked by the signing of the agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

A few weeks ago, Kazakhstan's Vice Minister of Economy and Budget Planning Timur Zhaksylykov said the EEU treaty is very important to Kazakhstan and will define its foreign policy for years to come.

Indeed, Eurasian economic projects based on the consistent efforts of Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus have already begun to show results.

Among the main purposes of Kazakhstan's participation in Eurasian integration is access to expanded consumer markets and the attraction of investments to Kazakhstan's manufacturing sector.

According to government data, since the launch of the Customs Union, the volume of investments to the manufacturing industry of Kazakhstan has increased by 88 percent from \$1.8 billion in 2009 to \$3.4 billion

in 2012. Foreign direct investment during that period also increased by 34 percent from \$21.4 billion to \$28.3 billion.

On Jan. 1, Kazakhstan also gained access to the government purchases regimes of Russia and Belarus, while producers in these countries received access to Kazakhstan's government procurement. Russia and Belarus had access to each other's purchases since 2011.

Total government purchases of the member countries of the Eurasian Economic Space reached \$198 billion in 2012. To compare, the volume of state purchases solely in Kazakhstan was \$7.6 billion in the respective period, which is 26 times less than the common volume of the member states.

The Eurasian integration processes, of course, face many challenges based on their complicated nature. Among the most substantial has been the creation of a common legal regime.

As of now, Eurasian integration is based on multiple international agreements that are difficult to manage. In the beginning of 2011, member states began to codify these agreements to make them easier to manage.

Yet there are concerns in Kazakhstan's business community that the structure and quality of the codified agreement could be

below par and could represent a challenge to the sustainability of the integration processes.

One particular concern relates to the fast speed at which such complex processes are being implemented. The Agreement on the Eurasian Union seeks to codify more than 60 international agreements adopted within the frames of the Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Space. The agreement contains multiple sections on competition policies, natural monopolies, transport, industry and economic practices. The agreement would embrace all sectors of economies of all member states and requires more time and elaboration.

The integration processes that are underway now did not appear overnight. Compared with the initial efforts of reviving economic ties among post-Soviet states on the basis of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) that did not yield much positive results, the current state of affairs presents a more mature development.

First, the Customs Union member states have agreed on common customs tariff. Most of the progress in this area was reached in the late 2000s.

Second, a common Customs Code has been adopted. This common legislative act

provides a common customs regime, including customs valuation, and other aspects of regulation.

Third, in July 2011, the countries removed internal border controls on transported goods, which significantly

progressed the integration process. According to Russian President Vladimir Putin, this process "finalised formation of a fully-fledged unified customs territory with clear prospects for the realisation of ambitious business initiatives." The member states created a solid institutional basis for integration cooperation.

The Commission of the Customs Union is an institution which has issued about 800 acts. Another major institution is the Eurasian Economic Commission, which facilitates collaboration in various areas, including macroeconomic procedures, common actions in the agricultural sector and on antimonopoly issues. There are 17 committees functioning under the Commission. Given the progress achieved in the Eurasian processes, the Eurasian Economic Union should be in a position to overcome the challenges it faces and provide economic benefits to its members. The new fundamental agreement is to be readied by late spring this year, while the EEU is scheduled to be launched by Jan. 1, 2015.

Much will depend, though, on the abilities of the three governments to work out the details of the agreement in such a way that it does not create benefits for some while creating detriments for others.

Much will depend on the abilities of the three governments to work out the details of the agreement in such a way that it does not create benefits for some while creating detriments for others.

Key Security Challenges in Central Asia

By Eryan Karim

The withdrawal of coalition forces from Afghanistan scheduled for 2014 is one of the key issues in discussions of security challenges in Central Asia.

There are fears, shared by governments, think tanks and the expert community in the United States, Europe and Central Asia, that the withdrawal of military forces will weaken control within Afghanistan and could lead to a new round of civil conflict. The most pessimistic forecasts even envisage radical forces coming to power or an increase in the number of terrorist acts in the region and the world.

Generally, we are already seeing an increase in the number of attacks on coalition forces and cases of terrorist attacks. Only in January 2014, 16 terrorist attacks occurred in Kabul, which led to 150 deaths. This is why it is not surprising that the main topics discussed among experts and politicians are the potential negative effects of the withdrawal of coalition troops. And the main question is: will the withdrawal cause a new outbreak of violence in Afghanistan and would this wave spread to other countries in the region or not?

With regard to Kazakhstan, these concerns are growing amid a burst of terrorist activity in 2011-2012, when extremist groups tried to organise acts in the cities of Atyrau, Aktyobe and Taraz. This is especially relevant as intelligence links those actions to various terrorist organisations based in Afghanistan.

The fact that most experts link the worsening of the security situation in Central Asia and the rise of terrorist activity with the situation in Afghanistan is based on events in Kyrgyzstan in 1999-2000, called the "Batken events."

At that time, several groups of militants who were moving around the Tajik-Afghan border or had military bases in northern Afghanistan tried to expand and invaded the territories of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

After the beginning of an anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, the militants of the Islamic Movement of Turkistan, also known as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Jihad Union, were forced to move their bases to the southern regions in the area of the Afghan-Pakistan border. It is anticipated that after the withdrawal of coalition forces, these groups might try again to advance their activity in northern Afghanistan and attempt to penetrate into other Central Asian countries. For this reason, today, expert discussion revolves around the different possible ways the situation in the region could develop.

This probably explains the growth of military spending of the countries of Central Asia geographically closest to Afghanistan.

Military spending of Central Asian countries in 2010-2011 (million USD)				
Country	2010	% of GDP in 2010	2011	% of GDP in 2011
Kazakhstan	1066	0.9	1297	0.9
Kyrgyzstan	96	1.7	111	2.09
Tajikistan	84	1.5	105	1.68
Turkmenistan	261	1.5	326	1.5
Uzbekistan	1422	3.5	1568	3.2



It is undeniable that the withdrawal of coalition forces could weaken the regional security system and complicate the situation in the region. This is already happening, as U.S. and coalition forces today are not active in Afghanistan, but rather like they are in a state of siege in their bases, and it would probably be an exaggeration to claim that they control the situation in the country. According to Afghan official bodies, 90 percent of operations are planned and implemented by the Afghan military, who have been given most of the authority.

It should be pointed out that, after all, the main factor in ensuring security in Central Asia is not the presence or absence of coalition forces in Afghanistan, but the internal situation in the region.

Now we see two sets of problems, which have the nature of a firm trend.

First is the deterioration in certain relations among countries in the region.

Conflicts and tensions among countries of the region have grown. Under these conditions, we cannot speak of any effective joint action and counteraction to certain threats, including terrorism.

A lack of clear delimitation of state borders and the presence of a large number of disputed territories is a major factor of instability in intraregional relations. The total length of the border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan is 1,378 kilometres. After two decades of negotiations, the parties were able to coordinate their positions on 58 sites or 315 km of the border. There is also contention about the Kyrgyz-Tajik and Uzbek-Tajik borders. For example, there are over 80 unspecified sites on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border (the main one being the Vorukh Tajik enclave in Kyrgyzstan), and two-thirds of the 1,500 km Uzbek-Tajik border is not demarcated.

It is a vicious circle when the regional situation is already fraught with problems of drug trafficking and the threat of terrorism and requires strengthening border controls, but the countries of the region still cannot agree on their boundaries.

The situation is escalated by the fact that the Central Asian region is beginning to unravel geopolitically, if you will. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are being increas-

ingly drawn into the orbit of the political and military influence of Russia. Uzbekistan is developing military cooperation with the U.S.. According to experts, the expansion of military cooperation of Central Asian countries with different geopolitical centres makes them even more intractable on intraregional issues, as each party counts upon the help of its own "Big Brother."

Second is the growth of political infighting in the countries of the region, complicating the nature and dynamics of internal processes in the countries of the region.

The deterioration of intraregional relations in Central Asia also occurs amid the exacerbation of the crisis in the domestic political situation in the countries of the region and the growth of the struggle for power among counter elites, especially in light of upcoming election processes in the region.

That is why today, the most relevant and key issue for all five countries in the region is to ensure the continuity and stability of the current political regimes as well as preserve their charted political and development courses.

This question is quite relevant and potentially destabilising, as there are no legal frameworks and mechanisms established in Central Asian countries for the transfer of power and most importantly, the preservation of the political course. The constitutions of Central Asian states provide only legal mechanisms for the replacement of the president in case of force majeure. The Kyrgyz and Turkmen experience of changing regimes has clearly demonstrated that the absence of clear and workable mechanisms for the continuity and transfer of power under the conditions of intra-elite conflicts as well as social and economic instability could lead to plots and revolutions.

It is assumed that the escalation of any struggle for power within the countries of the region would distract governments from countering other threats and ensuring regional security as well as distract security services and law enforcement bodies from their direct duties. Doubtless, this would weaken control and reduce opportunities for countering such threats as illegal migration, drug trafficking and terrorism.

There are several institutions of regional security in the region, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). However, there are no regional cooperation programmes in the field of security among the countries of the region. How can we speak about jointly countering threats at a time when countries argue over water boundaries or conducting economic warfare?

In other words, today many security challenges have less to do with the situation in Afghanistan than with the situation in the region itself. At the very least, these factors could escalate the development of negative processes. Therefore, countries of the region should focus on the issue of developing regional security cooperation and building a dialogue among them.

The author a candidate of political sciences.



Locals enjoy some leisurely time near Mazar-i-Sharif's famous Blue Mosque in January 2014.

Photo by Eryan Karim

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Editor-in-Chief: Roman Vassilenko
Managing Editor: Tatiana Kostina
18a Pobeda Avenue Astana, 010000
Telephone/Facsimile: +7 7172 32 17 29
Distribution in Astana: +7 7172 44 51 53

Publisher: Svezhaya Pressa LLP
News and Editorial: +7 701 575 1055
Advertising: +7 727 252 08 82
E-mail: info@astanatimes.com
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Defining the Contours of Kazakhstan's Diplomacy up to 2020

By Erian Idrisov

During the two decades of Kazakhstan's independence and under the leadership of its first President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the country has achieved major breakthroughs in its political and socioeconomic development. The country has achieved substantial foreign policy results in the international arena and has become a reputable and responsible member of the global community.

Kazakhstan's diplomacy has established a reliable system of relations with international organisations and all countries of the world. The country participates on equal terms and contributes to the resolution of regional and global problems of the modern world order. Today, Astana's foreign activity encompasses all spheres of national interests and the most urgent international problems.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is continuing a gradual implementation of strategic foreign policy tasks and priorities in all directions, set forth by the President of Kazakhstan. In this way, during the last year alone, around 170 international events with the participation of the head of state took place in Kazakhstan and abroad.

We have held productive negotiations with our neighbours Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

In November 2013, we signed a new Agreement on Good Neighbourliness and Alliance in the 21st Century with the Russian Federation that encompasses the whole spectrum of our bilateral relations.

During the first visit of the new President of China Xi Jinping to Astana, we signed agreements on cooperation in the areas of energy, finance and investments worth more than \$35 billion. We reached an important consensus on resuming the work on the water resources management project agreement in 2015. The partnership with the United States on a wide range of bilateral and global issues continues developing on a steady path.

We have also reached a new landmark in the European direction. Our head of state made his first visit to the Principality of Monaco. Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron made a state visit to Kazakhstan, the first visit by a British Prime Minister in the history of our countries' bilateral relations. The visit boosted our relations to the level of strategic partnership. The head of Spain's government Mariano Rajoy has also paid his first official visit to Astana.

The visit of the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso to Kazakhstan in June 2013 provided a great impetus to strengthen large-scale relations with the European Union (EU), which is the largest trade-economic and investment partner of our country.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs



has also intensified its efforts in the Asian direction. This relates not only to our traditional partners Japan, the Republic of Korea, India and Malaysia, but also other countries of the region. As such, during the first visit to Astana of the President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, agreements in the areas of trade, economy and technology with the participation of public and private enterprises and financial institutions were signed.

We have paid great attention to multilateral diplomacy and cooperation within UN, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and other international organisations. We place special emphasis on further cooperation with partners within the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, where chairmanship is passing from Turkey to China for the period of 2014-2016.

From the time of its establishment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has stressed the importance of the facilitation of the development of the state and society. It was diplomatic means through which Kazakhstan ensured a favourable external environment for implementation of large-scale political, economic and social reforms within the country.

This process passed through several stages. In each stage, the head of state laid out foreign policy priorities, defining a vision of the place and role of Kazakhstan in the modern world, strategic principles, goals and tasks of the foreign policy of our country.

One of the essential events of 2014 became the approval by the head of state of the Foreign Policy Concept for the period 2014-2020.

This document was elaborated in accordance with the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy's foreign policy settings. The difference in content between the new concept and the previous ones is natural. This distinction is explained by new modernisation priorities set by President Nazarbayev that have increased the role and influence of Kazakhstan, as well as the appearance of fundamentally new trends in modern world politics and economics.

While developing the concept, there were two tasks. On one hand, it was important to maintain the continuity of the foreign policy of Kazakhstan. On the other hand, it was essential to demonstrate its adequacy in relation to the changing conditions of the modern world.

Hopefully, we have managed to successfully accomplish these tasks. Current foreign policy priority directions reflect both fundamental provisions and new imperatives raised by modern realities.

Making the concept available to the public is another novelty. There were two important elements in explaining the concept: to define clear and concrete guidelines for Kazakhstan's diplomacy and, more importantly, to help our society and foreign partners get a better insight into the course and priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Better understanding leads to better trust and a clear and predictable counterpart becomes the closest partner.

Another distinctive feature of the concept is its conciseness. This was meant to synthesise major issues and facilitate understanding of the information. The document represents a key element of the philosophy of Kazakhstan's foreign policy for the next seven years.

The concept passed through the process of coordination with all related governmental bodies as stipulated by the legislation of Kazakhstan. During its preparation, recommendations from Kazakhstan's expert community, as well as public comments and evaluations of various international issues were taken into account. Taking this chance, I would like to express gratitude to those who participated in the discussions and development of the concept.

The principles of multi-vector and balanced foreign policy promulgated by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the dawn of Kazakhstan's independence have proven their creditworthiness and have become the single option basis of collaboration with the international community.

At the same time, the current version of the concept emphasises modern realities in international politics by stating the importance of pragmatic foreign policy on the basis of mutual benefit and firm protection of national interests. The same emphasis was laid out in the recent state-of-the-nation address of President Nazarbayev to the People, Kazakhstan's Way – 2050: Common Aim, Common Interests, Common Future. This way is, in fact, the only option in the modern world of globalisation and the negative effects of the world financial-economic crisis, the exacerbation of humanity's problems and the contraction of renewable energy resources.

Kazakhstan is an active participant in the world community and, by all means, is dependent on the processes occurring within the

community. Taking into account this relationship, Kazakhstan must maintain a pragmatic approach. As someone put it, there are no constant enemies as there are no constant allies in politics, but only constant interests. This aphorism has not lost its relevance in relation to modern international realities.

Along with the traditional aims of the foreign policy laid out in the concept, such as "ensuring national security, defence and sovereignty," there are other important elements of foreign policy.

In particular, the document underlines a necessity to create favourable external conditions for successful implementation of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, increasing life standards for the population, as well as strengthening the rule of law, democratic institutions and human rights protections. Previously, a stronger emphasis was placed on protection of the state's interests. By contrast, nowadays, the accent is being shifted towards the needs of the people. In achieving this task, we will also provide wide support to Kazakh diasporas and the Kazakh language abroad.

Kazakhstan is eager to occupy its honourable position in the highly competitive environment of the world community. That is why among the country's new goals, we can see a desire for a green path of development and entering the list of the world's top 30 most developed countries. A quality preparation for and holding of the international exhibition EXPO 2017 in Astana with the theme "Future Energy," as well as introducing cutting-edge ecological and energy-saving standards and technologies will become major components of reaching these goals.

Countries succeed when they harness their national potential. That is why maintaining the unique national-cultural identities of Kazakhs and other ethnic groups of the country and following our own path of development is one of the major guidelines in the foreign activity of Kazakhstan.

Another new element of the concept is announcing Central Asia as one of the essential strategic priorities of modern Kazakhstan. I am sure this declaration is highly important and takes into account the national interests of our country. Kazakhstan is located in the centre of Central Asia and its wellbeing is firmly tied to relations with neighbouring states. This is mainly related to securing economic and political development, regional stability and security, as well as tackling modern challenges and threats.

Active participation within intra-regional cooperation and, possibly, economic cooperation, is a guarantee for development of all Central Asian states. This is our view of integration processes development in the Eurasian space and our participation in them.

Economic integration is an objective tendency and a natural

phenomenon in the globalised 21st century.

No country is able to develop without the integration of its economy. And our economy too, requires new markets, as well as the elimination of trade and investment barriers. This is one reason why we are pursuing economic integration and are creating the Eurasian Economic Union.

With that, we strictly observe such fundamental principles as inviolability of political sovereignty, economic rationalisation of decisions, gradual approach, pragmatism and mutual benefit. We also call for equal representation of parties in all integration organs and consensus at all levels of collaboration.

In addition, the economic component receives a strong emphasis in the concept. We believe it is important to provide wide political and diplomatic support when promoting Kazakhstan's businesses abroad and attracting foreign investments and know-how in Kazakhstan's economy. International experience proves that the economic activity of foreign ministries and embassies are a major tendency of diplomacy today. For example, a large number of requests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other governmental bodies from foreign ambassadors accredited to Kazakhstan relate to economic cooperation.

Kazakhstan's participation in multilateral regional and global organisations strengthens the international reputation of the country. With that, Kazakhstan participates solely in those regional and international organisations whose activities relate to its national interests. Kazakhstan's role as a member of the UN has grown within this reputable organisation. A range of Kazakhstan's initiatives has been supported by the world community. This has established a positive international image of Kazakhstan. Today, on a reasonable basis, we are bidding for a position of a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2017-2018.

Proactive and responsible policies in the sphere of global security have brought Kazakhstan a reputation as a flagman of the movement for a nuclear-weapons-free world, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The new concept notes that Kazakhstan's policy in this highly important area of foreign policy will continue.

As a part of global community, Kazakhstan continues paying attention to environmental issues and the preservation of the global climate. This is explained by the fact that the Aral Sea and former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site are located in Kazakhstan.

Since the first years of independence, the country's geographic priorities emphasised relationships with Russia, China, Central Asia, the United States, Europe and the

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In the new version, the list of traditional county priorities is expanded.

In particular, it is planned to strengthen the Asian vector of our foreign policy, including by means of a separate programme that is under development now. Major spheres of cooperation will be investment-technological and trade-economic cooperation. The successful realisation of the state programme "Path to Europe" in 2009-2011 has facilitated significant increases in volumes of trade and investments and has stimulated cooperation with European countries along the whole spectrum of relations.

As a neighbouring state, Kazakhstan is interested in the stable development of Afghanistan and is ready to support, together with international partners, the social-economic rehabilitation of that country.

Taking into account historical and spiritual ties with the states of the Middle East, we look forward to long-awaited stability in this region. Kazakhstan firmly calls for a diplomatic resolution of the situation around Iran's nuclear programme and hopes for continuing dialogue with Iran with all interested parties to reach mutually acceptable decisions.

Kazakhstan's growing international reputation and economic potential have created conditions for enlarging cooperation with African states and Latin America. Signing a decree by the President on establishing an Embassy in the South African Republic in November 2013 was a symbolic act. This country is considered a "gateway to the African continent." This year we expect to open Kazakhstan's embassies in Ethiopia and Mexico. As one might recall, in 2012 our embassy in Brazil began its work.

The new concept is expected to expand Kazakhstan's presence abroad in a pragmatic way. Our country plans to promote its interests in the farthest countries and regions.

These tasks would have been unsustainable in the initial period of our independence, when there were other issues on the agenda. But today, Kazakhstan is a stable and dynamically developing established state, which has established strategic goals up to 2050. Now we have prerequisites for implementing large-scale and ambitious foreign policy.

The new concept embodies the historical experience of previous years and generations, and symbolises the beginning of the next stage of Kazakhstan's diplomacy development. I would like to underline that today Kazakhstan possesses an established set of fundamental principles to guide its foreign activity. Our task is to effectively and professionally bring them to life.

The author is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan.

Moving Toward Eurasian Integration

By Yelcinsag Sagindikov

The President's state-of-the-nation address, "Kazakhstan's Way – 2050: Common Goal, Common Interests, Common Future" laid out clear steps for building a more competitive state ranked as one of the top 30 most developed countries in the world. President Nursultan Nazarbayev's address requires the attention of all and is a guide for all power structures.

The most ambitious notion of the new address is an idea of Mangilik Yel (Eternal Nation) for how to realise the dreams of our ancestors who wanted to see Kazakhstan become a great nation. Our young state started down this path on the first day of independence.

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Customs Union (CU) and Single Economic Space (SES), which base their activities on a unified legal framework, will serve as catalysts for Kazakhstan's development. Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus, in



close regional cooperation, are actively working together to promote certain agreed upon joint macro-economic policies, customs tariff regulations and the protection of national markets.

We have successfully achieved important integration benchmarks, such as the creation of a free trade zone, introduction of a single tariff and the establishment of supranational bodies. The Eurasian Economic Commission of SES is the most effective supranational structure.

Eurasian integration has impressive potential. According to experts, the aggregate volume of the economies of SES participating countries is \$2.2 trillion, or 2.6 percent of world GDP. The effect of future integration on GDP growth by 2030 could reach 900 billion. Large scale synchronised actions by the governments of the three countries, the business community, industry and local governments are needed for this to happen.

All this increases requirements on the legislative provision of socio-economic and political processes inside and outside the participating countries. Extensive work on harmonising the three countries' legislation has already begun. The main task of this process is the creation of a SES legal base.

We have to revise a number of laws and codes, amend bills and adopt new legal acts. Indeed, parliamentarians are facing a difficult task to provide adequate protection to the interests of Kazakhstan citizens, the society and the whole state during the Eurasian integration. A

priority in this context is protection of domestic business within the SES and creation of favourable conditions for domestic entrepreneurs.

Domestic business has already proved its effectiveness in the CU and SES. The volumes of Belarusian and Russian goods increased in the commodity markets. The share of Kazakhstan imports from SES countries in their total volume grew from 32 percent in 2009 to 40 percent in 2012. Mutual trade between Kazakhstan and Russia will rise by an average of 7 percent and with Belarus by 10 percent. Moreover, the business climate in the three countries, according to international experts, is gradually improving. The rating of conditions for doing business, as estimated by the World Bank, was raised for CU countries in the bank's Doing Business 2013 report.

We should also pay special attention to events such as Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). At the meeting of the three countries' leaders in Minsk in the fall of 2013, Presi-

dent Nazarbayev stressed the need for Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO prior to Eurasian Economic Union beginning operations. This issue is very important because the agreements reached can be revised, which in turn will delay Kazakhstan's accession to the organisation for years. It is necessary to harmonise the levels of commitments from Kazakhstan and Russia to that of other WTO members.

There is another important aspect of Eurasian integration which requires detailed consideration: what does it do for ordinary people? Our citizens often do not understand what benefits they will reap from the integration process.

Many of our compatriots, who had left for Germany, said that with the formation of the European Union, they obtained the right to visa-free travel to neighbouring countries. All EU countries raised social standards of living, increased the level of remuneration, reduced administrative arbitrariness and enshrined many social achievements in law. Today, this is a powerful incentive to attract new states to the EU. Therefore, ordinary citizens ask: how do we benefit from joining the Eurasian

Economic Union and what should we expect in this regard? Even a cursory review of the Kazakhstan media shows that besides the barely understandable macroeconomic forecasts on this issue, there is a lack of information.

Today, we are faced with the task of explaining Eurasian integration to the people of Kazakhstan. Every citizen must know his personal income and opportunities will be equal to that of other member states of the Eurasian Economic Union on average. For these reasons and others, we need to create a unified legal framework for our system of laws.

The parliamentarians have to do serious work to identify and remove dysfunctional legislation, improve existing laws, harmonise them in accordance with the challenges of our times and develop new bills to ensure legislative activity in the prospective aspect. Actually, a significant portion of work of the two chambers this year will be devoted to the legislative aspects of Eurasian integration.

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

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

FM Idrissov Discusses EU Relations in Hungary and Latvia

By Nurzhan Assenov

RIGA – A delegation led by Kazakhstan Minister of Foreign Affairs Ertan Idrissov visited Hungary and Latvia Jan. 28-29 where they met with country leaders to discuss stronger ties with these two countries as well as with the European Union (EU) generally.

In the European capitals, Idrissov emphasised the meetings concerning EU cooperation had special meaning for Kazakhstan. The EU is Kazakhstan's largest trade and economic partner and accounts for half of Kazakhstan's foreign trade. Trade turnover for 2012 was \$53 billion, the highest in history. And for the period of January-October of last year, turnover reached \$46 billion. Forty-seven percent of foreign investments attracted to Kazakhstan's economy originated from the EU.

An important subject of the discussions was preparation of a new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. This document is aimed at building a legal framework for transition to a more mature and dynamic stage of the partnership between Kazakhstan and the EU.

"It is fundamentally important to us to make the enhanced partnership agreement efficient in opening new prospects, specifically in areas such as liberalisation of

the visa regime for Kazakhstan citizens, as well as cooperation in the science, technology and innovation spheres. In other words, the agreement must allow us to eliminate artificial obstacles to strengthening ties in the areas of science and business between our citizens," Idrissov said during the meetings in Budapest, according to the Kazakhstan foreign ministry.

In Budapest, Kazakhstan's delegation participated in the international workshop "Strengthening partnership: Republic of Kazakhstan-EU." The delegation also included representatives of Kazakh think tanks and government bodies, including Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, as well as Kazakhstan's Institute of Strategic Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, European Information Center and others. The European side was represented by a large group of experts and official figures, including EU Special Representative for Central Asia Patricia Flor, high level officers of the European Union External Action Service, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary János Martonyi and other ministers of the Hungarian cabinet.

During the event, Martonyi noted that Kazakhstan plays the role of a "bridge to the East" for

his country, and Hungary, in turn, is ready to become a "bridge to the West" for Kazakhstan. "We share common history and roots. According to many studies, the historical motherland of Hungarians lies on the territory of modern Kazakhstan," the head of Hungarian diplomacy said. He also underscored that he and his cabinet colleagues are ready to facilitate further rapprochement between Kazakhstan and the EU.

In Budapest, the parties also discussed opening access to the European skies for Kazakhstan-based airlines, visa regime liberalisation for Kazakhstan citizens, regional security, and energy issues. Around 70 percent of Kazakhstan's oil export is shipped to EU countries, including Italy, the Netherlands, France, Austria and Romania.

Also during the visit to Budapest, Minister Idrissov held bilateral meetings with his Hungarian colleague János Martonyi, Minister of National Economy Mihály Varga and Minister of Rural Development Sándor Fazekas. During the meetings, the counterparts discussed the state and prospects of Kazakhstan-Hungary cooperation, preparations for a visit this year by President Nazarbayev to Hungary, as well as trade, economic, agricultural and education cooperation.

The Kazakh delegation's meeting agenda in Riga echoed that of Budapest and Idrissov urged the Latvian diplomats to consider Kazakhstan a bridge connecting Europe and Asia. This corresponds with Riga's "Eastern partnership" foreign policy to strengthen cooperation with the Central Asian region.

Kazakhstan-Latvian relations also received attention last year as a result of a visit by Latvian President Andris Bērziņš to Astana. And both countries are working to implement the agreements reached during that visit. The work seeks to increase the transit capacities of container trains Baltika Transit and Baltika Transit-2, launch direct air routes between Kazakhstan and Latvia, improve cooperation in the areas of tourism and agricultural products processing.

An important part of the Kazakhstan delegation's visit was the speech of Minister Idrissov at the annual meeting of the heads of Latvia's diplomatic missions abroad and representations to international organisations. A key question discussed among the diplomatic corps in Riga was its upcoming chairmanship of the European Council.

During the annual meeting, Latvian officials invited foreign diplomats to take the floor. Līnās Linkevičs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania ad-

ressed the audience on Lithuania's chairmanship of the EU in 2013. Head of EU diplomacy Baroness Catherine Ashton delivered a speech to Latvia's diplomats and Minister Idrissov addressed the meeting's participants concerning Latvia's priority of strengthening relations with Central Asia in its future chairmanship at the EU.

During a vigorous question and answer session, Latvian diplomats expressed interest in Kazakhstan's priorities in its European foreign policy direction. Among Kazakhstan's European foreign policy priorities noted by Minister Idrissov during the session were Kazakhstan's signing of an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, the easing of the visa regime for Kazakhstan citizens, as well as further boosting of trade, economy and innovation-technology cooperation.

In Riga, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister also held a range of bilateral meetings, including with Latvian President Bērziņš.

During the meeting with Bērziņš, the counterparts touched upon a wide range of mutual interests. The officials specifically emphasised providing an impetus to the economic side of bilateral relations. The parties also discussed cooperation in areas such as transit and transport, culture, small and medium-sized business develop-

ment and cooperation within the EU and the European Council.

During the meeting with Latvia's Saeima Speaker Solvita Aboltiņa, the parties discussed strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation. They noted the success of groups working in the area of inter-parliamentary cooperation between the two countries. Chairman of Kazakhstan's Mazhilis Nurlan Nigmatulin invited the Speaker of Latvia's Saeima to visit Astana, according to the Kazakhstan foreign ministry.

In Riga, Idrissov met with his Latvian colleague Edgars Rinkēvičs. The heads of the diplomatic authorities discussed pressing questions of the international agenda, prospects for boosting bilateral relations, as well as cooperation in the multilateral sphere.

Minister Idrissov also underscored the potential of transport and logistics cooperation with Latvia. "Access to the European logistical centres will allow beneficial transit of goods from Kazakhstan, other CIS countries and China through the Latvian ports to the European markets and back," Idrissov underlined. An example of similar cooperation can be seen in the Kazakhstan wheat terminal at the Free Port of Ventpils through which Kazakhstan's wheat is shipped to world markets.

"Densify, Intensify, Diversify and Discover" Is French Ambassador's Formula for Success

Continued from Page A1

In the first 11 months of 2013, French exports to Kazakhstan grew by 49.3 percent compared to the same period in 2012 and reached 629 million euros (\$857 million). Imports from Kazakhstan, 95 percent of which are hydrocarbons, grew 0.6 percent to \$4.8 billion euros (\$6.5 billion). In 2012, French exports grew 85 percent and reached 484 million euros (\$659 billion); total trade in 2012 reached \$5.2 billion.

One of the highlights of the year, according to the ambassador, is going to be the Business Council session on Feb. 13-14 in Astana, in which some 50 French business people are expected to take part.

"I had a discussion with Minister [of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Ertan] Idrissov, and I am sure he is quite interested in facilitating more business exchanges," Etienne said.

"Kazakhstan is the biggest uranium producer in the world, so one way or another we are interested in cooperation in that field," Etienne said, adding that cooperation is already ongoing between French company Areva and KazAtomProm. The two companies are working on extending cooperation in other fields.

French companies are also planning to participate in the much-anticipated EXPO 2017 in Astana in various ways, said the ambassador.

"For instance, we are quite interested in offering a simulator-example of the sustainable management of a modern city of the 21st century," he said. "We are going to offer the city of Astana a system where you can see in advance what's going to happen in terms of transport with twice the number of cars or what's going to happen in terms of energy consumption or water consumption. ... Besides that, in terms of buildings being built and services being provided, as well as energy sources and technology, we are interested in everything, in every step towards EXPO 2017. One particular area is city transport, and whatever the Astana Akimat

(city hall) may choose, we can offer."

Smart management and saving energy are the keys to a sustainable future, the ambassador said, not only expanding into other energy sources.

"For me, the big question is saving energy. It is not only about providing energy, but also the way you consume it and manage it. It takes a lot of effort to change people's habits ... [but] little by little it makes a huge difference."

A region in France, Nord Pas de Calais, has been implementing a system of energy consumption-conscious living over the past few years. It is experiences like this that France can share, Etienne said.

At the same time, nuclear energy accounts for around 80 percent of France's energy consumption, according to the ambassador.

"There is certainly a future for nuclear energy. But there are plans to balance nuclear and renewable energy by 2020, going towards reducing to 50 percent [nuclear energy's share] and steadily developing more solar and wind energy."

At the same time, France, one of the five recognised nuclear weapon states and permanent members of the UN Security Council, believes its current nuclear posture is sustainable, the ambassador said.

"As for nuclear weapons, we are not expanding the numbers; we are just maintaining them at the minimum level consistent with our needs. We think we have a sufficient level [of nuclear weapons] and that is it," Etienne said, adding that "we are supporting Kazakhstan's efforts to prevent proliferation."

In addition to energy, the ambassador hopes to foster cooperation in education. Developing education is a priority for Kazakhstan.

"We will push for more cooperation between universities and schools on every level—technical, social, economic, engineering, et cetera—as well as student exchange programmes and combined events where we can cross experiences," the ambassa-

dor said, adding that France can provide top quality education at all levels.

Starting from 2014, Kazakhstan's students will be able to study at France's Sorbonne University without leaving Astana, as the two countries signed a memorandum last September establishing the Paris Sorbonne University at the Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University and making a prestigious Sorbonne education available there.

"Cooperation between the Sorbonne and Abai University is just beginning. We want to do the same with the Nazarbayev University here and other institutions," Etienne said. "We want to show that what you have done in a few years, most countries have done in decades; you're speeding up the process, which is quite extraordinary, and you can learn from our experience."

The French community is planning to show the reality of "Francophonie" in March as "we want to show that [Francophone culture] is alive and not only among diplomats. The French language is spoken by around 250 million people around the world in more than 50 countries," the ambassador underscored.

Before coming to Astana, Etienne headed the French diplomatic mission in New Zealand for three years. There are similarities and differences between the two posts, he said.

"In terms of development, how you deal with infrastructure, how you deal with the situation regarding economic development and national identity—this is what I would say [is similar]. In terms of differences, the climate in New Zealand is mild and here it is sharply continental, and there is the main difference. But as I was brought up in the mountains, I like the cold and the winter."

"I brought over my skis and go cross-country skiing on weekends, weather allowing," the ambassador said and added, smiling: "You have been living in a cold climate for thousands of years. I am sure I can cope with it for two or three years."

Ambassador Umarov to Take Part in Panel Discussion on Kazakhstan in U.S.

By Michelle Witte

Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United States Kairat Umarov will join a panel of experts for the panel discussion, "Kazakhstan and Central Asia: History, Culture, Politics and Economy," at the University of Scranton, Pennsylvania, on April 2.

According to a lecture brochure, the panel discussion will be the inaugural Jay Nathan, Ph.D. Visiting Scholar Lecture, a newly-established lecture series that invites international scholars and professionals from foreign countries facing various challenges in their economic and political development to the university to deliver schol-

arly presentations and take part in discussions on global issues.

The other members of the first panel are to be William Courtney, senior principle for policy strategy at Computer Sciences Corporation, member of the World Affairs Council of Washington, DC, former U.S. ambassador to Kazakhstan and Georgia and former special assistant to the U.S. president on Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia; Nancy Neill, facilitator of management discussions of vision, values and strategy and founder of the Atlanta Communications Group; and Jay Nathan, professor of management at St. John's University, New York, visiting professor and Ph.D. advisor at the Eurasian Nation-

al University in Astana, honorable professor at the Karaganda School of Economics and author of the recent book, "Kazakhstan's New Economy: Post-Soviet, Central Asian Industries in a Global Era."

Nathan and Neill presented "Kazakhstan: Nomads and Eagle Hunters Meet Modern Management Tools and Technologies" at a break-out sessions of the 36th Annual Fulbright Association Conference in Washington, DC, in October 2013.

The visiting scholar lecture series will be free and open to the public and attendees as well as staff and students at the University of Scranton will have an opportunity to meet the speakers.



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Nation&Capital

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

PEOPLE

Kazakh Pop Artist Displays Work,
Raises Money for Charity

B2

CULTURE

New Theatre to Open in South
Kazakhstan

B3

SPORTS

Kazakhstan Beats Belgium,
Advances to Davis Cup Quarterfinal
against Switzerland

B7

Slimclub Wellness Centre Opens in Capital



The opening ceremony of Slimclub wellness centre drew many potential clients.

By Alina Usmanova

ASTANA – Young entrepreneur Anastassiya Kalinina fulfilled a childhood dream on Dec. 15, 2013 to help women look slim and beautiful when she opened Kazakhstan's first Slimclub wellness studio.

Slimclub is a part of a Moscow-based chain with more than 90 clubs in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The clubs stress a healthy lifestyle based on a combination of exercise, nutrition, relaxation techniques and a healthy mental outlook. The clubs believe such an integrated approach leads to a healthy life.

"Slimclub is a studio of light fitness and correction of the body for women only. Women above 17 years old come here. We also offer afterbirth, anti-cellulitis programmes," Kalinina said.

Exercises are held on wellness equipment produced in the Czech Republic, Italy, Israel and Germa-

ny. Increasing blood circulation, improving general health, improving the work of the lymph system and eliminating toxins are among the main results of attending Slimclub.

In addition to wellness equipment, the club offers services such as massage, cosmetology and the services of a nutritionist.

"Wellness is in the middle between fitness and spa. A person taking an exercise on one of our training devices receives a complex of procedures, i.e. physical exercise, vacuum and infrared warmth," the owner said.

Every client before starting training in the club is examined by a doctor. If necessary, a special programme is developed. The club has six instructors and each client is designated an individual trainer.

"In our studio, drafting a unique training programme is an integral part of the way to a successful transformation of the female body.

In view of the fact that each of us is unique, when forming the programme such features are taken into account as age, physical activity preferences, health condition and goals. It is important that women know what shape they would like to have and regularly attended classes. The rest will be done by our equipment and highly qualified instructors. Following a personal programme, every week we trace effectiveness according to body weight analyzer TANITA [which tracks changes to the] entire structure of the body according to the content of muscle, bone and fat tissues of the client," said Tatyana Martemyanova, a senior instructor at the club.

"We consider various combinations and patterns of equipment that are maximally effective for the problem area. Individual approach to the client involves continuous quality control of the programme that ensures the best result in the shortest time," she added.

The club is divided into two areas. The first part is for active workouts using a variety of machines and equipment. Distinctive properties of wellness devices are versatility, ease of handling and use of the latest scientific developments. Vacuum simulators, a vibration platform, roller massagers and other interesting devices solve any problems for body correction. A person needs to apply minimum efforts to use the devices, the rest is done by smart machines. Wellness devices allow removing unwanted kilos only in the areas you want them to be removed from.

The second area is for relaxation and includes prelumtherapy, infrared blankets and special massage pants and gloves for hand rejuvenation. These devices eliminate cellulitis, remove toxins, speed up and restore metabolism and stimulate relaxation.

New clients are encouraged to come for a trial visit.

Fryday Events Continue to Connect Astana Professionals



Fryday networking events give ample opportunities for foreigners to socialise with locals.

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – Another Fryday networking event was put on by Connecting Professionals on Feb. 7 at Sadaf, a new restaurant at King Hotel.

More and more Astana residents and foreign visitors have been attending Fryday networking events.

Each function attracts over a hundred professionals from different walks of life. With Astana being Kazakhstan's administrative centre, running into local government officials, foreign embassy staff, bankers, representatives of the oil and gas sector, interpreters or even one's colleagues is not uncommon at such events.

"Our guests are mostly fluent in English and therefore, foreigners feel at home as well; there is no language barrier and they can easily communicate. Also, locals have the opportunity to socialise

with foreigners, give advice and share their impressions and knowledge of the city. I think our guests like that," Fryday project manager Mercy Mustafina commented.

According to Mustafina, this was the first event of 2014; it didn't have a theme. "We have just announced the beginning of the new Fryday season," she said.

"I think we can have a mutually beneficial relationship with entrepreneurial and professional associations, trade representatives and chambers of commerce and other specialised professional networks," Mustafina added. "Often, this type of network is limited to consultations on specific subjects and they are very formal. In a two year span, Fryday Astana has come a long way with its large scale events and now has its own data base of who might be interested in specific audiences and communities."

Continued on Page B8

UNDP, Government Collaborate on Energy-Efficient Lighting Project



Volunteers of the UNDP project help promote energy-efficient lighting in Kazakhstan.

By Ruziya Ospanova

ASTANA – With lighting expected to grow from 13 percent of Kazakhstan's energy consumption today to 36 percent by 2015, the country is looking for energy efficient lighting solutions. The Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme's

Global Environmental Facility (GEF) are working together on a project, "Promotion of Energy-Efficient Lighting in Kazakhstan," to develop electric energy, improve energy efficiency and promote energy saving. The project aims to transform the lighting market in Kazakhstan and gradually replace outdated and inefficient lighting systems.

Syrym Nurgaliyev, project manager, and Dinara Tamabayeva, public relations specialist, both from UNDP, spoke with The Astana Times about the project's goals and its plan for achieving them.

Who initiated the project and why was the project launched in Kazakhstan?

The Ministry of Industry and New Technologies decided that it was necessary to introduce in Kazakhstan all available methods of energy efficiency—renewable energy, modernisation of construction materials, modernisation of systems—and among them was the issue of increasing lighting efficiency. In 2012, the law on withdrawing incandescent lamps from use as non-efficient methods of lighting was adopted. Consequently, we needed to identify what subordinate laws should be amended and what to do in this direction. The ministry asked the UNDP to share worldwide advanced experience and best practices and introduce them here in Kazakhstan.

How will the project function?

The project consists of four components. The first is the implementation and creation of policies and measures introducing energy-efficient lighting. This includes regulatory issues. ... The UNDP helps the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies amend laws regarding construction rules and regulations and sanitary rules and norms and adopt new standards. Currently Kazakhstan has light-diode lighting, but we don't have laws or standards regulating the quality of this product. Currently, we are working with the Committee on Standardisation to introduce minimum quality standards for light-diode lighting. We are also considering issues in utilisation schemes.

Continued on Page B5

THINGS TO WATCH FEBRUARY

CONGRESS HALL

February 13 at 19.30 A concert by Kairat Nurtas

MAXIM GORKY STATE THEATRE

February 14 at 18.00 Mixed Emotions
by Richard Baer

RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL

February 14 at 23.00 Love Party

STATE CIRCUS

February 1 – February 23 Yuri Nikulin's Legendary Circus
at 10.00

KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ARTS

February 15 at 17.00 Symphony Orchestra Concert

PALACE OF INDEPENDENCE

December 20 – March 9 "Napoleon Bonaparte:
life and legend" exhibition

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Kazakh Pop Artist Displays Work, Raises Money for Charity



Visitors at the "Dream and Wings" charity project by famous modern Kazakhstan pop artist Serik Buksikov.

By Marina Mikhailova

ALMATY – An exhibition of the work of famous modern Kazakhstan pop artist Serik Buksikov was held in Almaty as part of the "Dream and Wings" charity project on Jan. 18.

The "Generation of Mercy" foundation will donate all proceeds from the sale of art to the municipal children's hospice.

The project, which was launched in October 2013, has spawned a new genre of modern art—"art affirmation" that aims to depict the values of Islamic culture. Each of the paintings embodies a bright and positive image, which symbolises strength, energy, happiness and enthusiasm.

These works of art are, in fact,

modern visual images that transmit the deep and vital meaning of ayats (verses) of the Holy Quran and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. They are depicted on the canvas, not only through the brush, but also through words—the pictures are accompanied by so called pattern affirmations which have very deep meanings and if repeated and given thoughtful reading, inspire a person to change their life for the better.

The organisers of the project claim that the charity's mission is to support those who are in both financial and spiritual trouble by using brightly coloured contemporary art to help them look at the world more optimistically and believe in themselves. Children suffering from cancer need such help. Few know that hospice is not the

only thing there for cancer patients in Kazakhstan. The programme brings relief to those undergoing often brutal cancer treatments and their relatives. In order to be cured of their cancer, young patients need not only medication and the best care, but also mental strength and to believe in themselves.

Bakhit Niyazov came up with the "Dreams and Wings" project. He is a financier, public figure and head of the "Generation of Mercy" charity fund.

"It is good when one project can combine several noble goals. 'Dream and Wings' is as much an outreach mission as it is a charity. It contributes to modern art while revealing Islam to children from the least expected angle," he said.

The project was supported by



Shamil Alyautdinov, Imam of the Moscow Memorial Mosque, Islamic scholar, preacher and author of numerous books on topics pertaining to Islam, including a translation of the Holy Quran into Russian. Alyautdinov can combine Quranic and prophetic teachings with the latest achievements in psychology, neuroscience, sociology, and other sciences. In addition, he is the founder of the "Trillioner" project which is aimed at helping people achieve success in both the material and spiritual facets of life.

"This is a unique project that examines Islamic values as tools for the spiritual, intellectual, physical and material transformation of man. We only live for a limited period of time, but the Lord's mercy is boundless. That is why people should do their best to achieve success in those areas in which they

want to prove themselves," he said. Alyautdinov translated some very bright, strong, deep and vital ayats and hadiths (sayings or customs of the Prophet Muhammad) into Russian. Buksikov has created bright and colourful pop art pieces based on these texts. Each picture is based on a single ayat or hadith and one "trillioner" rule. As the author noted, the project is not concerned with the direct artistic interpretation of the text, but rather images illustrating spirituality, faith, inspiration and inner strength that people get from exploring the truth of Quranic or prophetic wisdom.

Thirty paintings auctioned at the exhibit were created specifically for "Dreams and Wings." The cost of each picture is quite high, from 400 to 600 thousand tenge (US\$2,600 to \$3,900). In addition

to the paintings, the project organisers released a calendar of the art work. As the creator of this idea, Niyazov said he wanted to share the energy of art affirmation with those who do not buy pictures. Simply purchasing a calendar is a reasonable enough contribution to helping children fight cancer.

It is planned to raise 30 million tenge (US\$193,000). On the opening day of the exhibition, two paintings were sold for 1 million tenge (US\$6,428). One of the lots at the auction was the picture "Blue Mountains, Colourful Trees". It was painted by a young and talented artist named Yerbol Andoss-ov, who is severely ill, but strong in spirit. Alyautdinov purchased his work for a considerable sum. Thanks to Alyautdinov, the dream of the young artist to take part in the big exhibition has come true.

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Two Kazakh Movies Recognised at Iranian Film Festival

By Jan Furst

Acclaimed Kazakh films *Shal* (released in 2012) and *Harmony Lessons* (2013) received awards at the 32nd annual Fajr Film Festival in Tehran, which was held from Feb. 1 to Feb. 11.

Yermek Tursunov's *Shal* was honoured for its outstanding technical and artistic achievement.

Yerbolat Toguzakov, who starred as the main character, personally presented the feature to the Iranian public and the judges.

The film has already been awarded the Grand Prix of the Kinoshock Open Film Festival of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia that ended on Sept. 23. The movie's leading actor Toguzakov was also awarded that festival's Best Actor award.

The feature has been submitted to the Oscars this year for consideration in the Best Foreign Language Film category and praised by critics who described the feature as "a survival story: The Hemingway's 'Old Man and the Sea' of our times."

The other feature, *Harmony Lessons*, directed by Emir Baigazin, was given the Judges' Special Award in Tehran.

Ironically, both features were about survival. "Harmony Lessons is a film about survival," director Emir Baigazin said. "For me, the inner human struggle is important; a struggle between a predator and a being of a higher order," he noted.

The drama premiered at the 63rd Berlin International Film Festival in 2013; critics reviewed it very positively.

"In this insightful Kazakh film, symbolism and striking cinematography help us navigate the complicated landscape of a teenager's mind after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Emir Baigazin wrote, edited and directed this fascinating Darwinist first feature, which,



Episodes from *Shal* and *Harmony Lessons* films that were honoured for their outstanding technical and artistic achievements.

through his still shots, reminds us of Bresson and the best parts of the Japanese film Noir," Frédéric Boy-

er said at the Tribeca Film Festival last year.

Fajr International Film Festival is an annual event hosted by Iran's capital Tehran every February. The tradition began in

1982 and is put on by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.



New Theatre to Open in South Kazakhstan

By Lyubov Dobrota

SOUTH KAZAKHSTAN – A dance theatre, Turkistan Concert Hall and a new drama theatre building will be opened in the South Kazakhstan Oblast this year in response to President Nursultan Nazarbayev's call to give new impetus to the development of Kazakh culture. Head of the regional department of culture Kuliya Aidarbekova elaborated upon cultural revival in the region.

What are the more recent achievements and priorities in your work?

The growth of our budget allows local executive authorities to pay close attention to culture. Good funding equals successful and bold plans. Suffice it to say that last year, 2.5 billion tenge (US\$16 million) was allocated for these purposes. This is a huge sum and it enables us to implement many projects and solve a number of problems pertaining to art and culture.

Thus, in 2013, thirteen cultural objects were reconstructed. Within the state programme Employment 2020, 120.8 million tenge (US\$776 thousand) was allotted for the repair of three cultural centres in the Tyulkubas and Sharda-



ra districts, and 349.6 million tenge (US\$2,246 million) was earmarked from the regional budget for the overhaul of the J. Shanin Kazakh Drama Theatre and the N. Ondassynov Museum. More than 20.7 million tenge (US\$133 thousand) was spent on repairs of the regional opera and ballet theatre and the Y. Aitynsarin Youth and Children's Library. Thirty-two rural culture centres need repair; five of them are in very poor condition. This year, 327 million tenge (US\$2.1 million) was allocated for the overhaul of four rural culture centres.

Along with repairs, new cultural institutions are actively being built in the oblast. Which of them are the most important, in your opinion?

In my opinion, the most important institution is the long-awaited Otyrar Regional Universal Scientific Library. It was built in the new administrative and business centre of Shymkent. In the past year, seven new major cultural centres opened, one of which is the exhibition centre near Otyrar library. A new universal library opened in Turkistan. Additional buildings were constructed for the oblast museum for the memory of victims of political repression and for the oblast circus. Recently, Yerik Regional Museum opened its doors. In 2014, we plan to expand it for the 70th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War and open a new hall. Another unique facility is Nauryz Square.

To the best of my knowledge, there are eight regional theatres in South Kazakhstan. Recently, it was announced that another dance theatre will be built.

Last year, regional theatres staged 45 new performances. Income increased by 20 percent and

amounted to 91.67 million tenge (US\$589 thousand). Ninety-five concert tours were organised, including in the capital. For example, the Theatre of Humour and Satire presented its newest plays to Astana audiences, which were praised by critics.

Our theatres participate in all national festivals and win prizes. We have become accustomed to the success that seems to befall Russian and Kazakh theatres. In 2013, the Uzbek Theatre, the Theatre of Humour and Satire and the Opera and Ballet Theatre won prizes at national festivals. The choir of the Opera and Ballet Theatre won first place at the Bakhytzhan Baikadamov national contest. Its artists successfully participate in international competitions. Soloist Aruna Kassymbekova won the Grand Prix at the International Competition in St. Petersburg and took second place at a festival in Italy. Yerlan Zhandarbay showed his skills by participating in Kazakhstan Culture Days in Vietnam and Belarus.

Shamshi Kaldyakov Oblast Philharmonic organised 176 concerts and concert tours last year in 15 districts and cities to reap a profit of 14 million tenge (US\$90

thousand). Last year, Shamshi Kaldyakov musicians Aida Zhurmanova (kobyz) and Nurbol Aliyev (dombra) presented Kazakhstan national art in 16 U.S. states as part of the Golden Gates Project.

Singers and dancers of the Philharmonic participate in national events and shows. Thus, the Kazyna ensemble is the winner of the folk dance contest Baik, which is held in Ufa. This choreographic team worthily represented the region at the national television competition *Ayymaqtar Alamany* in Astana. The jury and famous artists highly appreciated their art and expressed gratitude to the oblast akim (governor). Then, the idea to open a theatre of dance was advanced. However, it should be mentioned that this idea had long been under consideration, because choreography is well developed in the region.

Oblast museums also cooperate on the international level; this promotes Kazakhstan's image and heritage.

There are 1,217 historical, cultural and architectural monuments in the oblast. Last year, 17 objects were discovered and presented to

the public. We submitted paperwork to the regional government on getting 100 of these monuments added to state monument registers.

Last year, 229 travelling exhibitions were organised by 24 museums and two art galleries. As a result, museums were replenished with more than five thousands new exhibits.

Regional museums began to cooperate with their foreign counterparts. In 2013, the oblast historical museum participated in numerous exhibits in Germany and participated in an international exhibition in Ukraine.

Also last year, the first scientific expedition was organised to the Tanbaly Tas in the Suzak district where 122 artefacts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were found, including tools made of stone.

The President, in his state-of-the-nation address, called for the creation of a long-term plan for cultural policy. Do you have any proposals for it?

In the state-of-the-nation address, culture received special attention. We have many causes and projects. One of them is issuing disks of and books on mellow folk music and kyuys from the auls (villages). During special expeditions, about 300 of these traditional songs were collected.

COUNTRY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Government Approves Long-Term Waste Management Plan



Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov (centre) chairs a government meeting in Astana.

By Rysty Alibekova

ASTANA – The government approved a programme for the modernisation of solid waste management for 2014-2050 at a meeting chaired by Kazakhstan Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov on Jan. 28.

The amount of municipal solid waste across the country is growing. Currently, municipal waste is placed in landfills without pre-sorting or neutralisation. Most landfills do not meet sanitation requirements and need remediation. In addition, waste is not systematically sorted at its origin at this time. The status quo is in dire need of reform.

Minister of Environment and Water Resources Nurlan Kapparov said about 500,000 tonnes of paper and cardboard, 300,000 tonnes of glass, 200,000 tonnes of metal and 500,000 tonnes of plastic are disposed of as trash per year in Kazakhstan.

Kapparov said that the programme will bring quality waste management and that it will make the waste management sector very attractive to private investors while still maintaining the principles and foundations needed to build a green economy.

The project's main goal is to increase the number of waste collection trucks in hopes of increasing trash collection coverage. Also, biodegradable waste, waste packages and hazardous materials will be collected separately. Landfill capacity will be increased 100 percent by 2050.

The programme is divided into three parts and will be completed in 2050.

"These phases are laid out in the Kazakhstan 2050 strategy and the Path to a Green Economy," Kapparov said.

He also announced plans to establish a single centre for waste management using subsidies from Damu Zhasyl, a company run by the Ministry.

During the discussion, Minister of Economy and Budget Planning Yerbolat Dossayev expressed his opinion on refocusing efforts to improve solid waste disposal. The state provides support measures at the initial stage that divide responsibilities between the state and private business. The minister noted that in this sector of the economy, it would be more efficient to use public-private partnerships. Much depends on the doings of local executive bodies, however, and how they go about building waste management plants and choose to collect garbage.

The head of government suggested a united vertical system for waste collection. According to him, the desired results will not be achieved if factories are constructed separately and containers and garbage trucks are separately purchased.

"All legal and regulatory frameworks should be amended to accommodate a vertically integrated system. This is the favoured method of waste collection in Western

countries. This is the only way forward," said Akhmetov.

Summing up the meeting, the prime minister proposed that the suggested approaches be approved. He recalled that two years ago at a government meeting, the head of state had asked for solid waste collection reform. Foreign experts helped study the related issues. The government recently adopted a related programme. Akhmetov instructed the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources to submit a government draft resolution to the prime minister's office.

Akhmetov said that funds for the programme were designated by the initial plan. Pilot projects implemented in the cities of Aktau and Karaganda are taking shape. The head of government charged the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, the Ministry of Regional Development, the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning and regional deputy akims (governors) with monitoring the projects in Aktau and Karaganda.

Ministry Presents Plan to Combat Climate Change

By Guliyam Tulesheva

ASTANA – The Kazakhstan Climate Change Control Programme (KCCCP) was presented in Astana at a recent international climate change conference attended by representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, diplomatic staff of the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan and representatives of USAID.

Speakers noted that the problem of climate change is global and combating it requires a comprehensive approach. So the three-year Kazakhstan programme to reduce greenhouse gases will be implemented in conjunction with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

According to Gulmira Sergazina, director of the department of low-carbon development of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, the diversification of Kazakhstan's economy, implemented within the State Programme of Industrial and Innovative Development (SPIID) in 2010-2014, will allow Kazakhstan to plan for greenhouse gas reductions beginning in 2015.

"In the Strategic Plan for 2011-2015, the ministry sets the goal to create conditions for the forma-



Minister of Environment and Water Resources Nurlan Kapparov

tion of principles of green economy primarily through public campaigns, training workshops for subsoil users, the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies, as well as through promotion of energy efficiency and energy saving," Sergazina said.

Head of the USAID office in Astana Nils Bergeson called the programme another contribution to the partnership between Kazakhstan and the United States. The programme seeks to control greenhouse gas emissions and improve the energy efficiency of Kazakhstan-based enterprises.

That partnership includes a willingness of American energy conservation and climate change experts to share their knowledge and experience with their counterparts in Kazakhstan.

Immunodeficiency Drugs to Be Produced in Akmola Region

By Chengis Tashenov

AKMOLA REGION – The Project on Technologies' Commercialisation of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan with the support of the World Bank and the Government of Kazakhstan has launched a project to produce in the Akmola region the generic form of im-

ported drugs to treat immunodeficiency.

The project will include the production of recombinant proteins with immune system stimulating and antiviral activity and be led by candidate of biological sciences Oleg Ten in Stepanogorsk. The project will be implemented with the help of a team of scientists from the National Centre for Biotechnologies. The project is currently still in the planning stages.

New Wound-Dressing Technology Invented in Astana

By Azamat Sydykbayev

ASTANA – A new method of producing biological dressings for wounds has been invented in Astana.

Healing long-term open wounds, trophic ulcers and other skin injuries has long been a difficult problem. About 10,000 people in Kazakhstan suffer from skin lesions, including burns (burns account for 3.5 percent of all injuries). Global medical practice for some time has been to use various types of natural biological dressings made of animal or human tissue to protect large-scale skin injuries. The dressings serve as a temporary cover for the wound, creating the conditions for healing and skin regeneration.

The main advantage of the conventional biological coatings over gauze bandages is their ability to retain moisture and other vital elements of healing. A significant drawback of these dressings is their high cost, both in obtaining the raw materials and in creating the final product.

In some countries, particularly in Australia, temporary biological wound coverings are made from the tissues of unborn calves, but this process is labour intensive and expensive. Specialists of the National Scientific Centre of Emergency Aid in cooperation with the National Centre for Biotechnology have developed a

totally new way to clean the surface of the abdominal membrane of cattle so it can be used as a wound dressing.

"From year to year, we are working on the development of

new techniques and technologies that help in the treatment of extensive skin lesions. Not so long ago, we began to use allogeneic transplantation [transplants using other human tissue]. When treat-

ing wounds, we transplant cultured skin cells: embryonic fibroblasts, which are powerful stimulators of healing. This method improves the results of skin plastic surgery: the wound is completely eliminated

or at least substantially reduced in size," said head of one of the centre's departments Kabylbek Abugaliyev.

"But we decided to go even further. The essence of our develop-

ment is the cultivation of cells on the surface of cattle tissues. In other words, we take the film from the surface of the abdominal muscles of cattle and remove all animal cells, leaving only the collagen matrix, which in all mammals has a homogeneous structure. Then we grow skin cells on the surface of this collagen and perform the transplant," he continued.

After the completion of laboratory and clinical tests, it is planned to launch production of these new biological dressings for widespread use in clinical practice.

The purification method developed by Abugaliyev and his colleagues at the National Centre for Biotechnology allows unwanted cells to be purged completely and the membrane to be used along with elements of silver and povidone-iodine, which accelerate the regeneration of skin cells.

In the future, after the completion of laboratory and clinical tests, it is planned to launch production of these new biological dressings for widespread use in clinical practice.



SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Karachaganak Operator Contributing to Regional Social Development

By Lyudmila Korina

WEST KAZAKHSTAN REGION – The huge Karachaganak oil and gas field is one of the West Kazakhstan region's most significant sources of wealth, and the Karachaganak Petroleum Operating B.V. (KPO) operating it is contributing significantly to the social reconstruction of the region, as evidenced by numerous industry awards and recognitions at the highest level. Regional priorities for social support are the health care, education and culture spheres, as well as infrastructure and sport, so KPO is directing its social investment there.

At the end of 2013, KPO received the silver award for best social project in the Parыз national contest for social responsibility. In the regional centre, Uralak, KPO built a secondary school for 1,200 children. This modern educational institution, meeting international standards, has five blocks with a total area of 15,000 square metres that include 48 classrooms, computer and language rooms, workshops, classrooms for military education and training, a sport complex, a library, a dining room and a medical station.

"This award is a certificate of appreciation of our company's contribution to sustainable development in the region. Successful implementation of social projects is possible due to our fruitful co-operation and partnership with the West Kazakhstan regional authorities," KPO General Director Damiano Ratti said.

Regional Deputy Governor Marat Karimov said that thanks to the companies working at the Karachaganak oil and gas field, 13 medical institutions, six gasification facilities and 17 schools have been built in the region. Previously, the KPO allocated \$10 million annually for this type of infrastructure; now this amount has reached



KPO's social investments are directed at social support, including health care, education, culture, as well as infrastructure and sport.

\$20 million per year. KPO also contributes to the development of sport in the region and has allocated funds for the repair and reconstruction of several stadiums.

Their first large-scale sport project, put into operation in 2001, was an ice palace. The 1,800 square metre arena, the largest in the region, holds a gym and fitness rooms, a summer tennis court and a mini soccer field. The palace can hold 1,300 visitors and is

designed to be converted into an exhibition and forum hall when necessary. The ice palace regularly hosts national and international competitions in power sports. In the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays, the palace is full of children and adults. In addition, a Children and Youth Sports School with figure skating, short track skating, ice hockey and weightlifting facilities was opened in the oblast centre.

KPO's swimming pool, built in 2005, was another major social contribution. Currently, more than 400 students are training at the Children and Youth Sports School of Aquatics based at the pool. Among the school's students are champions of national and international competitions. Students at the Nazarbayev Intellectual School and nearby secondary schools, people with disabilities and veterans visit the pool regularly. KPO is

now planning the construction of a tennis facility, and building will begin soon on four indoor and four outdoor courts. Also planned is a 200-seat cultural hall in Sulykol village, Karatobe district.

Only local companies are involved in the implementation of social projects, and special attention is paid to compliance with safety regulations. The quality of building materials is strictly controlled, as meeting international

standards is a major requirement of the social projects.

Other regional buildings funded and repaired by KPO include the Kazakh Drama Theatre, the Palace of Ceremonies, the Children's Village, the Regional Philharmonic and the Ostrovsky Russian Drama Theatre, as well as social projects in Akсай city where the Karachaganak field is located. Health improvement projects also make up a significant portion of the company's social projects.

UNDP, Government Collaborate on Energy-Efficient Lighting Project

Continued from Page B1

At the moment, more people are using energy-efficient lamps and we need to show them what to do with them after they burn out because these lamps contain mercury and are very dangerous when not properly used. With our project, a joint pilot project with the Astana akimat (city administration) was created to promote these schemes of utilisation. The akimat bought containers and we also held an informational campaign [and] filmed a video, which is broadcast on the state TV channels.

The second component is the development of a market for energy-efficient lighting by increasing the access of market participants to energy efficient technologies, which may involve discount and coupon programmes. Within this component, we show the population the advantages of energy-efficient lamps. ... This year, we want to hold a comprehensive programme, create a discount programme and introduce pilot events with producers and supermarkets.

The third component is increasing awareness of and interest in energy-efficient lighting among consumers. Within this component we are developing video ads and handouts. We plan to organise big events this year, like campaigns and flash mobs, to increase the level of awareness about energy-efficient lighting.

The fourth component is the launch of a number of pilot projects showing the practical implementation and commercial benefits of the project.

In 2013, we ran a project introducing energy efficient lighting in schools

in the Akmolа and East Kazakhstan regions. The akimats provided us with information on schools and co-financed the project, and the effect was very good. ... We changed the lighting system in schools there and children could better see the board even from the back desks. The quality of lighting increased. [Chair of the Mazhilis Committee on Social and Cultural Development] Dariga Nazarbayeva took part in the presentation of our pilot project in Vyacheslavskaya school, Akmolа region, ...

Akmolа region Akim (Governor) Kosman Aitmukhambetov asked us to provide information about how these innovations correspond to sanitary rules and norms. He plans to introduce such lighting in Kokshetau schools.

This year we plan to work on street lighting. We will show how to illuminate streets; we already have streets lighted with light-diode lighting in Astana. We also choose one regional centre, one small city and one rural area. We don't take into account Astana and Almaty because these cities are very well lighted.

How do you choose the areas to introduce energy-efficient lighting?

We have certain criteria: we need co-financing, we don't need modern equipment, ... and we also need the support of akimats.

We have a special working group to choose the areas, [which includes] representatives of Kazakhstan's communal housing services, the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources and the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies.

The project is not only implemented by the UNDP and the

Ministry of Industry and New Technologies—as akimats support us a lot. Without the support of akimats, our activities would not work.

Taking into account the example of lighting school, the Ayazak district akimat [in East Kazakhstan region] funded itself lighting of a street children take to go to a local school. Neighbouring districts also saw this positive example and allocated this year the money from the budget funds for this programme.

Who is financing the project?

It is financed by the Global Environmental Facility through the UNDP. When we talk about financing, we mean that we help create institutional frameworks. We could buy lamps, but we believe it's more efficient to create a system to show how effective they will be. Kazakhstan has its own funds. We need to show where to allocate the funds.

At what stage is the project right now?

We have analysed the existing regulations and what needs to be done in terms of norms and rules and standards and this year we will implement our results. This year, we will introduce eight standards for light-diode lighting ... We are also working with other countries within the Customs Union so our norms can be taken into account in the customs regulations and will be legitimate for all three countries [Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus]. Two years ago, when we started writing amendments, we had no factories for producing light-diode lamps; currently we have about 18 factories and workshops. This

is quickly developing, so we also need to take into account the interests of our producers.

We are creating requirements for the supply of goods because currently there are none regarding lamps—they are just supplied. In order to check the quality, we plan to open a testing laboratory, which will issue certificates.

Who is involved in writing bills?

We have a working group;

we've hired specialists in this field, experts on sanitary norms and rules. We hire companies that do analysis; we hold tender and the most experienced company wins. The tender system in the UNDP is not based on the lowest price, but according to experience. We also have international best practice experts.

Who controls the introduction of new technologies on the ground?

We monitor the lighting, conduct social research and control the level of lighting.

What will happen once the project is completed?

We plan to create such conditions by 2016 that the work we are doing now will continue without our participation. When the project finishes, it will work in all the spheres. The work will be based on regulatory documents we are elaborating now.



A worker installs energy-efficient lighting at a school in Akmolа region's Vyacheslavka village.

NATION&CAPITAL
TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Kazakhstan Display Named "Most Authentic" at Turkish Tourism Fair

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – At the 18th Annual East Mediterranean International Tourism and Travel Exhibition (EMITT) on Jan. 30 to Feb. 2, Kazakhstan's display, "Kazakhstan: The Land of Wonders," was named "Most Authentic."

The Committee of Tourism of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of Kazakhstan, headed by Chairman Marat Igali, along with delegations from Astana, Almaty, southern Kazakhstan, the Zhambyl region and the western regions of Atyrau and Mangystau, presented Kazakhstan's display.

Kazakhstan was represented by musicians in traditional Kazakh costumes playing the national musical instruments dombra, shankobyz, sazsymai, daulpaz, sousyldyr and artisans who offered classes on making felt crafts.

The Kazakh delegation also unveiled plans for the development of EXPO 2017, one of the major international exhibitions to be hosted by Kazakhstan in 2017. The plans include new tourism-related services in Kazakhstan.

During the visit, the Kazakh delegation signed several agreements with large Turkish companies specialising in promoting medical tourism.

"Healthcare and medical insurance are very developed in Turkey," a head of division at the Committee of Tourism Industry Renatolla Edil stated. "We have signed several agreements with large Turkish companies. In the future, they're planning to take part in extended meetings in our



The "Kazakhstan: The Land of Wonders" stand presented at the 18th East Mediterranean International Tourism and Travel Exhibition (EMITT).

ministries. They would like to help Kazakhstan develop medical tourism," Edil said.

Turkey hosted over 600,000

medical tourists in 2013 and that number is increasing every season. The newly renovated medical centres equipped with the

latest technology offer treatment at more affordable prices than in Europe. This same concept could be applied to Kazakhstan.

In 2013, the exhibition attracted 58,920 tourism professionals and 72,080 visitors from 67 countries. Those participants included some

of Turkey's top travel agencies. This year, the event attracted more than 150,000 participants and visitors.

Air Ballooning Service Opens in South

By Lyubov Dobrota

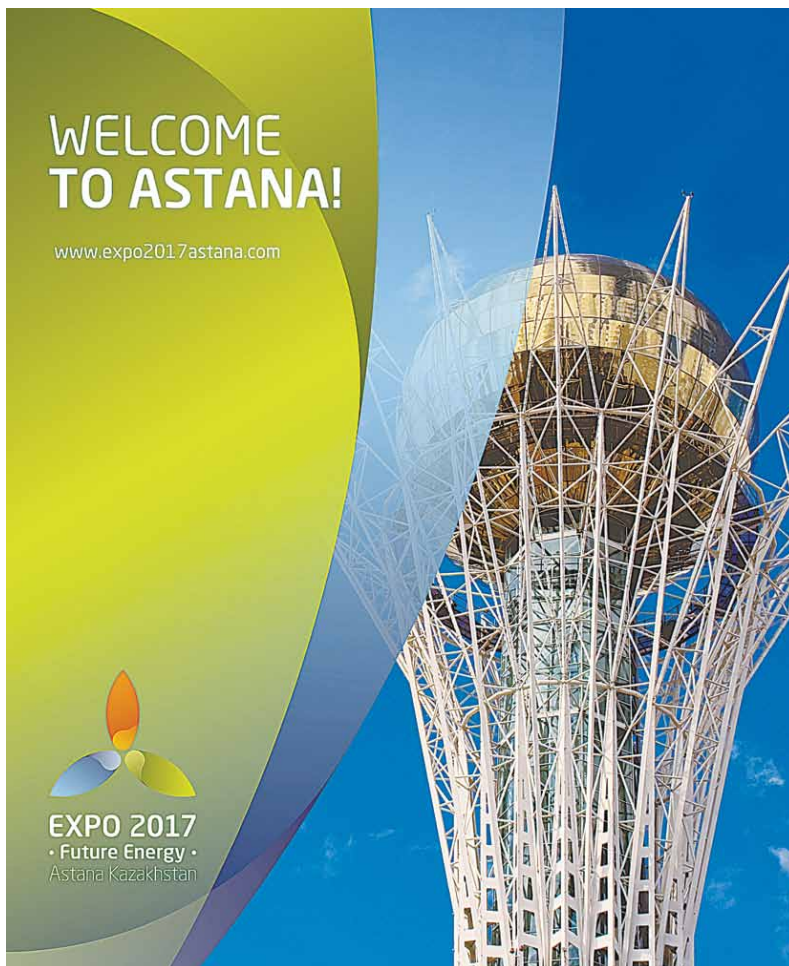
SHYMKENT – Residents and visitors to southern Kazakhstan now have the opportunity to soar over the region in a hot air balloon.

Local businessman Akhmet Daulenbaev is now offering the service for 1,000 tenge (US\$6.4) in a balloon he assembled from components ordered from Russia and France. Opening the service is a fulfillment of a childhood dream

and there is already a waiting list for rides.

The basket is not allowed to fly more than 150 metres high, but it is high enough to admire the region's landscape. The basket can hold up to four people and each flight is required to include a trained pilot navigator.

Those who have had the opportunity to fly in the balloon describe it as an amazing and unforgettable experience. And Daulenbaev is sure the service will become even more popular in the spring.



SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

As Olympics Progress, Kazakh Athletes Participate, Still Hoping for Medals



Mogul: In a tough competition, Dmitry Reiherd was placed fifth receiving so far the best result for Kazakh athletes letting only the athletes from Canada, USA and Russia ahead.

Speed skating: Roman Krech came in ninth in his first run for 500 metres, and eventually improved his positions to the seventh, 0.73 seconds behind the winner Michel Mulder of the Netherlands.

Short trek: In qualification for the 1500 metre race, Denis Nikishin and Aidar Bekzhanov got fourth and sixth places and didn't advance. Inna Semyonova also failed to advance showing fourth time on a 500 metre trek.

Biathlon: In a 12.5 km race Yan Savitsky and Sergei Naumik finished 29th and 58th respectively.

Luge: Yelizaveta Axenova finished 29th.



Country Wins Bronze at Bandy World Championships

By Alex Lee

Kazakhstan defeated Finland 5:3 to win the country's fifth bronze medal in history in Bandy World Championships. This year's championship took place from Jan. 26 through Feb. 2 in the Russian cities of Irkutsk and Shelekhov.

Seventeen countries, including

Kazakhstan, participated in the championship.

Kazakhstan captured the bronze by winning three of six games. They beat Finland twice, once in the group stage (7:3) and in the game for the bronze (5:3), and they defeated the United States (11:3) in the quarterfinal round. The Kazakh team also lost once to Russia (1:10) and twice to Sweden, once

in the group stage (2:11) and once in the semifinal round (3:4).

Russia defeated Sweden 3:2 to take the world championship for the second consecutive time.

Kazakhstan has previously won the bronze at the Bandy championships in Russia in 2003 and 2005, in Kazakhstan in 2012 and in a championship held jointly in Sweden and Norway in 2013.



Team Kazakhstan defeated Finland winning the country's fifth bronze medal in the history of Bandy World Championships.

Kazakhstan Beats Belgium, Advances to Davis Cup Quarterfinal against Switzerland

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – In the first round of the Davis Cup, Kazakhstan upset Belgium 3-2 at Astana's National Tennis Centre on Feb. 2 to advance to the quarterfinals which will also take place in Astana in April.

Andrey Golubev, who has an ATP ranking of 87, clinched Kazakhstan's victory by beating Belgium's Ruben Bemelmans (161).

Kazakhstan led Belgium 2-0 after the first two matches, which saw Mikhail Kukushkin beat Ruben Bemelmans 6-4, 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-3 and Golubev defeat David Goffin 7-6 (9), 3-6, 4-6, 6-2, 12-10.

However, the Belgian guests managed to come back, taking the doubles match 6-2, 6-7 (7), 6-3, 7-4 (7). Belgium's top player, Goffin (108), also beat Kazakhstan's top player Kukushkin (59), keeping Belgium's chances alive with his three-hour, 16-minute win over Kukushkin. He controlled the fifth set, taking nearly two-thirds of the points with 22 winners among his 31 points won. Goffin was on the court for nearly eight hours in his two matches this weekend.

In the decisive match between Golubev and Bemelmans on Sunday, Feb. 2, with the score 2-2, the atmosphere was tense.

Showing no ill effects from the 4.5-hour battle against Goffin on Friday, Golubev beat Bemelmans

6-2, 6-3, 6-1 to claim the series.

Sunday was a much shorter appearance for Golubev as he took out Bemelmans in one hour, 39 minutes. He finished off the match with a break—his sixth of the day—and won his third try at match point.

Golubev won 73 percent of points on serve and didn't face a break point after the first set. He won 80 percent of the points when he landed his first serve. He was 5-of-6 in break points until the final game, when Bemelmans fought off two match points before Golubev finally won.

The Kazakhs advance to the Davis Cup quarterfinals in April

against Switzerland, which won the first three matches of its series this weekend against Serbia.

Upon learning the news of Kazakhstan's becoming Switzerland's opponent in the semifinals, Roger Federer, one of the world's top players ranked at the eighth position currently, wrote a tongue-in-cheek comment in his Twitter account: "Joining my friends, captain Seve and STAN against Kazakhstan in April!"

'STAN' means Stanislas Wawrinka who beat Rafael Nadal in Australian Open's final in January 2014 to take the title and the world's third rank along with it.



Kazakhstan's victory over Belgium at Davis Cup did not come easy.

Golovkin Retains Title, Extends KO Streak with TKO Over Adama

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – Kazakh professional boxer Gennady Golovkin retained his WBA and IBO middleweight titles and extended his winning streak to 29-0 with 26 knockouts by defeating Ghana's Osumanu Adama (now 22 wins, 4 defeats) in seven rounds in Monaco on February 1. Adama became Golovkin's 16th back-to-back KO.

It was predicted that Adama would need a miracle to beat Golovkin, and from the first seconds of the round, hope for this miracle faded. The centre was quickly taken over by the Kazakh, leaving no chance for Adama, who ran to the corners for shelter.

At the end of round one, Adama went down and the referee began a

count. In round two, Adama came back strong, but the match began to look like a game of cat and mouse. Golovkin was looking to knock Adama out, throwing power punches that eventually floored him again in round six.

Judging from his expression, Adama wasn't eager to begin the seventh, and as it turned out, final round. Golovkin almost dropped him a third time with a powerful jab and referee Luis Pabon stepped in to stop the fight.

In the past two years, Golovkin has gone from unknown to celebrated. In his earlier bouts, the boxer was underestimated, accused of choosing only opponents he knew he could knock out.

In June 2013, he triumphed over Matthew Macklin of the U.K., then

American Curtis Stevens in November. Neither time was Golovkin favoured to win; both fights ended with a knockout. Macklin even needed medical attention and eventually reported broken ribs after a left hook to his liver. Stevens started rough against Golovkin but couldn't outbox him and went down in round two in a fight that was stopped by his corner in round eight.

After every fight, Golovkin says he'll face anyone. He's particularly interested in getting into a ring with some of the top pound-for-pound boxers, like Floyd Mayweather, but that idea has so far been turned down by Mayweather's camp. A more likely opponent is American super middleweight Andre Ward, who seems ready to face Golovkin.



Gennady 'GGG' Golovkin has been easily defeating anyone who is willing to get into the ring with him.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014

Abu Dhabi Plaza Construction on Schedule for EXPO 2017



The Abu Dhabi Plaza multifunctional complex is set to become the tallest building in Central Asia.

By Ruliyu Ospanova

ASTANA – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Issekeshov on Jan. 29 held a meeting on the Abu Dhabi Plaza project, which is implemented under the agreement of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev with the leadership of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The meeting discussed the work plan for 2014 for the construction of the project to be completed by the end of 2016

in time for Astana's hosting of EXPO 2017.

The Abu Dhabi Plaza multifunctional complex, which is set to become the tallest building in Central Asia, is fully funded by investors from the UAE to the tune of \$1.6 billion. It is a matrix of buildings with a retail and leisure area and a hotel cluster at the base that rises to form a series of office and residential towers, creating a new landmark on Astana's skyline. So far a deep foundation area of 858 auger piles have been set and construction and installation of rein-

forced concrete structures has been completed.

Construction on the next residential, office, retail and hotel towers is also set to begin any day. The foundation of a separate tower is already under construction. Temporary frost protection housing has been set up to allow work to continue during winter.

Issekeshov has offered to investors to hold a conference in February to present the project and to invite local potential suppliers of goods and services.

"We need to involve in the con-

struction of Abu Dhabi Plaza local companies to the maximum," Issekeshov said.

"The head of state in his state-of-the-nation address underlined that we need to support business in Kazakhstan. Besides, the development of the domestic construction industry is one of the State Programme of Industrial and Innovative Development (SPIID) priorities. The policy of increasing local content is an effective tool to support our entrepreneurs. We must take all measures to implement the President's instructions," he concluded.



To date, this is the first complex in Kazakhstan being built on the principles of advanced energy technology and environmental considerations. It is the most complex of all such facilities in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and it's the first multifunctional complex to combine business, housing and entertainment.

According to the Chairman of the Board of Aldar Properties Abubaker Seddiq Al Khoori, in 2014, construction of the complex will employ about 7,000 people who will work in two shifts. Currently, up to 1,000 workers are employed at the construction site.

Arabtech Holding PJSC (ARTC) has won the tender for construction of the 88-storey Abu Dhabi Plaza complex in Astana, Bloomberg reported in June 2013.

According to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, the agreement was signed by Albert Rau, First Vice Minister of Industry and New Technologies, and Sergei Khoroshun, Vice Akim (Mayor) of Astana, and Roger Goudry, Country Director – Kazakhstan, Aldar Properties PJSC, Abu Dhabi.

Fryday Events Continue to Connect Astana Professionals

Continued from Page B1

According to Mustafina, finding a suitable location with an appealing interior and such details as good parking are key. She admits

that sometimes cooperating with restaurants in Astana is a challenge, as "not everyone understands the need of brand recognition and PR. If they own a business [with a somewhat] recognisable

name, they do not feel the need to promote it, the same goes for services unfortunately," she said.

Mustafina went on to list some of the factors that reflect on the events.

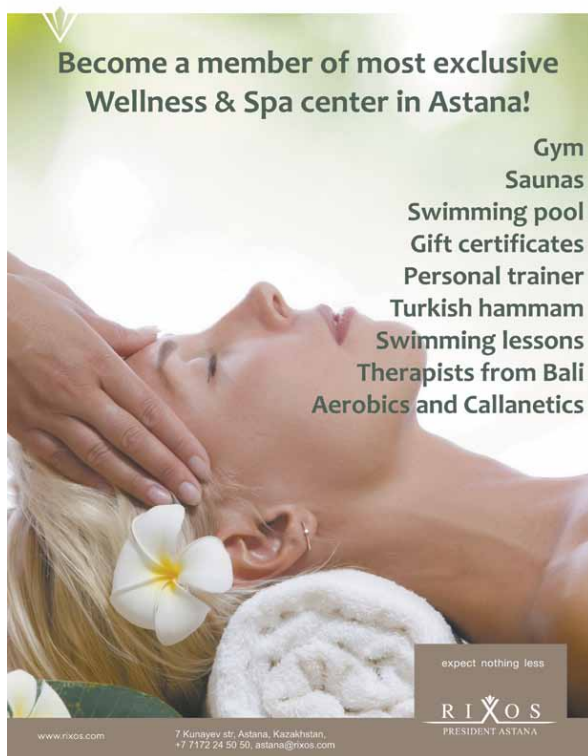
"First of all, we are pioneering these types of events in Astana. There may have been such events in the past in Astana, but they were closed and overly formal. Secondly, our events have an air of freedom, we don't have long presentations, speeches or programmes 'You come when you please and leave when you so desire.' Thirdly, the guests themselves create the atmosphere with assistance from the atmosphere of the venue. The fourth factor is that we offer a social platform for informal socializing. One person can simply walk up to another and offer a business card and start a conversation. Fifth, is our Fryday W events [on Wednesdays] which have a business focus; they help guests interact and discover new things both professionally and personally. Many have liked this type of gathering and we are planning to further expand them by inviting high caliber speakers. The sixth factor is that many networking events target ex-patriots; we target locals, but also welcome foreigners. The ratio of locals to foreigners is about 80 to 20 percent," Mustafina explained.

The next event will be held on Feb. 28 and will most likely be dedicated to International Women's day on March 8.



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