



SCO Presidents Urge Cooperation in Transit, Infrastructure, Counter-Terrorism



Presidents of the six member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation - China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan - are joined for a group photo by the leaders of Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan as well as the foreign minister of Iran and representatives of numerous international organisations who are SCO observers and partners for dialogue.

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Tashkent to participate in a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), where discussions focused on cooperating to counter terrorism and the flow of illegal drugs and to support regional development. The summit marked the organisation's 15th anniversary. Nazarbayev, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Kyrgyz President Almaz-

bek Atambayev, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon joined the host Uzbek President Islam Karimov for the June 24 summit.

The sides discussed concrete steps to develop cooperation in priority spheres including security, counterterrorism, and economic and humanitarian ties. The summit concluded with the adoption of the Tashkent Declaration, the approval of the 2016–2020 Action Plan for the SCO Development Strategy,

and the signing of a package of other documents.

Nazarbayev noted that the jubilee summit was held amidst global challenges and threats.

According to him, the SCO's response could be the effective implementation of the Cooperation Programme in the fight against the "three evil forces" for 2016–2018.

"We propose to develop and adopt a statement on the SCO's joint counteraction against inter-

national terrorism. A further step is the adoption of the convention on the fight against extremism. It is important to note that religious extremism is not identified with peace-loving Islam and other religions," Nazarbayev said, noting that his country had recently initiated the high-level dialogue, "Religions for Peace," under the auspices of the UN in New York and held the international "Religions against Terrorism" conference in Astana.

Continued on Page A3

In Historic Win, Kazakhstan Elected for UN Security Council for 2017-2018

By Galiaskar Seitzhan

NEW YORK – After a gruelling six-year campaign, which took its leaders and diplomats and introduced Kazakhstan to far flung corners of the world, from Europe to the Pacific Islands, from Africa to Latin America, Kazakhstan won the right to sit on the United Nations Security Council in 2017-2018.

In the second round of voting by the UN General Assembly here on June 28, Kazakhstan was elected from the Asian-Pacific group, receiving 138 votes, which is more than two thirds of the UN member states needed for the win.

For the first time Kazakhstan has declared his candidacy for non-permanent members of the UN Security Council in June 2010. Since then, the Kazakh diplomats have made consistent efforts to bring to the international community practical content and validity of the country's bid, and obtain support from the widest possible range of UN member states.

Kazakhstan put forward four priorities for its future work in the UN Security Council: nuclear, energy, water and food security. Advancing



Nameplate for Kazakhstan at the UN General Assembly hall is seen on June 28 during the vote count.

these priorities in the main body of multilateral diplomacy in the world, Kazakhstan intends to closely cooperate with all partners without exception, members in the Security Council and the UN as a whole, the country's diplomats have said earlier.

As a non-permanent UN Security Council member, Kazakhstan will also seek to represent the interests of the whole of Central Asia and intends to raise important issues for the region, the Kazakh diplomats added.

Kazakhstan will officially assume the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council on January 1, 2017 and will carry on until December 31, 2018.

Foreign Minister Highlights Prospective Tasks of Kazakh Diplomacy

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov presented detailed information about the current activities of the ministry and highlighted prospective tasks of Kazakh diplomacy in the international arena during his first formal meeting with the public held June 20 in the capital.

He emphasised that due to the country's dynamic development and peace-loving and active foreign policy of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan currently occupies strong positions in the world and enjoys respect among countries.

"Our country has rightfully become an established leader in the field of nuclear disarmament and an active moderator in the dialogue of cultures, religions and civilizations," said Idrissov.

Kazakhstan maintains diplomatic relations with 180 nations and has set the task to enter the list of 30 most developed countries.

"We build friendly, trustworthy relations and beneficial economic ties with large and small states in the east and west, north and south. We closely cooperate with Russia and China, the European Union (EU) is

our biggest trading partner, while the U.S. is the second biggest foreign investor after the EU. We are working on developing friendly, beneficial relations with our brotherly countries and closest neighbours in Central Asia. We are developing cooperation with key countries of the Arab world, Asia, Africa and Latin America," said the minister.

Developing a relationship with African countries is one of the newer, but at the same time important directions in Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

"Despite the geographic remoteness, we intend to develop beneficial relations with the region's countries. As of today, Kazakhstan has embassies in the South African Republic, Ethiopia and Egypt. Diplomatic relations with most of the continent's states were established. Today, the states of the African continent are involved more deeply in international economic and political processes," said Idrissov.

He added creating favourable external conditions for political, economic and social transformations inside the country and protecting national interests in an international arena were and remain the main priority of the ministry's work.

Continued on Page A2

President Nazarbayev Calls for Further Integration and International Cooperation



(L-R) CNN Host Fareed Zakaria, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi.

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Saint Petersburg, Russia to participate in the 20th International Economic Forum and hold a series of bilateral meetings.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi took part at the forum session "Capitalising on the New Global Economic Reality."

In his speech, Nazarbayev noted the world has lived in conditions of global crisis for several years, where people are experiencing a decrease in the quality of life, including the middle class in developed countries.

"The experts predict a record amount of capital outflow from developing markets up to \$450

billion in 2016. At the same time, the inflow of capital in the developed economies does not guarantee their further growth. The fall of prices on raw materials significantly reduced the revenues of exporting countries. It, in turn, intensified the deflationary pressure in importing countries. The income of absolutely all mining companies is rapidly declining. All lose. The governments and central banks become less able to revive economic activity," he said.

"Looking at the situation objectively, it can be understood that the global economy is not suffering from an excess of integration, but rather the lack of it," he said.

The President added a number of interstate integration bureaucratic frames have become a bar-

rier to national economies. He suggested the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), as the youngest interstate association, must take this risk into account. Disintegration and economic isolationism will not solve internal problems, he stated.

"The collaboration of economic spaces of the European Union and the EAEU has great potential for a breakthrough in the development of the entire Greater Eurasia and the world as a whole. I was and remain a strong supporter of this process. I constantly raise this issue at my meetings with European partners. I hope that the participation of many heads of major European companies and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker in this forum will bring the beginning of a direct

dialogue between the two unions," he said.

Nazarbayev emphasised close cooperation between the EAEU and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is another important direction. Speaking about Kazakhstan's economic initiatives, he invited investors from Russia and other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries to participate in the Astana International Financial Centre. He noted it will help create favourable conditions for the sustainable socio-economic development of the entire region.

The President added the world is facing the problem of uncontrollable external migration amid the worsening economic and political situation.

Continued on Page A3

Astana Prepares to Celebrate



See full story on Page B1.

INSIDE

NATION
Reshuffle in Kazakhstan: New Head of Presidential Administration, Mazhilis Speaker, Minister of Investment and Development, and Astana Mayor A2
Kazakhstan's Judicial Reforms on the Right Track, South Korean Chief Justice Says A2

ECONOMY&BUSINESS
Kazakh Government Says It Successfully Implemented 2015 National Budget A4
First Kazakh Business Channel Presents Live-Streaming Analysis and Breaking News A5

EDITORIALS
International Cooperation in Space Shows Ways Forward: A View from Kazakhstan A6
St. Petersburg Forum Helps Rebuild Trust, Develop EU-EAEU Dialogue A6

OPINIONS
FAIRFAX and NAPPER: Kazakhstan Can Help the United Nations A6
JIANWEI: 10 Years under the Flag of CICA A7

NATION&CAPITAL
Foreign Ministry Presents 'Kazakhstan – Land of the Great Steppe' App B1
Astana Art Fest 2016 Focuses on Local Artists, Encourages Digital Creativity B8

NATION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

Reshuffle in Kazakhstan: New Head of Presidential Administration, Mazhilis Speaker, Minister of Investment and Development, and Astana Mayor

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The Presidential Administration will have a new chief and Astana a new mayor and following a June 21 presidential decree on these and other personnel changes in the national and local government.

Former Akim (mayor) of Astana Adilbek Dzhaksybekov will now head the Presidential Administration; former head of the Presidential Administration Nurlan Nigmatullin is now a member of the Mazhilis (lower chamber of Parliament); former Minister of Investment and Development Asset Issekeshiev has been raised from first vice minister to minister of investment and development, according to the decrees signed by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on June 21.

Dzhaksybekov had been akim of Astana since October 2014. He has headed the Presidential Administration before, in 2004–2008, and has also served as secretary of state, defence minister, ambassador



Nurlan Nigmatullin

to Russia and minister of industry and trade. He was also Astana's first akim, from 1997–2003. Nigmatullin takes the place in the Mazhilis of Roman Sklyar, who was appointed deputy minister of national economy in May. Originally from the Karaganda region, Nigmatullin has served as deputy mayor of Astana, deputy minister of Transport and Communications, akim (governor) of Karaganda region and chairman of the Mazhilis. Nazarbayev has proposed him for speaker of the



Adilbek Dzhaksybekov

Mazhilis. On June 22, the deputies of the Mazhilis voted to elect Nigmatullin as their speaker.

Previous Speaker of the Mazhilis Bakhtykozha Izmukhambetov is now chairman of the Central Council of the Organisation of Veterans, a national public association. He retained his deputy mandate. Issekeshiev had served as minister of investment and development for two years. Originally from Uralsk, Issekeshiev worked at the Agency for Strategic Plan-



Asset Issekeshiev

ning and Reforms and the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning early in his career. In 2003, he was appointed deputy minister of industry and trade. He has also served as minister of industry and trade and deputy prime minister. In February 2015, he was appointed Investment Ombudsman.

Before his appointment as minister of investment and development, Kassymbek served as Issekeshiev's deputy. Born in Zhambyl region, Kassymbek started his career as



Zhenis Kassymbek

an intern researcher at the Kazakh Leading Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering and later worked at Temirbank. He served on the Kazakh Anti-monopoly Committee and in the Ministry of Transport and Communications, where he had earlier been appointed as a minister in March 2014.

The changes come as the country faces challenges of maintaining the growth rates in its economic development in the year of the 25th anniversary of independence.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

The bill to suspend certain provisions and amendments of the land code has been sent to the Senate. The document was reviewed in two separate readings and the decision to advance it was made by the members of a relevant committee. The bill suspends the actions of paragraphs associated with the provision for temporary land use by foreigners, Kazakh residents without citizenship and foreign companies.

Kazakhstan and Belarus are planning to share agricultural experience, reported Kazakh TV. Belarusian visitors who travelled to Almaty region showed interest in spring and winter crops, potatoes and local varieties of apples. Kazakh farmers were also interested in cooperating with their counterparts. Belarus has had good experience in cultivating sugar beets, rapeseed and various grains. Belarusians are members of the International Union, which protects plant breeders' rights and new plant varieties, an organisation which Kazakhstan is preparing to join.

The main sponsor of health insurance in Kazakhstan will be the state, as contributions from the treasury will cover more than half of the total population, reported Kazakh TV. The rate increase will be divided into stages, reaching up to 7 percent by 2024. Private entrepreneurs, as well as all who are self-employed, will have to pay a 7 percent fee to the insurance fund in three years. "We are now working with local authorities to identify the category among the population with the bodies of state income on tax amnesty," said medical services payment committee deputy chair Gulzhan Shaikhybekova. "But the state in the period up to 2020 has provided a guarantee for this category. They will benefit from free outpatient clinical care and pharmaceutical supplies, regardless of the fact that they do not have insurance, but by 2020 they should define the status." The experience of 57 countries, including the Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Russia, was taken into account during the development process. Employees will have a 2 percent deduction compared to Germany, for instance, where they pay 8 percent; the rates for private business are 7 percent in Kazakhstan and 15 percent in Germany.

Pavlodar school students will learn English during their summer holiday for free, reported the local media. More than 1,000 children are taking the courses. The project is implemented by an international public organisation with the support of the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science. "Our main goal is to instill the love for the English language in these kids. The programme will help them in the future when they enter high school," said Almas Ordabayev, one of the teachers.

Algebra and geometry will be combined into one subject starting in 2019, reported the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science. In all schools, students will study physics, computer science, chemistry and biology in English, world history in Russian and the history of Kazakhstan in Kazakh. In addition, the Ministry noted the transition to the English-language system will be flexible and suitable for students and teachers. Teachers will study English for four months a year for two and a-half years and the training will not negatively affect the educational process. The Ministry intends to spend 10 billion tenge (US\$29.8 million) annually for teachers' qualification courses. "Such expenditures are included in the state budget," said Ministry of Education and Science Department of Preschool and Secondary Education Director Zhanyl Zhontayeva. "And we want to remind teachers that training will be held according to the updated programme and at the expense of the government budget, not at teachers' personal expense. And teachers will not be overloaded at work because of the training."

Parliament Recommends Cutting Some Subsidies, Enhancing Tax, Other Administrative Efficiency

By Ainur Kuramyssova

ASTANA – The Parliament of Kazakhstan has recommended changing the Business Road Map 2020 programme to exclude subsidies for business entities engaged in the non-manufacturing sector, including wholesale and retail trade, real estate, and accommodation management in the recreation and entertainment sector, reported the press service of the Mazhilis, the lower chamber of Kazakhstan's Parliament.

During the June 17 joint session of both chambers, chaired by the Speaker of the Mazhilis Bakhtykozha Izmukhambetov, Parliament approved the governmental report on state budget implementation for 2015. In particular, revenues were 5.9 trillion tenge (US\$17.6 billion) and expenditures totalled 6.47 trillion tenge (US\$19.3 billion).

A thorough review of target indicators and other indicators in all

planning documents concerning the state planning system, in order to reflect outcomes and efficiency, was among other recommendations. Other suggestions covered creating measures to reduce the public debt, the level of external borrowing and debt in the quasi-public sector.

According to the report, the government should take steps to enhance the tax administration's efficiency to prevent future budget losses and provide mechanisms for the early detection of tax evasion and fictional companies. It was also stated that the government should provide preventive measures for cashing in funds and stimulate cashless transactions.

The document, adopted by both chambers, also considers issues in the development of a system for assessing the efficiency of the quasi-public sector. It is expected that special regulations will be developed to control state financing rates of the real economy through quasi-public sector entities and second level banks.

Foreign Minister Highlights Prospective Tasks of Kazakh Diplomacy

Continued from Page A1

Idrissov named the expanded Foreign Ministry meeting chaired by Nazarbayev Feb. 3 as a key event. The session reviewed the interim results of Kazakhstan's foreign ministry activity through 25 years of independence and laid new groundwork for further tasks on protecting and promoting the country's national interest on a worldwide scale.

"Since the beginning of 2016, Nursultan Nazarbayev has made eight visits abroad and received 21 heads of foreign states, governments and international organisations. A total of 19 international events and 39 bilateral visits have been conducted since the beginning of the year," he said.

The head of state tasked the Foreign Ministry with strengthening the work to attract foreign investment and technology within implementing industrial and innovative projects, the Nury Zhol programme, the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy and promoting exports to foreign markets.

The minister noted potential foreign investors from several coun-

tries will soon be able to receive the necessary consultations without leaving their nations.

"Together with the Ministry of Investment and Development, we will designate special investment advisors in Kazakhstan's embassies in 10 countries – the U.S., China, Japan, Germany, France, the U.K., Italy, South Korea, India and Iran. Each of these consuls will have the authority for working across the whole region," said Idrissov.

He added the front offices of Kaznex Invest, the national export and investment agency, will be opened in the world's five leading financial centres for on-site investors' quality support.

"These are [to be set up] in New York, Frankfurt, Dubai, Istanbul and Beijing. Thus despite the current global and regional financial and economic instability, we are building up efforts on attracting foreign investment aimed primarily at establishing new jobs and transferring technologies," he said.

Idrissov also talked about the priorities of developing bilateral relations between Kazakhstan's main international partners and

Russia, China, the U.S., EU countries, Central Asia, Turkey and the Arab and Asia Pacific regions.

Particular emphasis was given to developing partnerships with Central Asian countries.

"Cooperation with Kyrgyzstan is being held between the foreign ministries. Political consultations between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were held May 25 between the foreign ministries," he said.

Idrissov stressed the challenging trends of world political development, economics of the last years and realities of our day confirm the strategic importance of Kazakhstan's multi-vectored foreign policy.

A Kazakhstan Country of the Great Step mobile app was created by the ministry as part of the 100 Concrete Steps Plan of the Nation and was presented by Idrissov at the event held at the Kazakh Media Centre. It aims to present information about Kazakhstan in vivid and convenient form to a wide national and foreign audience. The app, is available for download from the AppStore, Play Market and on the ministry's website, www.mfa.gov.kz.

Kazakhstan's Judicial Reforms on the Right Track, South Korean Chief Justice Says

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Heads of the Supreme Courts of South Korea and Kazakhstan discussed reforms, cooperation and exchanging experience in a meeting June 24 in Astana.

Chief Justice of South Korea Yang Sung-tae and Chairman of Kazakhstan's Supreme Court Kairat Mami presented information on the development of the judicial systems in their countries.

Mami talked about current reforms that are part of the Plan of the Nation's 100 Concrete Steps programme, including the transformation to a three-level system of justice, increasing requirements for judge candidates, extending the powers of investigating judges and reducing the participation of prosecutors in civil proceedings, according to a press release on the meeting. He added that a specialised board on investment issues,



Chairman of Kazakhstan Supreme Court Kairat Mami (L) and Chief Justice of South Korea Yang Sung-tae.

an academy of justice and an international council had been created within the Kazakh Supreme Court.

Yang Sung-tae talked about the judicial system in his country, particularly about the application of information technologies in legal proceedings.

"Today, we found out about the reforms in the judicial system in Kazakhstan. In my opinion, the directions for the improvement and modernisation are chosen correctly," he said in an interview after the event.

Attention was given to using

electronic technologies in the justice system, a practice Kazakhstan is still working on.

"As you know, South Korea is one of the leaders in the IT industry. We were thinking about the need to informatise the judicial system in the 1980s. In the 1990s, we created it, and today 60 percent of legal proceedings take place in an electronic format and the number will increase. Also, according to World Bank data, South Korea has really good results in resolving economic disputes via our electronic system," Yang Sung-tae said about his country's experience.

Regarding the increase of requirements for judge candidates, a similar reform was implemented in South Korea five years ago. The number of years of experience required for judges increases every year, he said. By 2025, the required experience will be a minimum of 10 years. "If a judge has a lot of experience, people give him

their trust. So in that direction, Kazakhstan has also chosen the right path," he added.

Cooperation between Kazakhstan and South Korea started in 2000. "The chairmen of our Supreme Courts have met several times. Also, one of the judges of Kazakhstan's Supreme Court has participated in an educational programme in the Korean Court. Now he works in Kazakhstan and plays a big role in the development of the judicial system in his country and the cooperation between our countries," Yang Sung-tae noted.

Both countries are interested in further cooperation, he said.

"I hope that the cooperation between our two countries will continue and the exchange programme will be restored. The Korean Supreme Court thinks that international relationships with other courts are very important. We hope that in the future our relationships will become even stronger," he said.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

One hundred and thirty-seven Kazakh citizens won the annual Bolashak scholarship this June, it was announced at a recent meeting of the National Commission on Training Staff Abroad. In total, 216 candidates from different regions of the country participated in the international scholarship competition. According to President of the Bolashak Centre for International Programmes Gani Nygymetov, "There are various directions to take, like the engineering specialty – IT, geology, metallurgy, industrial engineers – all of them are in first place, followed by pedagogical and socio-humanities, economics, management and finance. Medicine is in third place."

Astana EXPO 2017 exhibition tickets are now available abroad, Kazakh TV reports. South Korean business woman Jeong Hee Woo was one of the first foreigners to purchase an e-ticket for the upcoming exhibition. The head of a diversified company, Woo has been interested in the international exhibition in Astana for a long time and regularly follows news about the expo. As she explained, she looks forward to the expo's opening, where she hopes to find partners for joint business projects in Kazakhstan.

"Kazakhstan is South Korea's strategic partner, and we can see the huge interest from other Korean companies. The exhibition's theme is future energy, green technology and we would like to work on the establishment of joint projects in the field of renewable energy. In addition, we are interested in railway projects of the New Silk Road."

Kazakhstan is one of the top five cheapest countries for living and travelling, according to a rating compiled by consumer spending portal Numbeo. Some 122 states were rated based on prices for about 50 goods and services, including food, rent, the average bill in restaurants, taxis and the cost of public transport, as well as entertainment, utility bills and mobile phone costs. India was rated the cheapest country for living; second and third places went to Moldova and Pakistan. Kazakhstan is in fourth place. The top 10 cheapest countries for living and travelling also include Nepal, Ukraine, Georgia, Algeria, Azerbaijan and Colombia. According to Numbeo, the most expensive travel destinations are Switzerland, Bermuda and the Bahamas. Earlier this year, Kazakhstan was also ranked among cheapest countries for living in the world by the U.S. financial portal GOBankingRates.

Graduate of the Kazakh-Turkish lycium from Shymkent Daulet Batyrkhan won Student of the Year for 2016 at the UNIST University in South Korea, tengrinews.kz reports. UNIST University is located in Ulsan, a South Korean city that is the home of Hyundai Motors, shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industries, the SK Energy petrochemical company and other industrial groups. UNIST was founded in 2009 and is South Korea's first independent national university. "UNIST is a warm and welcoming post-secondary institution located in the heart of Korea's largest industrial city, Ulsan, South Korea. Since its opening in 2009, UNIST has truly become one of world's leading science and technology universities. UNIST aims to be ranked within the top 10 science and technology universities by 2030," its website explains.

Minister of Investments and Development Zhenis Kassymbek stated that the Western Europe-Western China corridor will be fully commissioned in 2016. He highlighted that more than 2,000 kilometres of roads are already ready. The minister said works are being carried out on Almaty-Khorgos, Shymkent-Tashkent and the Shymkent-Zhambyl region's border sections. He added that the road from Khorgos to Kyzylorda will be repaired according to first category standards which help reduce the number of accidents.

Kazakh President Urges Reduced Tensions in the World, Nuclear Disarmament

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – The manifest "The World. The 21st Century" and his nation's moral right to advance such proposals was one of the topics addressed by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in a recent interview with TASS First Deputy General Director Mikhail Gusman.

"First, 26 years ago we made a tough decision to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Secondly, we made the same difficult choice to abandon a nuclear and missile arsenal that was located in Kazakhstan. I am not going to tell you how many people have suffered; an area equal to Belgium's size was contaminated [with radiation] because of tests at the Semipalatinsk test site and people in the third generation feel the consequences of the exposures. This was a problem [and] we were left alone," said Nazarbayev.

He maintained the trust between nuclear weapon countries has been declining because the world's combined inventory of nuclear warheads remains at a very high level.

"There are 15,000 nuclear warheads, of which almost 4,000 warheads are deployed with operational forces. Approximately 93 percent of all nuclear warheads are owned by Russia and the United States, who each have roughly 7,000 warheads in their military stockpiles. The other countries have the remaining 1,500 nuclear missiles. Weakening confidence causes colour revolutions. As a result, while a state is falling apart it turns into a hotbed of extremism," said the Kazakh leader.

Nazarbayev emphasised the



Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev (L) and TASS First Deputy General Director Mikhail Gusman.

manifest that he presented earlier this year has a very specific algorithm of steps that countries need to do to overcome their distrust of each other.

"It is necessary to raise the entire population of the globe, all people of good will and especially all parliaments, until it is not too late to address this issue," he said.

The head of state participated June 17 in the 20th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. Nazarbayev noted it was very important to meet with Russian business leaders to exchange views on investment opportunities in Kazakhstan and its achievements since the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

The President also spoke about his extensive meeting with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. They discussed regional and policy issues and concerns about ter-

rorism as well as the development of the EAEU and bilateral relations between the countries.

"Thus, I highly appreciated the event. We organised the Astana Economic Forum before this forum. They somehow complement each other," he said.

Gusman asked Nazarbayev about the prospects of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Kazakhstan's role in the group.

Recounting its history, the Kazakh leader emphasised the important role of the organisation on several fronts: the security of the region, economic and humanitarian cooperation and transport and logistics through SCO member countries.

"At a meeting in Ufa [in 2015], we agreed to adopt the SCO programme on combating terrorism that is very crucial. I proposed the creation of a free trade zone with

the Eurasian Economic Union and the SCO. It has been considered by member states and is supported by the Russian side. Today, we are taking a very important step towards admission of new members such as India and Pakistan. We also consider the joining of Iran," said Nazarbayev.

He added SCO's main goal is not to become an amorphous and bureaucratic organisation such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

"I believe that the CIS has a right to live. We agreed last time that we would reduce bureaucracy and meet once or twice a year to discuss feasible questions and make decisions. For instance, our military authorities exchange experiences and information with each other and conduct general security work in our territories. Therefore, the CIS can develop and become

a much more successful organisation as a platform for dialogue," said Nazarbayev.

Speaking about the relationship between Kazakhstan and Russia, he noted it is not necessary to compete with each other; the countries need to work together.

Gusman inquired about Kazakhstan's 100 Concrete Steps and which portions of the initiative have been enacted.

"All last year we worked hard to ensure the legal framework of these reforms. Together with the Parliament, our government has been working actively and get 59 laws passed to implement these reforms. During the first quarter of this year, 25 steps have already been implemented and started to work. I am determined to finish all 100 points," said the head of state.

The discussion also turned to the role of Astana as a moderator. The city hosted the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) summit for the first time in 11 years, it hosts the triennial Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, while the international exhibition EXPO 2017 will be held in the capital next year.

"This year, we want to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site and invite scientists, nuclear physicists and politicians to once again draw the attention of the world community to a very big threat to all humanity. Fifteen thousand nuclear warheads can destroy the entire planet multiple times. Nobody can think about it. We speak of an ecological catastrophe, global warming and so on. I believe that this is a very serious matter and everyone should be concerned with it," said Nazarbayev.

President Nazarbayev Calls for Further Integration and International Cooperation

Continued from Page A1

"According to the estimates of various international institutions, the total number of migrants fleeing from poverty and conflicts ranges from 40 to 60 million people," he said.

Nazarbayev used the opportunity to meet with United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. They discussed issues of cooperation and noted progress between Kazakhstan and the UN, as well as exchanged views on topical issues of the international agenda. Ban Ki-moon thanked the President for his personal

contribution and support of the organisation.

Nazarbayev conferred with Putin on a wide range of issues, including key areas of cooperation and developing integration processes within the EAEU.

The Kazakh President also held talks with its Guinean President Alpha Conde. Nazarbayev noted the huge distance between the two nations is not an obstacle for close cooperation. The sides discussed prospects of bilateral relations in political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres and a number of issues on the international agenda, including joint work

within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Nazarbayev also led a meeting with Russian business circles including companies such as AvtoVAZ, Efko, Eurochem, European Bearing Corporation, Lukoil, Polymetal, Russian Railways and Skolkovo. He underlined the potential for further cooperation, noting 6,000 enterprises with Russian participation operate successfully in Kazakhstan.

"At the moment, the formation of the necessary legislative framework of the EAEU is fully completed. There is a free movement of goods, services, capital

and labour. The most important thing is the free competitiveness of our producers in the union. The next step is formation of common markets of oil and gas, electricity, certain types of services and medicines," he said.

The President indicated Kazakhstan is concentrating on moving the country to a new level of investment attractiveness and combating crises.

"In 2015, we expanded the list of visa-free regimes for investors from 35 countries. In 2017, we plan to increase it up to 54 countries. Currently, 10 special economic zones (SEZ) operate in Ka-

zakhstan. They provide incentives in the form of exemption from the land tax, property tax and VAT (value-added tax) on goods consumed in the territory of the SEZ. Also, the rent of land is free of charge for up to 10 years," he said.

Nazarbayev met DP World Chairman and CEO Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, discussing the company's participation in developing the Khorgos-Eastern Gate SEZ and Aktau port. He also held talks with ExxonMobil President Rex Tillerson and Russian conglomerate AFK Chairman Sistema Vladimir Yevtushenkov regarding oil, gas, energy and investment issues.

SCO Presidents Urge Cooperation in Transit, Infrastructure, Counter-Terrorism

Continued from Page A1

The SCO heads of state agreed that "fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism in their all forms, [as well as] the illegal production and turnover of drugs; illegal trade in weapons, munition and explosives; and distribution of arms of mass destruction and means of their delivery will remain a priority task of cooperation in the organisation."

Nazarbayev also expressed support for the adoption of the SCO anti-drug strategy for 2017–2022 and its programme of action.

"The member states, expressing concern over the problem of international drugs, confirm their strict adherence to the line for keeping and improving the present international system of control over drugs, based on three major conventions of UN organisations," the Tashkent Declaration reads.

The Kazakh leader proposed a joint preventive action by the SCO and the Central Asian Regional In-

formation and Coordination Centre under the slogan, "Together against Drugs." According to the declaration, the SCO leaders "consider that it is important to unite efforts under the auspices of the UN founded on a complex and balanced approach in order to stop the global production of drugs, including the elimination of illegal plantations of drug-containing plants and their processing," the document reads.

The SCO leaders also witnessed the signing of memorandums on the procedures and timetable for India and Pakistan's accession to the SCO. "As India and Pakistan gain the status of member countries, the organisation's potential will be bigger by raising its role on the international arena as a multi-lateral mechanism for settling current problems and for providing security, stability and sustainable development in the region," participants said.

The member states emphasised the role of cooperation in energy and transport, including by creating

international transport corridors to connect Asia and Europe, joint infrastructure projects to expand economically attractive transport and communication opportunities and by generally trying to exploit the region's transit potential.

"Cooperation between SCO member states through transport and logistics points, the opening of economic borders of our countries and the revival of the Great Silk Road will bring Kazakhstan great benefits in the future," stressed Nazarbayev during a press briefing after the summit.

"Kazakhstan has already started the implementation of the Nurly Zhol infrastructure development programme, which is a distinct addition to the New Silk Road Economic Belt. It seems timely to use the potential of the Astana International Financial Centre, which aims to become a regional financial and investment hub with an independent legal system and a preferential tax regime. It is important to use the opportunities of the Asian In-

frastructure and Investment Bank to stimulate the macroeconomic development of the region. Deepening trade, economic, financial and investment cooperation will provide the necessary conditions for the creation in the future of a free trade zone within the SCO," Nazarbayev said.

Summit participants also supported the idea of having common rules for the behaviour of countries in the information space, and expressed their intention to develop cooperation in managing the internet.

In addition, the Kazakh President spoke about the main results of bilateral talks held within the framework of the event.

"During a meeting [with Xi Jinping], we discussed prospects for the creation of more than 50 joint ventures, which will have an important role in the industrialisation of our country. During talks with the President of Afghanistan, we spoke about the situation in the country. Today, Kazakhstan con-

tinues to assist in training Afghan students. About 150 professionals have returned to Afghanistan and will soon start to work. Each year, we take in our universities 50 people; this is our help to the Afghan economy," emphasised Nazarbayev.

He also announced that the next SCO summit will take place in Astana in June 2017. "With a great sense of responsibility Kazakhstan assumes the mission of chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation this year. We intend to continue the large-scale work carried out by the Uzbek side and contribute to the development and strengthening of the organisation, increasing its role and weight in the world," said Nazarbayev.

Leaders of Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan as well as the foreign minister of Iran and representatives of numerous international organisations participated in the side events of the summit as observers and partners for dialogue.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

Kazakh Government Says It Successfully Implemented 2015 National Budget

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – The June 17 joint session of Parliament's upper and lower chambers reviewed and approved the government report on the successful execution of the 2015 national budget.

The main features of administering the budget were its anti-crisis direction and stabilising role, said Minister of Finance Bakhyt Sultanov in presenting the report. Thus, the first year of administering the Nurlu Zhol programme was focused on supporting the economy's demand and financial stability.

"Over the past year, all social spending was increased and all obligations have been met in full. Businesses were presented cheap loans from the National Fund, whereas privatisation and legalisation were intensified," Sultanov said.

"In the framework of Nurlu Zhol, 80,000 jobs were created, 456 km of roads were built and almost 11,000 apartments were commissioned. Three hundred and forty-two small and medium-sized projects received loans and more than 4.5 million vehicles were sold," he said.

Sultanov noted the good results were achieved thanks to the work on ensuring budget stability and its timely adjustment in February and October together with adoption of the National Bank's measures on the transition to a free-floating tenge exchange rate last year.

"This ensured full implementation of the revenue side of the budget. Moreover, compared to the adjusted plan we executed budget revenues to the tune of 105.7 percent. Thus, free cash balances were formed at the beginning of the current year in the amount of 264 billion tenge," Sultanov continued.

"The compensating effect of the budget softened the current swings in the economy and laid the founda-



tion for long term growth," he said.

Speaking to the deputies, Prime Minister Karim Massimov noted that on the instruction of President

SULTANOV: "Over the past year, all social spending was increased and all obligations have been met in full. Businesses were presented cheap loans from the National Fund, whereas privatisation and legalisation were intensified."

Nursultan Nazarbayev the government is working on redistributing

funds within existing programmes. "Considering the current economic situation, we will review some articles of the Nurlu Zhol programme and some additional

resources within the government. In the short term, we are focused

on more efficient use of existing resources," he said. A good impetus for economic growth may be the further increase of housing construction, he added. To that end, Nurlu Zhol will be augmented with a new direction related to implementing the infrastructure of individual housing construction.

"We believe that the allocation of 10 one-hundredths [of hectare] of land [per person] with infrastructure will largely make positive adjustments. Therefore, part of the resources will be directed to the development of individual housing construction," said Massimov.

The previous day, the Prime Minister attended, the third congress of the National Chamber

of Entrepreneurs Atameken He spoke about the President's decision to redistribute resources within the existing programmes in order to provide additional support for small and medium-sized enterprises and employment.

Massimov asked the participants to join the work of ensuring the money allocated is incorporated into the economy, therefore allowing entrepreneurship and employment to move in the best direction.

He also urged business people to pay attention to the issues of employment, increased agricultural productivity, labour mobility, ensuring the country with essential domestic commodities and attracting investment in the primary sector.

During the first four months of the year, Kazakhstan's light industry sector share increased by 3.7 percent to 40.9 percent compared to 37.2 percent in the same period in 2015. From January-April, clothing production increased by 6.8 percent to 8.5 billion tenge (\$25.3 million) against 7.9 billion tenge (\$23.5 million) last year. For comparison, a higher annual growth rate for the first four months was fixed at 12.5 percent in 2015 with respect to 2014. The sports clothing, ski equipment and swimwear segment (45.8 percent) occupies a considerable share of the market.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) members Kazakhstan and Belarus are developing a long-term strategy for economic and trade cooperation, reported the local media. According to experts, the countries will focus on developing transport and logistics systems. Statistics from 2015 indicate the trade turnover between the nations totalled \$600 million and the figure has already increased by \$100 million in the first quarter of this year. In addition to mutual trade, the countries see potential cooperation in sectors such as machinery and a number of raw materials industries. Kazakhstan currently supplies Belarus with non-ferrous metals, liquefied gas and complex fertilisers and Belarus has recently started to acquire techniques, primarily from cars assembled in Kazakhstan. Belarusian companies are also interested in acquiring Kazakh grain, fruits and vegetables.

Kazakh oil refineries are expected to produce 2.7 million tonnes of gasoline this year, according to the Ministry of Energy. Experts note Kazakhstan imports 1.3 million tonnes of gasoline from Russia and 400,000-500,000 tonnes of diesel per year; therefore, the current processing volumes are sufficient to meet the needs of the domestic market.

Kazakhstan will export about 7.5 tonnes of grain this year, reported Kapital.kz citing the Department of Crop Production. As of the beginning of June, approximately 17.5 hectares of land was allocated to sowing seeds for agriculture, representing 95 percent of the total spring sowing in 2016, according to the Ministry of Agriculture. Nearly 2.4 million tonnes of seeds, including two million tonnes of cereal, 338,000 tonnes of potato seeds, 57,000 tonnes of oilseed and 25,000 tonnes of forage crops, were sown this year alone.

The gold extraction industry is one of the most attractive sectors of the Kazakh economy to foreign investors, reported Kazakh TV. According to the National Committee for Statistics, about 28 tonnes of raw, semi-finished gold and precious metals in the form of powder were produced in the country this year, almost 20 percent more than 2015. The Varvara gold and copper mine in Kostanai region is one of the largest in the country. The complex, launched in the mid-2000s, includes four active mines and a modern processing plant and is a high precious metal deposit in Central Asia. The Varvara field was among the first in the country to adopt the GLO-NASS satellite navigation system. The space technology enables the remote control of equipment and machines.

Altmy, the former capital of Kazakhstan, has resumed cultivation of the legendary Aport apple. Almost 60 hectares of land around the city has been allocated to gardeners to carry out the project. The work began two years ago, when businessman Dauren Alibekov and his team planted 10 apple varieties on 80 hectares. In contrast to local growers whose harvest depends on climate and other conditions, the new businesspeople planted so-called intensive gardens. Using the trellis system, they incorporated drip irrigation and implemented the latest care methods for fruit trees.

NB Chairman: 400 Billion Tenge in Pension Fund Savings to Be Invested in Quasi-Governmental Institutions

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – National Bank Chairman Daniyar Akishev recently spoke at a government meeting about using pension assets to stimulate economic growth and employment in 2016 and 2017.

"The National Bank is the co-executive in two directions related to the allocation of funds from the Single Accumulative Pension Fund (SAPF). In 2016, there are plans to invest SAPF funds in the amount of 400 billion tenge (\$1.2 billion) on market conditions in due debt securities of subjects of the quasi-governmental sector. As of June 17, pension assets have been invested in bonds of quasi-governmental organisations in the amount of 145 billion tenge (\$431 million). One of the important elements of anti-crisis measures is a rational and effi-



Daniyar Akishev

cient use of financial resources. The implementation of the plan of additional anti-crisis measures in 2016 revealed that part of the SAPF pension assets was not demanded by the quasi-governmental companies," he said.

In his last sentence, Akishev was referring to 85 billion tenge (\$252.8 million).

"In this regard, we support the need for reallocation of this sum

to finance the working capital in the manufacturing industry. The National Bank, as the manager of pension assets of the SAPF, is not against joint use of the National Fund and the SAPF assets. And in order to reduce the cost of borrowing under the mechanism, we will be mixing rates," he said.

On one hand, he noted, the action will help to protect the interests of depositors; on the other, reduce the cost of lending in the real sector of the economy.

As part of the plan of additional 2016 anti-crisis measures, the SAPF mechanism of distributing funds is being used by the National Bank and other banks; it was as transparent as possible, he said. The banks could independently assess the amount of funds which they could access.

"The mechanism of the distribution of funds fully takes into account the ability of banks for

allocation of resources and provides safety and recoverability of pension assets of banks-participants of the programme that must necessarily have a portfolio of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) loans and relevant work experience," added Akishev.

In general, banks were offered approximately 200 billion tenge (\$595 million) for spending, but only 94.4 billion tenge (\$280.0 million) has been disbursed to date. The reasons for the partial use of funds are the high cost of resources and the conditionality for financing SME needs.

"Since the banks have not shown sufficient demand for the provided resources, I believe that they also may be redistributed in other areas. At the same time, I note that the protracted allocation process among the banks was not the full competence of the National Bank and may not

be completely monitored, as the necessary decisions must also be made by the board of the National Fund and the government accordingly. I believe that there is no delay in the development of resources and all activities were carried out in a timely manner," said Akishev.

Prime Minister Karim Massimov suggested the National Bank meet with bankers and businessmen.

"Last week when I was at Atameken, I met separately with some bankers. They talked about this issue a lot and had different opinions and statements. Therefore, let us agree that together with you, the bankers and the Atameken hold a separate meeting. On the readiness basis, through the chairman of the National Bank we will sort out all these issues, because there are too many misunderstandings," he said.

PM Massimov Comments on Use of National Fund

By Zhaniya Urankayeva

ASTANA – Member of the Finance and Budget Committee of Mazhilis Yekaterina Nikitinskaya asked Prime Minister Karim Massimov about the National Fund's savings during a June 17 joint session of the Parliament and members of the government.

According to the prime minister, the budget expenditures due to the high state presence in the



Kazakh economy immediately affect the development of business

activity and increase economic growth.

Nikitinskaya noted the conclusions of an audit committee indicate that over the past five years in the structure of the national budget income tax revenues, a substitution of transfers from the National Fund and lower budgets can be traced.

"If in 2011, transfers accounted for 29.8 percent of revenues, in 2015, their share increased by 13 percent to almost 43 percent. What measures is the government plan-

ning to take to change this negative practice? Have we wasted the National Fund and how long will the savings of the National Fund last at the present level of consumption in the current financing of the budget deficit?" she asked.

"This is a question for both the international and internal auditors. We understand it, and together with those questions, which I mentioned like the public sector reforms, the taxes and the more efficient use of public funds, this

system will also have the question related to the efficiency of the national fund," the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan noted.

According to him, President Nursultan Nazarbayev will receive the relevant law this coming fall.

"We are discussing it, this summer we will submit for consideration by the head of state and in autumn will come to you along with the budget in order to be clear and well understood," he stressed.

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

The KazAgro national holding summed up the preliminary results of its financing of the sowing campaign in 2016, Kazakh TV reports. As part of the support for the spring sowing campaign, KazAgro's subsidiaries financed more than 2,800 agricultural producers for a total of 65.3 billion tenge (US\$194.7 million) as of today. In addition, as part of the leasing programmes of the national holding, contracts have been signed for the supply of 1,140 units of agricultural machinery totalling 18.5 billion tenge (US\$55.1 million), 849 units of which are equipment.

National Geological Exploration Company Kazgeologiya, Polymetal and Kazzinc Ltd. have agreed to implement joint projects, according to KAZTAG. The parties agreed to cooperate on the search and evaluation of potential areas of subsoil for the detection of gold, silver and copper in Kazakhstan. Kazgeologiya was established in 2011. One hundred percent of company's shares, which were previously owned by Samruk Kazyna, have been transferred to the Kazakh Ministry of Investments and Development.

In three years, the number of Chinese companies operating in Kazakhstan has increased by 35 percent, Director of the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies Erlan Karin announced. At the beginning of 2016, there were more than 600 Chinese companies, Karin said at the annual conference on security in Central Asia. Most Chinese companies, he noted, were registered in trade and construction. China is in fifth place in terms of companies operating in Kazakhstan with foreign capital, after Russia, Turkey, the Netherlands and Germany, which account for more than 9,000 enterprises.

First Deputy Prime Minister Bakhytzhon Sagintayev summarised the results of the fifth meeting of the Land Reform Commission: from 2010-2015, the gross inflow of foreign investments to Kazakhstan from China amounted to more than \$10 billion, and according to this indicator, China is in fourth place. In 2016 it planned to implement six projects with the participation of Chinese investors in the manufacturing sector for a total of \$4 billion.

A business forum titled "Latvia-Kazakhstan" was held in Riga as part of the trade and economic mission of Kazakhstan, which featured new business contacts and helped investors search for foreign partners for access to foreign markets. The event in the Baltic state, organised by Kaznex Invest, Kazakhstan's national agency for export and investment, and by the City Development Committee of the Riga City Council, gathered representatives of more than 15 companies representing domestic engineering, construction, metallurgy, pharmaceuticals and the light, food and chemical industries. Chiefs of the Latvian Ministry of Transport and Latvian Railways were introduced to the main freight highway and passenger locomotives assembled by a Kazakh plant using Alstom's technology. Meetings were held in the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture of Latvia to discuss the registration of Kazakh goods and the participation of domestic companies in Latvia's government procurement. Latvia was the first European country to ratify Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Kazakhstan and the European Union.

Astana's Department of State Revenue and the capital's branch of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs will work jointly to reduce the scale of illegal business in Astana, Tengrinews.kz reports. The management of both institutions signed a memorandum of cooperation to create conditions for the support of good business. During the meeting it was stressed that the two regularly cooperate; however, there still a lot of room for improvement. According to head of the capital's Department Abylkair Skakov, it is the time to restart the relationship between business and the state's revenue authorities.

Zero to One to Bring 1,000 Mobile Apps to Market



By Kseniya Voronina

Zero to One, a Kazakh mobile app company, has announced plans to train no fewer than 1,000 professional developers and create at least 1,000 iOS and Android mobile apps.

The ambitious goal is expected to be reached with the help of several start-up projects which have already launched this year. Summer Start Up School (www.thesummerstartupschool.com) and its upgraded version nFactorial Incubator (www.n17r.com), opened June 5, require participants to develop an exclusive iOS app and gather 10,000 users in 12 weeks. The progress, as well as interesting photo shoots and final

reports, are posted regularly on the Zero to One Facebook page.

"The mission of the nFactorial Incubator is to bring 40 Kazakh mobile apps to the App Store, which will cover both the foreign and local B2B audience. Our partners are Intellection.kz and Idea-Lab.kz," said Marat Shaken, one of the organisers.

The purpose of the project was also explained by the improved productivity. The organisers originally believed they could create five to six high-quality products a year, but with the help of Incubator, it became possible to speed up the process and reach the mark of 100 apps. The enhanced efficiency will also improve the chances of creat-

ing a successful idea such as the popular Angry Birds.

At the end of the project, the best teams will be invited to continue working on the product and be able to receive financial support. During the period, each team must develop three to four versions of the product and attract a target audience from Australia, China, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea and the United States. The participants will be supervised by mentors responsible for programming, design and PR promotion.

In the final stage, the apps will be presented in the framework of the App Store and Demo Day, where a large audience of foreign and Kazakh investors, heads of Kazakh public and private companies, entrepreneurs, journalists, professors, developers and designers can estimate the end product.

During its 11-month existence, Zero to One has added eight mobile products to its portfolio. Among the most popular are Kelin, the anonymous social network for women covering basic issues of feminine health and beauty (172,000 users); Being Beethoven, which tells about daily rituals of great men and Zero Willpower, created to block distracting websites.

Kazcosmos Enlarges Partnership with Sudan

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

A delegation from the World Aerospace Committee met recently in Khartoum, Sudan with representatives of Sunacs to open negotiations concerning data transmission from the space remote

sensing system, reported the Kazcosmos press service.

The talks centred on ground segment research issues, training at the Sunacs base, joint cooperation on various earth surface monitoring techniques for agricultural purposes and creating nanosatellites based on Kazakh experience.



The Kazakh side also spoke with individuals from Mirage, a space technology company, the Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technologies and representatives of the Sudanese military academy. The main focus was cooperation between the countries regarding space technology and agriculture. Mirage provided a presentation on its achievements and capabilities.

The Kazakh delegation also considered the possibility of selling space images from KazEOSat-2 to their Sudanese colleagues. They noted the data collected will contribute to precisely estimating of the quality of Sudan's agricultural fields.

The sessions ended with the sides signing a bilateral protocol on space technology cooperation between Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary and Sunacs.

Belgian VanHool Buses to be Produced in Kyzylorda



Photo credit: vanhool.be

Staff Report

Kazakhstan plans to start production of VanHool buses based on the technology of the Belgian company which annually manufactures approximately 1,400 buses and coaches and as many as 4,000 commercial vehicles. Representatives recently held several meetings in Astana, Almaty and Kyzylorda.

The total value of the agreement on bus construction, which will be based in Kyzylorda region, is 10 million euro (US\$11.3 million) and will be financed by both parties.

"We have created a new bus model with a particularly beautiful design in hopes that people would prefer to use public transport more often than cars. These buses are also harmless for the environment, as they operate on electricity and don't produce emissions. The battery has to be charged at the end of the route and this procedure takes only ten minutes, after which the bus is ready to drive for the next 40-50 kilometres. It is also possible to make the buses adaptable to extremely low temperatures during a winter season, for instance in Astana," said company board of directors member Ian Van Hool.

The details of the future partnership were discussed during the Kazakh visit to the Belgian factory in Lier. The meeting's agenda included the process of transferring new technologies, new jobs and

training for local engineers and service centre employees in order to provide technical support for existing and new bus parks.

"After we advanced in technical matters, the final part of the agreement has entered the scene. We have also reached agreements with Baikonur company to produce seats and many other components on the spot. The electric tram bus, presented today in Paris, has a great chance to become a worthwhile alternative to the LRT project in Astana. The coming EXPO 2017 would be a good platform to present this product to the world," said company commercial director Gert Van Hecke.

Van Hool currently leads negotiations with the Belgian bank, said Kazakh-based company office representative Andrey Kashechkin. The start of the EX-15 model production is scheduled for late November-early December.

Kazakh participation will represent one quarter of the total production, said Baikonur head Temirkhan Kenzhebayev. The operation is expected to attract existing car building and automobile manufacturers, as well as plastic and textile production companies. Kazakhstan's share in the production process is expected to increase after the launch of the Kyzylorda glass factory.

Kenzhebayev added the project could enhance the level of interest of European and American markets to import components made of high-quality Kazakh glass.

First Kazakh Business Channel Presents Live-Streaming Analysis and Breaking News

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The Atameken Business Channel, now broadcasting online and on television from Astana and Almaty, is the country's first multimedia business news channel.

The ABCTV.kz internet portal is an information platform with integrated TV, which operates only in live-stream mode, presenting the main news of Kazakhstan, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the world.

Leading business experts, business leaders, government representatives and opinion leaders are invited to participate and give their opinions on analytical programmes and market forecasts.

The Astana Times interviewed head of the Atameken Business Channel Yuliya Valiakhmetova to learn about the channel's content and future plans.

Graduate of the Moscow Institute of Television and Radio Broadcasting, Valiakhmetova has worked as a reporter and in 2012 headed the Kazakh TV channel. Over the past two years, she has been involved in public relations. "It was time to create a niche



Yuliya Valiakhmetova, Atameken Business Channel CEO

channel dedicated to business, finance and economics. There are some television channels with entertainment content and news programmes in Kazakhstan. The news agencies are also well developed. But it was necessary to launch a channel with functions such as informational news with analytics, television and media; three key platforms connected in one to develop into a multimedia project," she said.

According to Valiakhmetova, the channel's developers studied the experience of foreign channels including Bloomberg, CNBC, and RBK before starting the project.

The channel covers financial, economic and political news; analysis; ratings; conclusions and

projections; exchange rates and securities markets; precious metals; raw and non-raw material resources; bank news; stock exchanges; and companies.

"At the beginning, we decided that we would cover business and finance news and present what happens in the country and the situation with our economy. We aim to do this quickly and efficiently and provide analysis by professional experts. The advantage of online television is that the whole world is watching our channel. We started broadcasting on May 23 this year and we had been working in test mode for a month. Our audience coverage is four countries: Kazakhstan, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom. This is a good indicator. Our priority is live streaming. We broadcast in Kazakh and Russian. We plan to introduce English-language content in the near future," she said.

According to the latest Yandex metric data, 45 percent of the audience is between 25-34 and 25 percent is 45 years old or older.

"We collaborate with the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange [KASE]. [Viewers] can get the information about all currencies and it is important for them

to obtain information online. On weekdays, we have news and special programmes such as Otrastli ("Branches"), Aktualno ("Actual"), In Focus and programmes about markets in different sectors of construction, agriculture and business. Weekend content includes programmes featuring test drives, restaurant reviews, et cetera. For example, recently we did a live broadcast of the briefing with [Kazakh weightlifter] Ilya Ilyin, as we could not ignore the doping results," she said.

The channel is collaborating closely with the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs (NCE) to produce specialised programmes with professionals in their spheres.

"They provide us with analysis and know the situation in the regions down to districts and villages. We also have agreed with VTB Bank and Sberbank to invite experts to take part in some programmes regarding the bank sector. KASE will conduct its own programme every day after trading starting from July. We will analyse the trading day at the end of the day and the whole week and make predictions for the future," she said.

In the month since it launched, the channel has already produced

interviews with exclusive speakers at the Astana Economic Forum by means of its mobile television studio and did live streaming of the Astana Mining and Metallurgy Congress, the KADEX International Exhibition of Weapons Systems and Military Equipment and the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council meeting.

"All our projects are unique and we have reporters in all regions. Our country has already formed a business society and the media covering the activities of our business and popularising entrepreneurship, especially with commodity prices falling, are of great importance. What do we see today in our media? News agencies come to the fore because they present information quickly and efficiently. Social networking is left for comments. People are waiting for experts' comments on their pages in social networks rather than waiting until they come home and watch TV to know what happens in the country. When we compare television and news agencies in terms of providing information, the agencies clearly win. Today, we want to get information quickly and efficiently; we want to get feedback from the audience," she said.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

International Cooperation in Space Shows Ways Forward: A View from Kazakhstan

There was a time when it was strongly feared that space would become the next international battleground. Following the race to put a man into space, its growing militarisation along with increasing tensions was seen as inevitable.

Thankfully, the very opposite has happened. Down on earth, sadly, we have seen new rifts between countries and old ones reopened. But above our planet, we have witnessed a new era of international cooperation.

Nothing highlights this extraordinary and welcome transformation in attitudes better than the International Space Station (ISS). The planning, co-ordination and operation of the station has brought rivals together in the shared search for scientific knowledge. It has been one of the most remarkable – and certainly the most complex – examples of international cooperation.

Operated jointly by the space agencies of the U.S., Russia, Europe, Japan and Canada, the station has now become home to astronauts from 18 different countries since the first arrived in 2000. It is a research facility where American and Russian scientists and members of the armed forces, together with those from other partner countries, are working to improve our understanding of the mysteries of the universe and how to overcome the challenges of space travel.

The latest addition to this international roll call was the U.K.'s Tim Peake, whose safe landing alongside his U.S. and Russia fellow astronauts got remarkable attention on June 18 from the media and wider public. He spent 186 days at the ISS, orbiting the earth approximately 3,000 times. As well as taking part in a variety of research projects, he also successfully engaged with school children around the world to boost their interest in science and space.

Major Peake's space adventure began and ended, as have so many of his predecessors, here in Kazakhstan. The Baikonur Cosmodrome is now the only launch pad for manned flights, while the wide open spaces of our steppes are the ideal place for the Soyuz capsule to drop slowly and safely back to earth.

This automatically puts our country at the heart of this remarkable international endeavour. But our involvement in space exploration goes further than geography thanks to the increasing role of Kazcosmos, the country's space agency. Headed until his recent appointment as special advisor to the President by Talgat Musabayev, a veteran of three cosmonaut missions himself, Kazcosmos is forging new partnerships with its counterparts around the world.

This involvement has already seen Kazakhstan's first official cosmonaut, Aidyn Aimbetov, take part in a 10-day

mission to the ISS. In the long run, investment in space research will bring benefits not only in terms of Kazakhstan's international stature and relationships, but also through scientific and engineering advances which can help drive our industries back on earth.

But what is happening through the work at the ISS and all the agencies involved, of course, also symbolises Kazakhstan's own determination to promote international cooperation. From our earliest days as a country, we have strived to convince the international community that only by working together can we hope to overcome the world's challenges.

It has not always been a message, despite Kazakhstan's efforts, which has fallen on fertile ground. There can be too many vested interests, suspicions and divisions in the way, but overcoming these barriers is essential to delivering the progress we all want to see.

It is here the ISS shows the way forward. If we can work together so successfully in such a difficult environment, it gives us hope for a better future. The space station is the only man-made structure that can be viewed in space with the naked eye. Perhaps if we encourage global leaders to look up more regularly at the night sky and reflect on what's been achieved, we might see a new era of cooperation on earth in the coming years as well.

French Experience Relevant for Kazakh Dairy Development



By Philippe Amé

At a time when, as many oil exporting countries, Kazakhstan has been hit by the depreciation of oil prices, the agricultural sector is one of the most promising sectors for the diversification of the Kazakh economy. Indeed, the potential and the needs of Kazakh agriculture have been enlightened in President Nursultan Nazarbayev's strategy for 2050 and more precisely the livestock development, which is part of the 100 Concrete Steps to implement the five institutional reforms unveiled in 2015.

France, with its world-known experience in agriculture, wants to support Kazakhstan in this ambitious move. French and Kazakh relations in the livestock sector have been building up at a high pace over recent years. In the course of the last year, a study financed by the French government, the Livestock Institute (Idele) and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Agriculture was launched to confirm the orientation of Kazakhstan's master plan for the development of the dairy sector.

Being at the heart of livestock development worldwide in about 20 countries every year, the French Livestock Institute through the International Technical Cooperation Bureau (BCTI) enthusiastically accepted carrying out this study. Indeed, BCTI has all the technical and scientific legitimacy and resources to support this venture and to propose innovative operational solutions for the implementation of the master plan. In fact, BCTI has acted as the international technical assistance office of the French Livestock Confederation (CNE) and has offered a full range of support services to livestock development programs since 2000.

The dairy master plan being a major outcome, revealing both a sound vision for the future and a clear willingness of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan to dynamize the sector, BCTI was happy to contribute to facing all the challenges ahead. The study, mobilising a team of high-level experts in all relevant fields (husbandry, genetics, veterinary, information systems, fodder production and range management and environmental integration), has yielded a wealth of proposals for further development and cooperation. These proposals will be extensively discussed and will be presented officially in Astana on June 23 in the presence of experts, companies and officials of Kazakhstan and France. This study will pave the way to a broader scope of the huge development potential of Kazakhstan in the dairy sector.

Last but not least, subsequent cooperation will be given life thanks to the commitment of 20 French companies of the sector which are potential providers of genetic products, machinery, equipment, advisory services and training. These companies federated by BCTI have pooled their commercial offers to respond to all the possible demands of the future projects.

The author is a French expert in agricultural economics. After 30 years of working on international agricultural projects with different organisations such as the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), he is currently the Director of the International Operations Bureau at the French Livestock Institute.

Welcome Tourism Industry Signs on Rise in Kazakhstan

Winter in Astana has its own special attractions. But there are very few of us who live here who don't look forward to the chance to feel the sun on our faces and the warmth on our backs. The opportunity to sit outside and walk about easily changes the nature of our city and palpably lifts spirits.

It's not only Astana residents who have been smiling over the last few weeks now that summer has arrived. Walking round the city, it has been notable to see an increase in the number of foreign tourists. Many are from Russia or our closer neighbours, but more than in the past have travelled here from farther afield. It's a very hopeful sign for the future.

We have, of course, a very long way to go. Tourism in Kazakhstan is still very much in its infancy. We have barely scratched the surface in terms of harnessing the country's rich potential as a tourist destination.

But the increasing number of foreign tourists in the city is a sign that Kazakhstan's attractions are finally becoming more widely known. This is potentially a breakthrough year for our tourism industry.

After all, by this time next year, EXPO 2017 Astana will be in full swing. As well as seeing the latest developments in green energy and sustainable living, visitors and exhibitors will see for themselves a remarkable new capital city with much improved transport links and hotel facilities, but which has re-

tained an old-fashioned tradition of offering hospitality to strangers.

Expo will follow the 2017 Winter Universiade in Almaty that will see a record 64 countries sending their top young winter sport athletes to compete. Over 30,000 students, spectators, officials and media will enjoy these winter games which will take place in staggering scenery on the doorstep of Kazakhstan's lively second city.

The investment to ensure both events are a huge success will provide an exciting springboard for the country's tourism industry. It is being matched with targeted efforts to enable visitors to more easily enjoy Kazakhstan's amazing natural wonders.

Getting this right, as the government and tourism chiefs are determined to do, will bring huge rewards. Rising living standards, speedier and easier transport and an appetite for adventure is driving a global industry which saw nearly 1.2 billion people make international trips for business and pleasure last year. That is a 4 percent increase – 50 million more people – than even the year before.

It is big business. International tourism now represents 30 percent of the world's exports of services and 6 percent of overall exports of goods and services. In fact, tourism ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and food in terms of export value.

The impact on local economies is great. According to the UN's World Tourism Organisation, income generated by international visitors on accommodation, food and

drink, entertainment, shopping and other goods and services was over \$1.2 trillion a year. It directly supports well over 100 million jobs and many more indirectly. This is not a sector any country can afford to ignore and particularly one with such assets and attractions as Kazakhstan.

Our geography may once have put us at a disadvantage in attracting foreign visitors compared to other regions. But as prosperity spreads to new areas, an increasing number of international tourists come from Asia or the Middle East, while more and more travellers from more developed markets want to see new countries and places.

As part of the country's drive to reach and inform some of these travellers about the opportunities available here, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has just launched a new app, Kazakhstan: Land of the Great Steppe. Available from the App Store, Play Market and in a web version, it contains relevant information for tourists as well as interactive 3D experiences that enable those thinking about visiting the ability to experience some of our greatest landmarks before they reach our country.

Kazakhstan has so much to offer. At a time when travel to an increasing number of places in the world seems riskier than ever, it is a country that is safe and secure. Add in breathtaking scenery, an abundance of wildlife, a remarkable history and an outgoing, friendly people, and we should expect the foreign tourists now enjoying the sunshine in Astana will be the advance guard of many more to come.

St. Petersburg Forum Helps Rebuild Trust, Develop EU-EAEU Dialogue

There are plenty of clouds on the horizon for the global economy, as the World Bank's latest outlook report has confirmed. Looking at what has happened over the first half of this year and the risks ahead has forced the bank to cut back again its forecasts for global growth it made in January.

The bank is right to be cautious. Political uncertainty has increased and is holding back investment and making global markets more volatile. Europe's hopes of recovery, for example, have been badly stalled and confidence undermined by the upcoming UK referendum on the so-called Brexit on June 23.

Security concerns and the threat from extremism – something even a stable society like Kazakhstan has experienced recently – are also helping create a challenging environment. And where we should be seeing increased cooperation over trade, we are seeing divisions and calls for a return to protectionism.

Such calls may strike a chord with some audiences but they are not the answer to global problems. It is free trade that has been the motor for economic growth and rising prosperity right across the world and choking it off will only damage us all.

Kazakhstan stands as an example of this progress. The openness to investment and to partnership has been a major reason for the transformation of our country and the living standards of our citizens since independence. We trade successfully with countries around the globe.

Like many economies, Kazakhstan too is being buffeted by global forces. But we know that the best way of overcoming these difficulties and continuing to build a prosperous future is by being open, not closed, to investment and trade.

Our accession to the World Trade Organisation last year is a symbol of our determination to continue along this route. It is also why we are determined to do all we

can to remove barriers whether it is playing our part in improving transport routes across Eurasia or forging new trade partnerships.

It is against this gloomy background but also with this goal in mind that Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev travelled to the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. He joined political leaders, senior business figures and experts from around the world for public, and private, discussions on how the global economy can be put back on track.

No wonder the Kazakh President called for dialogue between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which brings together Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia.

"The EAEU is interested in a strong and stable EU and wants to cooperate closely with (the 28-nation bloc). Likewise, for Europe constructive cooperation with our integration union is beneficial," he said at a plenary session of the forum.

He further proposed creating "an EU-EAEU forum for bringing together experts, scientists and business leaders and explaining to them what our union is about."

Of course, much attention was paid to participation from European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, along with Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. The former's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin attracted much attention too, as it was the first since the EU introduced sanctions on Russia in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis two years ago.

While the talks produced no breakthrough, the very fact that they took place is a step in the right direction. It is only through dialogue that problems can be overcome and a new tentative relationship – based on mutual economic gains – can begin to be forged which can bring big benefits for all countries in the wider Eurasian region.

The forum agenda covered a wide range of challenges

and opportunities from the impact of mass migration to the role that drones can play in improving logistics. There were also sessions dedicated to how growth can be made more inclusive. As President Nazarbayev has said, we must ensure that every country and everyone shares fairly in rising prosperity.

But perhaps the dominant theme – rightly for a forum taking place in a city which represents the meeting of West and East – is the breakdown in relations between Europe and Russia and how they might be repaired. Sessions focused on trying to identify a new model for the future based on economic co-operation and mutual respect.

The EAEU clearly offers the foundation for this new partnership. There is huge scope for removing barriers between the EAEU and the EU to encourage trade and give a welcome boost to growth. The long-term aim must be to create a unified trading bloc of nearly 700 million consumers.

It is often forgotten that the EAEU was a concept first proposed by President Nazarbayev over two decades ago. He has been very clear from the start that the union should be economic in nature and open in character.

Kazakhstan, of course, has every incentive and is in an ideal position to act as an honest broker. The country has excellent relations with both Russia and the EU. We have also been one of the countries outside the dispute over Ukraine which has resulted in the tit-for-tat sanctions imposed by the West and Russia on each other. These sanctions are an added burden on the global economy when it already faces enough serious challenges.

Rebuilding trust and relations between Russia and the West will not happen overnight. But small steps to improve economic links can play a big part in easing tensions while, at the same time, boosting global trade and prosperity.

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Kazakhstan Can Help the United Nations

By Ken Fairfax and Larry Napper

On June 28, the UN General Assembly votes to select new non-permanent members of the UN Security Council.

A star in promoting a more peaceful world, Kazakhstan deserves a two-year seat on the United Nations Security Council beginning next year. As much as any emerging power it has worked for the common good in such areas as regional cooperation, nuclear non-proliferation, and providing assistance. A seat on the Council imposes a responsibility to lead. Kazakhstan has more than demonstrated its will and capacity to do so.

Kazakhstan has fostered moderation at home, developed good ties with neighbours, and led in regional and global undertakings.

From independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has relied on economic openness and bountiful national resources to lift itself from poverty to middle income status. Citizens from over a hundred ethnic groups are treated with respect. Despite occasional expressions of public



Ken Fairfax

disgruntlement, Kazakhstan reduces tensions by accommodating ethnic, national, and religious diversity.

Kazakhstan is an exemplar neighbour. It has deep ties with Russia, with which it shares many traditions and is a partner in the Eurasian Economic Union. Kazakhstan also has close ties with its other great power neighbour, China. Together they are improving Eurasian transport infrastructure and speeding trade. To its south, Kazakhstan has mutually beneficial relationships with Cen-



Larry Napper

tral Asian states and Afghanistan. Astana has provided over 1,000 scholarships for Afghan students in Kazakhstan, and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

On a wider stage, in 1992 Kazakhstan led in the creation of a pioneering group, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. With 26 member states and 7 observers, it enhances communication among diverse countries ranging from South Korea to Egypt.

In 2010, Kazakhstan became

the first former Soviet state and first predominantly Muslim state to chair the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and it hosted the first summit in over a decade. As chair, Kazakhstan spurred the OSCE to shift more focus eastward, an overdue step, and to become more sensitive to security concerns of Central Asian states adjacent to Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian state to have chaired the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in 2011-2012. During this time it helped raise over \$500 million to aid Somalia and encouraged OIC dialogue with others.

Kazakhstan organised the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and hosts its sessions. At last year's meeting, delegations from 42 countries and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon participated. The Congress promotes inter-confessional dialogue and seeks to abate religious strains.

Kazakhstan has contributed mightily to global peace through determined efforts to avert the

proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. It helped make possible the Iran nuclear deal by delivering natural uranium to Iran in exchange for enriched uranium. It is working to establish a new low-enriched uranium bank in Kazakhstan under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Kazakhstan has a sterling record in reducing risks at home. In the 1990s, it was the first former Soviet state to give up its nuclear weapons and eliminate their supporting infrastructure. It joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state. Even before attaining independence, Kazakhstan closed the main Soviet nuclear weapons test site, at Semipalatinsk. Later it destroyed the world's largest anthrax production facility in Stepnogorsk.

In 2009, Kazakhstan and four neighbours created the Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. In 2012, Kazakhstan launched the ATOM Project, a campaign that aims to galvanise global public opinion against nuclear weapon testing and, ultimately, nuclear

weapons. In 2015, Kazakhstan and Japan assumed co-chairmanship of the Conference of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, where they promote its entry into force, including through conferences convened by the UN Secretary General.

Kazakhstan donated to the African Union's programme to fight the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. It has deployed its observers to the UN peacekeeping missions in Western Sahara and the Ivory Coast. Kazakhstan has provided aid for education in Latin America, managing disasters in Central America, and developing institutions in small Caribbean islands. Next summer Astana will host the EXPO-2017 international exhibition, focusing on energy and environmental challenges facing humanity and how to overcome them.

It is hard to imagine that any country only a quarter-century into its independence could do so much for regional and global comity. A seat on the UN Security Council will enable Kazakhstan to contribute even more to its region and the world beyond.

Ken Fairfax and Larry Napper are former U.S. Ambassadors to Kazakhstan.

10 Years under the Flag of CICA

By Gong Jianwei

Over the last few years, international relations have been going through a difficult period and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which unites 26 countries, found itself at the crossroads of key global trends, largely determining the future development vector in not only Asia but also in the world.

Ten years ago, on June 17, 2006 during the second CICA Summit, was the first time when the document folders of heads of delegations had an official CICA symbol. And it was also the first time when the staff of the Secretariat, which had not yet been formally constituted, and consisted of only a few persons, took part in organising the meeting.

Let us recall, in 1992, the initiative of the CICA laid a foundation of new security awareness based on mutual trust and cooperation. This contributed to the fact that bilateral relations were upgraded to a new level of equal partnership. A model of regional cooperation was proposed, introducing the priority of security indivisibility, initiative in collaboration, mutually-beneficial cooperation between small and large countries and the interests of the nations' sustainable development were put at the forefront. This has become an important contribution to the creation of new international relations.

In recent years, politicians and experts increasingly and frequently emphasise the huge potential of the CICA, which precisely equals cooperation of countries distinguished by population, religion, culture, economic development, political order, etc. This potential has been realised for 24 years for the sake of prosperity of every distant corner of the Asian continent. CICA has been established as the platform for strengthening mutual understanding, dialogue, trust and equal partnership between the member states and has become one of the biggest parties of the modern system of international relations, contributing to the maintenance of security and stability in the region. And the region is not small – from Southeast Asia to the Middle East, the Indian Ocean up to the northern seas.

As citizens of CICA countries, it's important to know what is being done to ensure regional security and stability and the defence of peace in our land, the joint development of national economies, cultures and our common future.

In late April of this year, Beijing hosted the 5th meeting of CICA Ministers of Foreign Affairs (for the first time outside of Kazakhstan). The purpose of this meeting, as well as other high-level meetings of our forum, was not only exchanging views on pressing national and global issues between the delegations of the member



Photo by Dym

countries, observers and guests. China, in its turn as chairman of CICA since 2014, gave a detailed report for the activity over the last years and presented its vision of the work in the next two years. As far as we know, the Chinese chairmanship's second term begins after the ministerial meeting.

Among the general goals and objectives for the trade and economic cooperation of the CICA, the priority is given to cooperative efforts in the promotion of small and medium entrepreneurship, trade, investment, infrastructure and transport corridors, telecommunications, science and so on. The 21st century with its introduction of innovative technologies offers advantages for the implementation of tasks in these areas.

CICA member states make their best efforts for the development of the economic potential of the region. The entire world knows that 30 percent to 70 percent of the economically-active population of our countries is employed in small businesses. It produces up to 30 percent of the gross domestic product and by 2020 this share could more than double. Therefore, during the fourth CICA Summit in May 2014 in Shanghai, it was decided to establish the Business Council of the CICA. The main task of the business council is to promote the development and expansion of economic cooperation in the sphere of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the establishment of direct contacts and dialogue between the representatives of business organisations and public authorities of the CICA member countries and their involvement in the all-round cooperation. China, as CICA chairman, contributes to establishing mutually-beneficial partnerships between enterprises and SMEs in the countries of the region. Here CICA takes a different approach – there is no creation of financial institutions, funds or banks, but the establishment of connections and the provision of support for manufacturers. And this approach seems correct to us, especially against the background of a prolonged global economic crisis caused by the collapse of financial institutions.

Russia, Thailand, Kazakhstan and Turkey coordinators and co-coordinators of the CICA confidence-building measures in the field of development of small and medium-sized businesses as well as the

CICA Secretariat participated in the council constitution and establishment. The constitutive meeting of the Business Council of the CICA was held in November 2015, which marked the official start of work. At the same time China hosted the 4th CICA business forum with participation of more than 200 representatives of governments, financial institutions and business enterprises from eighteen member states. China's initiative "One Belt One Road," which has been promoted in recent years, fits perfectly, finds support and will be implemented by the CICA. The importance of these actions was recognised by the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Christine Lagarde. In Astana at the end of May, she admitted that this initiative reflects the need for such integration for successful regional development.

Each country and all international organisations starting from United Nations declare their activities for the prosperity of future generations. The Chinese chairmanship's achievement within the CICA was the launch of the Youth Council (YC), after the Chinese Youth Federation meeting in Beijing in August 2015. Representatives of 24 member states of the CICA and the CICA Secretariat took part in the preparation for the establishment of the council.

The YC is faced with formidable tasks. It is not only for conducting festive events, festivals and gatherings, but also for the research and development of national youth policies based on realities. As I noted in 2014, youth cooperation is not just a part of public diplomacy and an important component of bilateral relations, it is a real and recognised resource development.

At the first stage of work, YC is planning to establish an exchange of information between national youth organisations and cooperation in the field of employment of young professionals and entrepreneurs, as well as development of youth volunteering. In July, Bishkek will host the second conference of the CICA Youth Council, where, we hope, certain decisions will be made. Among others, the main focus will be on preventing the radicalisation of young people, which is now one of the most important issues in the world. We are considering the possibility of the organisation of the arts festival for students of the CICA member states to promote friendly communication among our youth.

Over the years of CICA's existence, the need for exploiting the potential of the so-called "second track" has been repeatedly discussed. The term "second track" implies the involvement of think tanks, academic circles and independent experts. In May 2015, China, as the chairman, held the first conference of the non-governmental forum with the aim of establishing a network of civil dialogue among the CICA member states,

the promotion of the concept of security and the increasing influence of the forum and the development of regional safety management. The conference, Asia in the Next Decade – Security and Development, included six roundtables on topical issues such as non-traditional security, financial security, the construction of the one belt, one road programme, energy security, a scientific development and production centre and also the media's role in Asian security. The forum was attended by the former political leaders and almost 400 leading experts, scholars, representatives of the media elite and public organisations from 37 member states and observers of the CICA, as well as a number of countries from outside the region.

Additionally, the Shanghai Institute of International Studies organised five expert forums in March and September 2014, May and December 2015 and April 2016. Well-known experts and scholars from many Asian countries discussed a wide range of issues of regional security and development, the strengthening of dialogue and cooperation and the functions and development of the CICA.

The value of such events is not in the level and number of participants, but in the need of the widespread activation of the expert community and the exchange of views in the understanding of the processes leading to global problems. The chairman, the member states and the secretariat find the discussions informative and instructive and the conclusions are subsequently taken into account in the development of strategies and specific action plans in various areas of CICA activity. In 2017, the Chinese Chairmanship plans to organise a second meeting of the NGO forum, as well as regularly conduct forums of analytical institutions of CICA countries.

It should be noted that political and security cooperation successfully continues within the CICA. More and more countries are convinced that as a result of the further deepening of relations of good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation can effectively protect their own interests, thus realising the goal of the joint development and prosperity.

Active work is continuing on the development of the Plan of Action for the implementation of the CICA UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy, which includes the negotiations between the CICA member states, as well as takes into account the experience and achievements of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee. During 2015-2016, Kazakhstan held a seminar and lecture for the military experts, diplomats and military attaches of the CICA member states on the development of military-political dimension and organised a visit of the participants to a number of military facilities.

In August 2015, Thailand organised a training course on drug treatment and rehabilitation for the officers of the CICA member states. China, in cooperation with the coordinating and co-coordinating countries, will actively implement documents on cooperation, including the action plan for the implementation of confidence-building measures in the military-political dimension during the period 2015-2018 and also the action plan for cooperation among CICA member states in combating illicit drugs for the period 2016-2018.

In the upcoming period, China plans to invite member states and CICA observers to take part in the first cultural exhibition of the Silk Road, which will take place in September 2016, the third international art festival of the Silk Road countries, film festival and so forth to promote the relationship and cooperation between the human dimension of the CICA member states.

Country coordinators and co-coordinators and all the members of the CICA under the leadership of the Chinese Chairmanship will develop and implement confidence-building measures for the implementation of action plans in all dimensions for the period 2016-2018 to achieve their goals. Sessions of the specialised agencies are held on a regular basis during which short-term objectives are considered, so that the activities of CICA are not periodic, but constant and pre-arranged. These meetings are held in different countries at their request. Six meetings were held from mid-2014 to 2016, including one meeting in Egypt. China will hold the fifth summit of the CICA in 2018 in consultation with the incoming chairmanship. We are also considering the possibility of holding an informal meeting of CICA foreign ministers on the sidelines of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly in September 2017.

The number of member states of CICA is growing and external relations are strengthening. Bangladesh and Qatar have joined the family of the CICA and immediately got involved in the activities, making constructive suggestions. Belarus got the status of observer. Memoranda of understanding between the secretariats of the CICA and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the CICA Secretariat and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) were signed.

Member states continue to explore ways to improve the legal and institutional base for the development of the CICA, focusing on strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of cooperation, taking into account the official draft of the concept on creation of the Organisation for Security and Development in Asia, represented by Kazakhstan at the end of 2015.

As mentioned above, Almaty hosted the second summit of heads of state and government of the CICA member states on June 17, 2006. The world's media actively covered the event and discussed

the summit declaration, bilateral meetings, etc. However, the signing of the agreement creating the CICA Secretariat was sparingly mentioned. It is the administrative and technical body established to provide support to member states in their activities.

The establishment of the secretariat marked a significant stage of institutionalisation of the CICA and the new stage of development. During these 10 years, the secretariat has been maintaining close contact with the chairmanship, assisting countries in organising events, providing information and support for workflow, creating databases, supporting the website and so on.

The executive director of the secretariat is in close contact with ministerial officials and authorities from relevant departments of the states' parties as well as regional and international organisations, exchanging views on international and regional situations and discussing several issues of cooperation in the implementation of the CICA CBMs, at the later stage as well as development forum, etc. For example, in the last two years the executive director took part in more than 30 events such as conducting the parallel bilateral meetings, contributing to the promotion of the goals and objectives of the CICA and increasing the value and image of the forum.

In this work, he was assisted by highly-qualified staff such as CICA diplomatic personnel. The administrative staff delivers benefit by ensuring timely information processing and making it available to the recipients. Sometimes the work is going on till very late and I would like to commend the responsibility and professionalism of the staff.

The CICA Secretariat is in close coordination with the UN Secretariat, UNODC, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, as well as other international organisations such as the SCO, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Economic Co-operation Organisation, Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, the Turkic Council and Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries (TURKPA), and also participates in several meetings organised by these institutions.

In the third quarter of 2016, the CICA Secretariat will finalise the move to a renovated building in Astana provided by Kazakhstan. In order to ensure effective and comfortable performance for the CICA staff, the Chinese Chairmanship has provided furniture and equipment for the new premises.

I want to wish all my colleagues every success in achieving the goals of the international forum – the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

The author is Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

Slovakia and Kazakhstan Defended Own Development Models, Says Ambassador Juza

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Divided by almost 4,000 kilometres, Kazakhstan and Slovakia are each located in the heart of their regions. Both young, former members of big unions, the countries keep fighting for their independent names. In an exclusive interview with The Astana Times, Slovak Ambassador Peter Juza highlighted the main aspects of cooperation between the nations and his country's upcoming presidency of the European Union (EU) Council, as well as shared his priorities and impressions of Kazakhstan.

Diplomatic relations between the countries were established in 1993. President Rudolf Schuster, who served from 1999-2004, made his first official visit to Kazakhstan in November 2001, when an agreement on relations between the countries was signed. The Slovak Embassy opened in the Kazakh capital in January 2005 and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Slovakia in 2007.

Slovakia is officially assuming Presidency of the EU Council on July 1. The country is ready for the new post and optimistic about the issues facing the union following Brexit, said Juza.

"Slovakia is one of the small countries in the region and it is our first presidency. Our country set



Ambassador of Slovakia Peter Juza

priorities earlier for its presidency and the decision of British voters has changed those priorities. I have to say that Brexit does not mean that the world stops; there are just new challenges. And Slovakia is set to quickly respond to the situation as its main goal," the ambassador said.

"Slovakia is ready for an active position in changes and modernisation of the European Union. Also, the country is ready to work and will work so that centrifugal force will not be extended and the European Union will stay as it was and it is now – an important partner, including the relations with Kazakhstan," he said.

Slovak Foreign and European Affairs Minister Miroslav Lajčák

is expected to visit Kazakhstan in early November. Juza used the opportunity to address the EU visa facilitation agreement.

"We share the objective of the Kazakh authorities to improve people-to-people contacts between the EU and Kazakhstan and we are committed to cooperating on that matter. In this regard, Kazakhstan can fully rely on the support of the Slovak Republic," he said.

The ambassador added Slovakia is closely following Kazakhstan's candidacy as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018.

"We traditionally fulfil our reciprocal obligations as a responsible UN member state," he said of the vote that is due June 28.

Trade relations between Slovakia and Kazakhstan, specifically trade in equipment and industrial output, said Juza.

"In 2014, a major part of the turnover was in the automobile industry, since a KIA assembly plant is located in Slovakia and those cars were delivered to Kazakhstan. Also, we assemble Citroen and Peugeot. But in 2015, the total turnover fell by 40 percent due to the Eurasian Economic Union launch and mainly the decline was in the car industry," he said.

Cars are not the only goods, which the nation offers to Kazakhstan. Slovak-based Progroup

Sediment Removal started work this year on purifying one of the lakes at the famous Borovoye resort area. The company has a patented technology, which has been one of the most effective solutions.

Another successful joint project is the capital's Oftum Centre for Laser Eye Surgery, which offers services of Slovak eye surgeons.

"The diagnostics and preparations are being made by local doctors, but the surgery itself is made by Slovak surgeons and the technology is brought from there, too," said Juza.

Due to the initiative of Slovak entrepreneurs, European-level services are available to residents in Kazakhstan. A joint project to construct a photovoltaic plant in Karaganda is currently under discussion.

Slovakia, in turn, buys petrochemical products, copper, iron and chemicals from Kazakhstan. The Central European nation is also presently working to promote tourism in the country and offer opportunities for medical tourism by promoting its health retreats and spa resorts.

"We offer quality for people with health problems. Our tourism industry targets the middle class with affordable prices. Of course, it is hard to offer mountains, for example, for residents of Almaty, because we have mountains with

no access to the sea. Each of the facilities in our country specialises in its field, whether it's heart disease, joints, reproductive system, anything," said Juza.

While most of the centres focus specifically on health treatment without entertainment, Slovakia also offers pure vacation destinations.

"We have wonderful mineral springs and popular ski resorts offering guests excellent European service at prices no higher than the Kazakhstan resorts," said Juza.

The ambassador presented his credentials to Nazarbayev almost three years ago.

"Establishing and maintaining political contacts, expanding cooperation for student exchange via international programmes and direct contacts, making Slovakia more recognisable – all of these were and are among my priorities here," he said. "I also wanted to gather Slovaks who live here, people who studied in Slovakia, everyone who is somehow connected to Slovakia in one community to become a bridge between our countries."

Talking about his expectations and first impressions, Juza said that he was not at all surprised by Kazakhstan.

"I knew almost everything, since I am a specialist in that region. Also, I studied in Moscow and

the post-Soviet space and Central Asian region are not surprising for me, but always were objects of great scientific interest," he said.

Kazakhstan and Slovakia had similar roads in the 20th century, said Juza.

"Almost the same period of independence, since 1991 and 1993 respectively. Slovakia has chosen the path to enter the European Union, while Kazakhstan chose the way to unite with post-Soviet countries. And it is really important to stress that both countries defended their own model of development. Both are young countries. We have had similar experiences in creating our own statehood," he said.

He added there were no cultural and political relationships due to objective reasons.

"Slovak people are kind, will always help, will never close a door. Kazakh people have the same qualities. Despite geographic and religious differences, people are alike," he said.

Juza noted Slovakia has been closely following the preparation process for EXPO 2017.

"It is assumed that in the near future we will inform Kazakh authorities on the possible involvement of the Slovak Republic in this event. Slovakia is heading to a positive decision regarding its participation in the exhibition," he said.

UNAIDS to Open Subregional Office in Kazakhstan; Director Says Country Can Eliminate AIDS Ahead of UN Agenda

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Executive Director of UNAIDS and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Michel Sidibe announced June 22 plans to establish a subregional office in Kazakhstan that will become a base for working with five Central Asian states. Sidibe met with Kazakh top officials on the matter and stated that the country has the opportunity to eliminate AIDS within its borders.

Michel Sidibe, Executive Director of UNAIDS and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

"I personally feel that Kazakhstan can be the first country in the region to achieve the dream of ending AIDS. The political commitment and leadership are good. We need to fast-track. I will be very happy to come back to Kazakhstan and announce with the government that there are no babies born with HIV. I would like to [be able to] certify that Kazakhstan is free of babies born with HIV," Sidibe said.

"The commitment of the Kazakh government is very strong," he said after his meeting with Minister of Healthcare and Social Development of Kazakhstan Tamara Duyssenova. Sidibe also met Prime Minister Karim Masimov and other top government officials. He emphasised that the government finances AIDS programmes and has put 7,000 people into treatment.

The UNAIDS subregional office in Kazakhstan will help ensure that people in the region with HIV have access to treatment.

"All people with HIV must have access to treatment, because if such people get treatment, transmission of the virus to other people is almost impossible. This can stop the epidemic. This is a new



Michel Sidibe

approach to AIDS treatment," said UNAIDS Country Director Alexander Goliusov.

"If we give access to treatment to all people with HIV, we reduce the possibility of transmission of the virus by 96 percent and save lives as well," Sidibe said.

Both experts noted that the cost of HIV and AIDS treatment drugs are very high: \$1,500–2,000 per person annually in Kazakhstan. The government is working on reducing prices, Goliusov said, to make treatment available to more people with HIV and HIV or AIDS-related conditions.

"The UN aims to end AIDS in 2030. But Kazakhstan has all opportunities to do it much earlier," Sidibe commented.

UNAIDS is a Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS that works to ensure that no one is left behind in the response to HIV and that everyone in the world has access to life-saving HIV services.

The AIDS epidemic has defined the global health agenda for an entire generation. Ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 is a central part of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the leaders' agenda that world leaders signed up to last September.

Manifest Discussed by Leading Experts

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – From the hydrogen bomb to anthrax, anything that could threaten the peaceful co-existence of humanity, was discussed June 20 at the international conference devoted to the Manifest "The World. The 21st Century." Leading experts on nuclear safety, supported by the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC), met in the Library of the First President.

"The most prominent scientists are now working on solving the problems of planetary scale. First of all, it is preventing the use of a nuclear arsenal in modern conflicts. Kazakhstan has a wide experience in matters of nuclear disarmament and for us it is very valuable," said U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation of Weapons Programmes in the Bureau of International Security and Non-proliferation Simon Limazh.

Countries which have nuclear weapons usually save them to secure a more important place in the international arena, said European Union (EU) delegation in Kazakhstan Charge d'Affaires Kamen Velichkov. Kazakhstan abolished the fourth largest nuclear arsenal, however, and became an effective state with creative foreign policy, he said.

The nation is an important strategic partner for the EU, said the EU's representative on the ISTC governing board Eddie Mayer. He noted Kazakhstan's favourable political and geographical location and its open and accessible position to the world's leading scientists.

Kazakhstan occupies first place among the world's uranium exporters and makes a great contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. "The World. The 21st Century" highlights the importance of expanding and replicating existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the need to modernise existing international disarmament treaties. The

document emphasises how a world without conflict will require the removal of the injustice that is its root cause. It shows all barriers to fair trade and development must be lifted, while the principles of international law need to be reaffirmed and respected by all countries.

The ISTC was established by the EU, Japan, Russia and the U.S. in 1992. Kazakhstan joined three years later and the headquarters are now situated in the capital's Nazarbayev University. Scientists at the centre are working on security in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear fields, as well as energy efficiency and nanotechnologies. Special attention

has been paid to the scientific and technical support of seismic monitoring projects and prediction of seismic activity in ISTC member states.

The ISTC finances and builds business links between scientists in Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and their colleagues and research organisations in the EU, South Korea, Japan, Norway and the U.S. The centre has already funded 2,753 projects worth more than \$1 billion; specifically in Kazakhstan, 210 research projects valued in excess of \$80 million. ISTC-supported projects were used at Fukushima in Japan.



Kazakh and American Judicial Experts Hold Round Table Talks on Preventing Terrorism

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

Representatives of the Kazakh Supreme Court, the Union of Judges of Kazakhstan, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative took part in round table talks to discuss judicial practice concerning cases related to extremism and terrorism, reported the press service of the Supreme Court.

Among the participants were judges of the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan and local courts, Federal District Court of Massachusetts Judge Richard Stearns; Director of USAID's Department for Democracy, Human Rights and Public Administration Bryony James; as well as representatives

of Kazakhstan's General Prosecutor's Office and National Security Committee. Supreme Court Judge Kambay Nuryshev noticed that methods used by terrorists tend to become more and more complex every year.

"Unfortunately, Kazakhstan couldn't avoid this danger. One of the most dreadful aspects of such crimes is that young people, who usually haven't developed a solid set of principles and a mature worldview yet, turn into victims easily influenced by the ideology of terrorism. Moreover, what we can see now is that modern terrorism is changing its tactics and advocating more actively and strategically," he said. He stressed that the exchange of experience on this topic is vital today.

Over the past five months, 38

people were convicted on charges related to extremism and terrorism in Kazakhstan. Some of them took part in fighting in Syria and Ukraine, said the representative of the Prosecutor General's Office. Stearns admitted that he'd learned about the terrorist attacks in Aktobe just before his flight to Kazakhstan and expressed his deep concern over the increasing scale and expanding boundaries of terrorist attacks in the world. In this regard, he called for joint measures by countries and international organisations to confront these challenges.

The American expert also spoke about effective ways developed in the U.S. to combat common calls for terrorist acts appearing in social media, as well as how to work

with people who have returned to their homelands from conflicts elsewhere.

Participants agreed that terrorists' main goal in Kazakhstan is to destabilise the domestic situation in the country, to inflame interethnic strife and to intimidate the population. As a result, it was decided to deepen cooperation in order to counter global challenges, to adjust legislative concepts of terrorism and extremism, to resolve disputable qualifications of crimes of this category, to define common tactics of the struggle and to continue organising constructive dialogues.

At the end of the talks, Stearns promised to provide written recommendations on the issues discussed.

Nation&Capital

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

PEOPLE

Social Activist and TV Presenter Says Success Comes Through Hard Work

B2

CULTURE

National Museum Presents New Exhibition 'Outlook into Future: Actual Heritage'

B3

SPORTS

Kazakh Gold Medallists among Doping Failures

B7

Foreign Ministry Presents 'Kazakhstan – Land of the Great Steppe' App



Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov (L) and Deputy Foreign Minister Roman Vassilenko during the presentation of the application.

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – A new digital application “Kazakhstan – Land of the Great Steppe” was presented June 20 by Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov during his public briefing.

The app serves as a digital encyclopaedia of Kazakhstan, covering a wide range of topics, such as the country’s geography, history, society, culture, government, international relations, economy, tourism, Astana and EXPO2017. It is downloadable from the AppStore or Google Play Market by entering “Kazakhstan Land of Great Steppe” in the search box.

“The application Kazakhstan – Land of the Great Steppe was

designed to provide information about our country in the modern and interactive format,” said Idrissov during the presentation, adding that “it is one of the first products in the field of digital technology, which contains unique information about Kazakhstan collected in one place.”

The trilingual app (Kazakh, Russian and English) has 68 chapters, each of which has its own photo gallery. In total, there are more than 370 photos. It also has 24 videos, 12 3D objects, 20 panoramic photos, 12 interactive 3D graphs and 4 interactive 3D maps.

Most of the used photos and video materials are exclusive and have never been published before. The developers have set a high bar for technical and artistic require-

ments to the quality of the materials.

“We hope that our application will be useful to all who are interested in getting to know our beautiful country and bringing it closer to their friends and acquaintances, both foreigners and Kazakh citizens. I am sure that through this application everyone can discover many new and amazing facts about Kazakhstan, as we did in the course of its development,” added Idrissov.

For Kazakh diplomats, the application will be helpful for use during meetings and presentations, spreading among compatriots and the Kazakh diaspora abroad. Foreigners are expected to be especially interested in materials about tourism, investments in Kazakhstan and the upcoming EXPO 2017.

Land of the Great Steppe is a slogan President Nursultan Nazarbayev first proposed to be used to describe Kazakhstan in an informal way along the lines of similar slogans used to describe Japan (as Land of the Rising Sun) and Korea (Land of the Morning Dew).

The project involved a large team of Kazakh and foreign experts, including journalists, photographers, videographers, graphic designers, programmers, totalling 80 people and 33 public and private organisations, working on the product for more than a year.

The Windows version of the application can be downloaded on the official website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mfa.gov.kz) or browsed online.

Journalist’s Day: Do You Have What It Takes to Become Kazakh TV Host?

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The English-speaking Kazakh TV staff recently unveiled what it is like to be a television host, the cultural shocks of being a foreign journalist in the country and who they respect. The exclusive interview with The Astana Times was conducted on the eve of the June 28 Kazakh Journalist Day.

“The English Service on Kazakh TV is in charge of the in-house daily news production,” said international information department producer and head Lyazzat Shatayeva. “We are primarily engaged in the selection of the local and international news, translation of news texts, editing and voice-over.”

Shatayeva noted the crew covers an event on-site when there is a need to originally report in English.

“This often happens at international events held in Astana, such as the Astana Economic Forum, Eurasian Media Forum and large business and cultural events involving the expatriate community, diplomats, foreign officials and speakers,” she said.

Kazakh TV targets a versatile adult audience, primarily expatriates living and working in Kazakhstan and English-speaking viewers abroad who are interested in learning about the nation.

“Since our audience is so diverse, we strive to extensively cover significant events taking place in Kazakhstan, offering a daily gist of general, political, cultural, business and sports developments,” said Shatayeva.

She noted broadcast journalism is not a regular office environment with 9-5 hours.

Continued on Page B4

Kazakh Teachers Begin Language Training in Move Toward Trilingual Education

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – More teachers in Kazakhstan will be getting second degrees in English as part of the country’s effort announced in the spring by Minister of Education and Science Yerlan Sagadiyev to move towards a trilingual education system by 2019.

“In general, we shall seriously deal with the pedagogical universities. We are preparing a specific programme for them. However, even in 2012, the number of pedagogical universities started to train a new generation of teachers in a pilot mode. Kokshetau University trains 200 students at the multilingual department. Over four years, the educational facility has trained mathematicians, physicists, chemists and environmentalists who can teach in English,” the minister said, according to Kazinform.

Head of Educational-Methodical Service at Shokan Ualikhanov Kokshetau State University Saule Iskenderova said it is necessary to prepare teachers and more than 50

of them are studying abroad under the Bolashak and Erasmus Mundus programmes.

The National Academy of Education is creating a trilingual education centre, which will monitor the new programme for multilingual schools. There are 168 such schools in the state and the number will be increased.

Teachers in Aktau have started to study languages. Seven school teachers of English also teach their colleagues.

“Teachers now really want to reach a level of language, which will allow them to teach in a different language. This is a real challenge. Therefore, English language teachers wrote a plan under which teachers were divided into groups, and courses were organised for them. Now, we are studying together,” School No. 13 Director Madina Abdieva said.

Transition to the trilingual system was discussed at the highest level. In March, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev emphasised that to speak several languages is important.

Preparations Underway for Astana Day



Photo credit: Alimzhan

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Capital Day will be more like capital two and a-half weeks, as an array of concerts, festivals, sporting events and shows are scheduled June 20-July 8 to celebrate the city’s birthday on July 6. The Library of the First President will hold exhibitions and foreign embassies will be taking part in the festivities.

“Dear residents and guests of Astana – We invite you to celebrate the Day of the Capital. We have prepared remarkable concerts, spectacular shows and sports events for you. Do not miss them,” read the announcement of the city’s culture, archives and documentation office.

An overview of events from July 3-8 includes the Elle Style Awards Kazakhstan 2016 at the Palace of Peace and Harmony (the Pyramid), Zhan Dosym concert at Congress Hall dedicated to the creativity of the country’s honoured figure Seidolla Baiterekov, Astana-Arkau Turkic Music Festival in Astana Opera Theatre and Serper National Instruments Orchestra festival in the city square, according to the Kazpravda.kz.

Sports enthusiasts will enjoy the international kite festival on Saraiskyh Street and figure skater Evgeni Plushenko’s Snezhnyy Korol 2 (Snow King 2) show at Kazakhstan Sports Palace. Comedy lovers will want to attend the Konildi Astana humor eve at Congress Hall, while music lovers

should circle the dates for the first Turkish Choir karaoke festival at Baiterek Square and the ABK and Muzart concerts at Alau Ice Palace and Central Concert Hall.

Various embassies will also take part in the celebration. The U.S. Embassy will offer performances by Broadway Bound at the Pyramid and the open area near Baiterek Tower. The Italian Embassy has invited flag bearers to participate in the Samaly Brass Orchestra festival, according to NewTimes.kz.

The Library of the First President will hold open days July 1-10 timed with the capital’s birthday.

“The Day of Astana big festive date is approaching. This year, the city turns 18 years old. It is adulthood by age measurements of hu-

man life,” said Library Director Beisembai Zhumabekov during a Central Communications Service press conference.

“It is symbolic that we mark this event in the jubilee year of Kazakhstan’s 25th anniversary of independence. In over 18 years, the capital has grown into a big and beautiful city. We have achieved great success thanks to the head of state. The library plans to hold 10 days of open doors while celebrating the day of the city,” he added.

The library has prepared activities for the occasion including five exhibitions with photo documentary archival footage devoted to the life of Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan’s First President, noted its website.

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

ASTANA OPERA

- July 2 at 9 p.m.** La Bayadere, Ballet (at the square in front of Independence Palace)
- July 6 at 6 p.m.** Abai, Opera
- July 10 at 6 p.m.** Birzhan-Sara, Opera

GORKY DRAMA THEATRE

- July 3 at 6 p.m.** Life that lasts more than a century, Concert
- July 2 at 6 p.m.** Romeo And Juliet, Modern Direction Spectacle

KAZAK YELI SQUARE

- July 5 at 10 a.m.** Arkaim – the Sun City, interactive 3D entertainments city

PEOPLE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

Social Activist and TV Presenter Says Success Comes Through Hard Work

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Director of the Miloserdie (“Mercy”) Volunteer Society, social activist, actress, producer and TV presenter Aruzhan Sain, 40, is one of the most famous and successful women in Kazakhstan. Sain wasn’t chosen for TV for her connections, but through her own hard work and determination, she says.

“I was six years old when I was sent to ballet. Instead of watching TV and relaxing with girlfriends, my mom took me to a ballet class taught by Honoured Artist and amazing teacher Natalia Vikentievna. Ballet teaches you everything: how to forget about children’s games, to sweat your guts out, to fall and to rise, to learn to live with bloody calluses. It teaches you to overcome. ... Thanks to these lessons all things become possible. Now my chil-



Aruzhan Sain

dren do ballet as well, and we explain to them that it is more than dance,” Sain said in an interview with Kazpravda.kz.

As a child, Sain spoke only Russian, but in fifth grade, she asked her parents to send her to a Kazakh school. “Thanks to the love and patience of the teachers, I managed to quite quickly deal

with the adaptation period. In grades nine to 11, I defended the school’s honour in city competitions. I took third place in mathematics, first in geography. When it came time to go to a national competition I chose geography, because my parents – physicists and mathematicians themselves – insisted,” she said.

In Sain’s words, after school, she wanted to enroll in a theatre institute, but her father forbade it. Since she had twice won national geography contests, Sain was able to enroll in the geographical faculty of KazGU (Kazakhstan State University), where the faculty of ecology and monitoring had just opened, without taking entrance exams. She graduated from KazGU, but never practiced her academic profession.

“Actually, I worked all the time. I earned my first money at age 13, selling newspapers. At age 15, I was a choreographer in the Na-

tional House of Culture,” she said.

Answering a question about how she became a TV presenter, Sain said that everything began with “Razminka” (“Warm-up”), the first such TV programme in Kazakhstan.

“People say that it is necessary to have influential relatives and profitable connections to be a TV star; actually, I am evidence that this is not the case. It is impossible to deceive viewers. You might be on TV 24 hours a day, but if you are not sincere, people will not remember and recognise you,” she said.

As Sain explained, the year of her graduation from school, she won a part in a commercial that called for a graduating student. There she met a girl, Zamira, who would become her business partner.

After entering the university, Sain met talented dancer Sergei Dulesov. Together, they created the ballet, “Divertissement.” The

team practiced modern choreography using videotapes of Michael Jackson and Madonna dancing.

When Aruzhan and Zamira went to the 31st TV channel with their project, TV producers accepted it and started to broadcast. In 1994, they created a production centre, Aruzhan and Co.

“That is how ‘Razminka’ started 23 years ago. Perhaps there is no older Kazakh programme than this. It is both a reason for pride and a reminder of our age: we are almost contemporaries of independence. I think that for many people, ‘Razminka’ is a sign of stability: if the morning starts with it, then everything is well in the country. Many of our viewers are 30 or even 40 years old. However, my favourite viewers are children. Sometimes, people who meet me in the street say that their children stop crying when they hear the sounds of ‘Razminka,’” she said.

“Children are an audience you cannot deceive with clothes, words, views, smiles, the way this can sometimes be done with adults. If they stop watching you, then you need to finish everything and get involved in other things,” Sain added.

In April 2006, Sain founded a charity fund through the Save Children’s Lives campaign. Her charity raises money to treat children who suffer from diseases that are incurable in Kazakhstan and provides assistance to orphanages and child care centres.

The main objective of the fund is to be a communication link between those who want to help and those who need help. People can help with money, services, volunteer activities or professional knowledge, according to the official website of the foundation.

Sain has been given the Altyn Zhurek (“Golden Heart”) award.

Kazakhs Were Involved in European WWII Resistance Movements, New Project Reveals

By Kamila Zhumbabayeva

ASTANA – Recent publications have revealed more to the general public about the participation of Kazakhs in European resistance movements during World War II, in particular about former Soviet war prisoners who were sent by Germany to work in France, Holland and Belgium but did not accept their fate and continued to fight against the invaders.

Kazakhs’ involvement in combat actions in Europe is being studied in the “Participation of Kazakhs in the Second World War in Western Europe” project. Professor Gulnara Mendikulova has

contributed significantly to the research, Voxpopuli.kz reports.

“I encountered this subject for the first time in November 1994. Back then, during a trip to New York, I managed to meet and interview two former Kazakh Turkestan legionaries: Kuntugan Bazilbek and Mukhtar Karabai. These were the first interviews with former legionaries in the history of Kazakhstan’s science at that moment. This subject remained banned for a long time,” said Mendikulova in her interview with Vox Populi.

The Turkestan Legion were units of Turkic peoples who fought for the German army during the war. Many of them were

captured Soviet soldiers turned collaborators.

Research is showing that many Kazakhs involved in the French Resistance movement were former war prisoners who joined the Turkestan Legion and who then escaped from Germans to partisan units.

“Parts of the Turkestan Legion were moved to Europe in early 1944. The legion’s headquarters were located in the small town of Albi in southern France. At the beginning, legionaries were used in fighting local partisans, but this idea failed, as captives began to bond with participants of the French Resistance movement,” the professor explained.

Quite soon, through various channels, legionaries established contacts with maquisards or maquis, rural partisan bands of French Resistance fighters. Former Soviet captives organised escapes and helped fill their ranks. Among those who escaped and joined the resistance were many Kazakhs, according to the Vox Populi report.

Ukrainian Petr Dyachuk and a doctor from Shymkent, Akhmet Bektayev, headed an underground organisation and designed escape schemes for legionaries who wanted to desert from the German garrison, Mendikulova said. “For example, if someone fell seriously ill, Bektayev had the right to send him to a hospital in Albi. A few people were sent to accompany the sick and carry the stretcher. On the way to the hospital, maquis would pretend to attack and take all the captives with them. Together with his associates, Bektayev organised more large-scale escapes. Along with Dyachuk, he managed to smuggle 97 people to partisans during his underground organisation’s activity.”

Former war prisoners pulled off a mass escape from the Albi camp in July 1944. Shortly after, a separate battalion of Soviet captives and then the first Soviet partisan regiment was formed.

In 1944, there were about 50 Soviet partisan units all over France. Former legionaries and

war prisoners from the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic had fought as part of Stalingrad and Mongol units. Their fighters successfully attacked small Nazi garrisons, destroying compounds with valuable cargo on railway tracks and rescuing captives from camps of southern France. At the end of 1944, they participated in the liberation of Albi, Carmaux, Toulouse, Montauban, Carcassonne and other towns, the report stated.

Among commanders of units distinguished by their heroism were the Kazakhs Zunum Zhamankulov and Kadem Zhumaniyazov. Zhumaniyazov commanded an intelligence unit. He mastered German and French. His unit prepared concentration camp prisoners for release. Sometimes

disguised as a German, Zhumaniyazov would get into war camps on his own.

Freed Soviet captives remained in France until the fall of 1945, when they started to return home. In total, 26,000 Kazakhs were repatriated from European countries, Vox Populi notes.

Mendikulova often gets asked to find out the fate of relatives who went missing during the war. They send their loved ones’ memories, valuable documents and old photographs. The research work on Kazakhs’ participation in World War II continues. Mendikulova wants to continue studying European archives and then summarise all the data she has gathered into one collection of documents and records.



Photo credit: Gulnara Mendikulova's archive, from Voxpopuli.kz



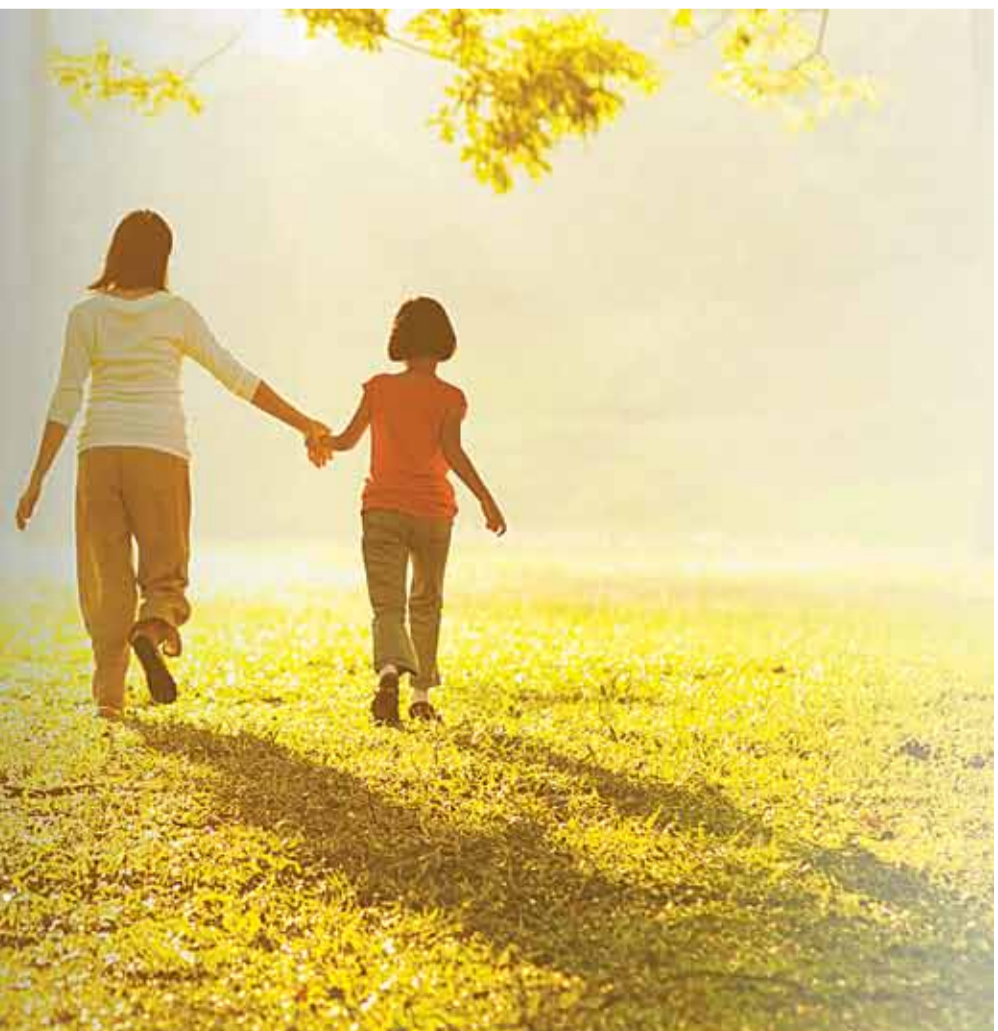
Photo credit: Gulnara Mendikulova, from Voxpopuli.kz



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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

National Museum Presents New Exhibition 'Outlook into Future: Actual Heritage'



By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Outlook into the Future: Actual Heritage opened June 23 at the Kazakh National Museum. The museum, the youngest and biggest in Central Asia, was created two years ago in conjunction with the Cultural Heritage state programme.

Situated on the country's main Independence Square, the museum is harmoniously blended into a unified architectural set with the Kazakh Eli monument, Palace of Independence, Palace of Peace and Harmony, Hazrat Sultan Mosque and Kazakh National University of Arts. The building, with

an unusual exterior shape of seven white and green-coloured blocks, occupies an area of 74,000 square metres. President Nursultan Nazarbayev opened it in 2014.

The museum's exhibit area includes Astana hall, Independent Kazakhstan hall, the gold halls, ancient and medieval history halls and history, ethnography and contemporary art halls. The gallery also houses a children's museum, child creativity centre, two exhibition halls, restoration workshops, laboratories, professional fund storage, scientific library with reading hall, a conference room and souvenir stalls, according to its website.

The museum is equipped with modern exhibition technologies such as a unique curved screen with special content, media floor, mock layout of the modern capital, numerous media screens, holograms, LED technology, sensory stalls and trilingual multimedia guide, added the website. Surveys, thematic and philosophical trips and special programmes such as interactive activities and game excursions are being developed.

"The national museum aims to become a modern intellectual culture institution, a site for analysis, comparison, thinking, discussion, statements and evaluation of Ka-

zakhstan's historical and cultural heritage. A modern museum is always about an open dialogue with a visitor. Everything possible was done to make guests of this museum active participants in a conversation with history," director Darkhan Mynbai noted on the website's blog.

Outlook into the Future: Actual Heritage was developed with the assistance of Astana EXPO 2017, noted the museum's press release. Works are on display by artists such as Saken Narynov, Rashida Nurekeyeva and Yelena Vorobyova, each of whom crafts in various mediums and has been involved in forming the country's spiritual



memory. The goal of the project is to popularise the creativity of Kazakh artists who are better known abroad than in their motherland.

"In our history of culture there were different periods. The exhibited works belong today to one of the genres of art that refers to a period of independence. ... Artists whose works are displayed at today's exhibition are talented masters; through their works our country becomes known all over the world. We welcome and are very pleased that our art and our culture are developing in all areas and genres," said Mynbai at the opening, according to the press release.

Has Sanat Gallery Showcases Work, Nurtures Talent

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – The Has Sanat art gallery in Astana displays an eclectic mix of foreign and local artists to capital residents – but beyond being just a showplace, the gallery supports the development of art in Kazakhstan, working with artists, maintaining close relationships with them and continuing to follow their work and support them.

The gallery has been fully functional since 2003. "The gallery's renovation took a very long time; I came up with its design on my own. Foreigners come to our gallery saying they have seen a lot of galleries but this is the best in Kazakhstan," Director of Has Sanat Zhanat Ensebayeva shared in an interview with The Astana Times.

The gallery's primary task is to familiarise the capital's residents with unique creations by both local and foreign artists of different generations, uncover new names in

the art world and create an artistic environment for developing young talents. Has Sanat means "true" or "genuine art."

"All galleries do good deeds. However, we are not simply a salon or a shop that sells paintings, but an actual gallery that works with artists over many years. Some of our artists exhibit their works here twice or more. We do public relations and advertising, and they are often covered in the media," she said.

Has Sanat conducts exhibitions of contemporary artists and sculptors. The gallery bonds with its artists, watching their growth even after an exhibition is over and the next is coming up.

"We love artists, that is why this all is genuine and mutual. We also try to attract more viewers by working with Astana residents and guests. About 13 or 14 years ago just random visitors were here; now we have fanciers of arts who constantly attend all exhibitions,

and it is always very pleasant to see them because all the work being done at the gallery is done for people. It is very important for us that people visit galleries," Ensebayeva stressed.

It has been 10 years since the gallery's major international Altyn Gasyr ("Golden Century") project started in 2006.

"We had a start in Moscow, in the city centre. ... We were exhibiting 100 paintings by Kazakh artists. Then the exhibition moved to Warsaw, Berlin, Stuttgart, Munich, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, The Hague, Vienna, Brussels, and other locations. We always exhibited at nice halls and museums and thereby introduced our country to viewers," the director commented.

In 2009, she arranged an exhibition in London's famous Sotheby's auction house, where 30 paintings by Kazakh artists were exhibited for a month, with thousands of people viewing the work.

Back in Astana, an exhibition by



Zhanat Ensebayeva

well-known Almaty-based artist Vyacheslav Lui-ko was launched June 6 and is still open, Ensebayeva said.

"It's his first exhibition in Astana and an interesting one. I recommend seeing it. Every exhibition that we have is unique and we select the artists very carefully. We are always on a high level; we can't fall to the average level or below. The originality of each exhibition here must be undisputed," she said.

Astana Hosts Concert Featuring Argentine Pianist Luis Ascot



Argentine pianist Luis Ascot.

Staff Report

ASTANA – Argentine pianist and Geneva Conservatory of Music honorary professor Luis Ascot presented a concert at the Astana Opera Chamber Hall June 16 featuring works by Chopin and Liszt and the Argentine tango.

Performing on the main stages of the U.S., Europe, India and China, the musician always includes works by Liszt and Alberto Ginastera in the programme, according to theatre's press release.

An outstanding interpreter of Ginastera's works, Ascot has promoted the composer's music throughout his career. He received critical acclaim for his performance of Ginastera's piano works and his Concert No.1 for Piano and Orchestra, Op.28.

"My interpretation of Alberto Ginastera's music is close to the emotions that the composer wanted to invest in his own creation when he created it. Primarily, I always serve the composer and take responsibility for the interpretation of each piece which I play," said Ascot.

The concert featured Chopin's Nocturne in C-sharp Minor, Op.48 No.1 and Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major, Op.47; Haydn's Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI / 35; Astor Piazzolla's Angel Trilogy; Liszt's Consolation No. 3 in D-flat Major, S.172 and Petrarch Sonnet No.104 in E Major and Ginastera's Milonga, Sonata No.1, Op. 22.

The event was held with the support of the Swiss Embassy in Kazakhstan.



Has Sanat Art Gallery.

COUNTRY

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

Kazakh Language Classes Launched in Maryland



By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Weekend courses on the Kazakh language have begun in a primary school in Maryland with the support of the Kazakh-American Association and the Kazakh diaspora in the U.S.

Kazakh classes for children and adults are offered on Saturdays and pay close attention to the correct use of grammar and style, reported 24.kz. Most students come from the Washing-

ton, D.C., area or Richmond, Virginia.

According to President of the Kazakh-American Association Darkhan Nurmagambetov, such schools contribute to the preservation of Kazakh culture, language, traditions and customs among Kazakhs living outside the country. The Kazakh diaspora in the larger Washington, D.C., metro area can maintain ties with Kazakhstan, celebrate national holidays and practice their native language, thanks to these enthusiasts.

“We have students with different levels of preparation, but all of them are eager to learn the Kazakh language. There are some people who speak Kazakh and want to raise their level of language to start reading books in Kazakh. The classes are organised at the Westbrook Elementary School. It is a prevailing tradition: on weekends, people from different cultures try to deepen their knowledge and maintain links with their culture,” said Kazakh language expert Edige Magovin.

Many American institutions offer their premises during weekends to cultural centres.

“We are very pleased that the Kazakh-American Association in Washington opened this unique Kazakh language course. This gives us the opportunity to be associated with our country and to not forget our culture and traditions,” said Natalia Caryl, who has enrolled in the new language classes.

35 Green Buses Introduced in Almaty



By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – The Green Bus Company bought 35 new buses of the brand Daewoo that use envi-

ronmentally friendly fuel – compressed natural gas (methane). Qazaq Banki has joined the project as the funding partner.

The official presentation of the buses was June 20 and was attend-

ed by Akim (Mayor) of the city Baurzhan Baibek, Director of the bus company Baurzhan Kulishev and Managing Director of Qazaq Banki Igor Zavyalov.

“We are very pleased to contribute to the development of ecological public transport in the cities of Kazakhstan. Thus, in 2014, the bank financed the purchase of 200 new buses running on natural gas, which are currently engaged in passenger transportation in the city of Shymkent,” said Zavyalov. This joint project also creates new job places.

“The event is socially significant not only for Almaty and its citizens; it is also a landmark for our dynamically developing bank,” the top manager of Qazaq Banki added.

The new vehicles are meant to improve the city’s ecological situation and public transport system. The project was implemented with the support of Almaty’s Akimat (the city’s administration).

Journalist’s Day: Do You Have What It Takes to Become Kazakh TV Host?

Continued from Page B1

“It’s a job that requires commitment, utmost accountability, working under pressure and overtime without a guaranteed or measurable return on effort. People here are passionate about what they do, often against all odds. Most of their dedication to quality reporting, excellence in performance and ethics comes from wanting to serve the people, make a positive impact and be part of a progressive change. When people are driven by higher goals like those, incredible things happen,” said Shatayeva.

dia personality and credibility as an information source. I often try to find somebody to look up to, identify a person who is best at a similar job in the same industry,” she said.

Shatayeva noted she admires CNN anchors Anderson Cooper and Becky Anderson “for their strong presence and passion for excellent reporting and coverage of serious news.” The Young Turks’ Ana Kasparian and her all-time favourite, veteran Russian journalist Vladimir Pozner.

“Finding someone to look up to, learning from them, imitating them

only American working alongside locals in the capital as a reporter, I feel a sense of belonging to a close-knit team,” he said.

Stanton enjoys the opportunities he has been given by the network to meet interesting people and explore the culture.

“Working for Kazakh TV gives me the unique opportunity to look deeply into Kazakh politics, culture and traditions. In my opinion, it is one of the main elements one needs to do to understand the perspective of the country you are living in. For example ‘Global Talk,’ my television show that I host, lets me break out of the normal office routine and allows me to head to some of the top political events. When I am at these events, I am usually interviewing between six and eight high level managers, heads of companies, entrepreneurs and government officials from here and abroad,” he said.

During his first round of interviews with locals, he felt their initial shock of seeing a foreign reporter conducting news about Kazakhstan, a curiosity he still encounters from time to time.

“But on the other hand, the emotions that are portrayed by them are also a sense of eagerness and warmth, as well as an openness to answer my questions and learn more about my purpose here. I have witnessed the evolution of the Kazakh TV platform from the beginning I started to work here until now and I can tell you that Kazakh TV has a true willingness to become one of the top channels for expats wanting to know about Kazakhstan, not only domestically but also abroad,” he said.

Stanton feels the essential and timely role of the team.

“I believe Kazakh TV’s horizon is a bright one if we keep on track and push out quality content. I am honoured to be a witness to all the

transformations going on with the channel and I am excited for what the future holds,” he said.

Insider’s Nuts and Bolts

Staff member Dana Omirgazy explained the challenges of being a translator in the department.

“Working as a news translator you simultaneously become a journalist. You just can’t translate mechanically. In fact, you need to write news stories in English and produce information in a specific

way. It’s crucial to be able to present all the necessary information in a limited word count and provide the most important information to your targeted audience,” she said.

While translating and composing news stories, reports, programmes and articles in English, Omirgazy added it is essential not only to understand the language and consider the small differences of perception, but also the culture, linguistics and idioms in the language. Particular focus must be

given to the style of information interpretation and accurate paraphrasing.

“Also to ensure a news story’s accuracy, we need to confirm the facts. Fact-checking is quite challenging and is a time-consuming process,” Omirgazy said.

“Kazakh TV is promoting the country’s image abroad; therefore I feel a great responsibility to perform my work with dignity in presenting life inside the country to foreign viewers,” she said.



The department is composed of translators, editors, anchors and voice-over artists. Yet at times, “everyone is a reporter, too, when needed,” she added.

Speaking of hosting her own programme, she admitted the job is challenging. That challenge, however, is not the language.

“I majored in English at the university and have spoken it as a working language throughout my entire career. As a TV host, I am on a continuous search to improve my presence, voice, pronunciation, speech clarity and pace, emotions that go with it, likeability as a me-

until I master the craft and find my own style is my approach to growing professionally. As Miles Davis once said, ‘sometimes you have to play a long time to be able to play like yourself,’” she said.

A Foreigner on Kazakh Television

Chris Stanton is a foreign journalist working for Kazakh TV as a presenter and editor. He blended right in with the crew.

“First, when I arrived I felt an instant connection with my colleagues. Even though I am the



Photo credit: Khabar Agency, JSC

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SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

Book Project Enthusiasts Promote Literacy, Love of Reading

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – With her blossoming book project, I Book You, Marina Sharipova hopes to get her country reading. I Book You (ibookyou.kz) is a non-commercial project about books and readers with the ultimate mission of instilling an interest in reading and making reading a national priority. More than 16 book exchanges, including the children's storytelling and charity event "Blind Date with a Book," have been organised in Almaty, Astana, Aktope and Shymkent since 2014.

This year, a book exchange event will be held July 30 in the capital.

The idea to start a blog about books came to Sharipova in 2013 while she was on maternity leave and working as a freelance author and blogger. Starting a business while on maternity leave is an emerging trend in Kazakhstan.

Currently, Sharipova is working as an editor at the Look.tm lifestyle portal and is involved in reading challenges and video blogging.

"The idea of a reading blog came to my mind when I thought about a socially useful project. Initially, I wanted to organise a book fest, but I decided to start with an online project, and a year later we started to organise the book exchange events and meetings with readers. There are currently four members of the team: myself, Aina Dosmakhambetkyzy, Ainash Itkulova and Aidana Togysbayeva. We all



Marina Sharipova

write posts, run the social network [and] work on the events," said Sharipova in a recent interview with The Astana Times.

According to Sharipova, the inaugural investment was 3,000 tenge (US\$9) for the domain purchase. As the organisation of events and the blog itself do not produce a significant profit, the project's activities basically can be called a hobby.

Book lovers involved with the project usually meet on Saturday mornings in a city cafe. They exchange books, get acquainted with each other, take part in a literary quiz and enjoy a morning coffee with friends.

"We have constant participants now who bring books that they took on previous book swaps. The

most common age of our readers is between 25 and 35, mostly women. The most popular genres are fiction, current bestsellers and classic literature. Participants also bring children's literature, non-fiction books and books in Kazakh and English. The most participants we ever had was almost 200 people at one time. They hardly fit into the cafe, and almost 1,000 books were exchanged," she said.

The latest I Book You swap was held at the My Café restaurant with an entrance fee of 1,000 tenge (US\$3) or a pack of diapers. The organisers raised 100,000 tenge (US\$296.16) and bought 25 packs of diapers for a pediatric oncology department.

"We have done two charity events with the initiative 'Be Better for Kids.' Both aimed to help the pediatric oncology department of the National Centre of Pediatrics and Surgery. Blind Date with a Book was hosted by Esentai Mall. We covered the books with brown paper and wrote hints for readers about what was inside. The funds raised were used to buy new books for children in the department," Sharipova said.

Sharipova says she and other organisers have received a lot of letters from participants saying that thanks to the I Book You blog, they've started reading again. Half their readers say e-books are more convenient, while the rest still love paper books.

"As for me, I prefer paper books and I have a spacious home library,



(L-R) Aina Dosmakhambetkyzy, Aidana Togysbayeva, Marina Sharipova and Ainash Itkulova.

but I always carry an e-book when I travel," Sharipova said.

"Even though there is a high interest in our blog activities, reading is not a very common or popular in Almaty and other cities as well, I guess," she said on

why reading culture seems underdeveloped in Kazakhstan. "When we walk, ride the subway or visit restaurants, we hardly ever see a person reading a book. At the same time, we have very ambitious plans and want to launch

the next edition of I Book You Boxes [gift sets for book lovers], launch a photo project and the biggest plan—I can't tell now, but we hope that it will be something very new to Kazakhstan," she said.

Astana, Almaty Host International Day of Yoga Celebrations



By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The Embassy of India in Astana organised special events to celebrate the second International Day of Yoga in Astana and Almaty on June 19. Karaganda is expecting the event on June 26.

In the capital the celebration was in front of the Baiterek monument with the participation of 425 people. It started with a welcome address by Ambassador of India in Kazakhstan Harsh Kumar Jain, who also read out Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message on the second International Day of Yoga.

The Kazakh government was represented by Serik Zharasbayev, deputy chairman of the Committee of Sports, Ministry of Culture and Sports. Ambassador of South Africa Shirish Soni and Ambassador of Norway Ole Johan Bjørnøy also spoke on the occasion.

After the common yoga protocol, over 250 participants joined the "Sun Salutations (Surya Namaskar) – Marathon."

In Almaty, the celebration was held at the main auditorium of

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Special yoga sessions and Indian cultural performances continued throughout the day at the venue until the evening.

In Karaganda, the celebration

will be held in Central Park at 9 am. June 21 was declared International Yoga Day by the United Nations General Assembly and was celebrated for the first time last year.



Special Website Reduces Number of Orphans

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – A website created under the Kazakhstan without Orphans project is hoping to assist the nation towards that goal.

Usynovite.kz, (which stands for Adopt.kz) established by DOM Social Fund, works to promote all ways of placing children in families, including adoption, guardianship and patronage. The idea was to create an open database of children without parental custody who receive state support in public institutions. Operating since 2012, the website has made a sufficient contribution to reducing the number of orphans in the state.

"There is a stereotype in our society that adoption is very difficult and bureaucratic procedures take a lot of time that it is not worth dealing with. We make sure that access to information, including all forms of placing children with families and registration procedures, creates a correct attitude to adoption," said DOM Social Fund Executive Director Tatyana Semyonova.

Usynovite.kz has a database about thousands of children without parental custody and contains responses to questions concerning adoption, rights, procedures and the duties of adoptive parents. Since its inception, children without parental support have found families. Led by Auzhan Sain, the project is supported by Samruk Kazyna National Wealth Fund.

"We aim to give access and not to disturb a child. There is no information about the location of any child at our website. Any potential parent has to contact a special state body to meet a child," said Semyonova.

The social fund has an agreement with the Children Rights Protection Committee under the Ministry of Education and Science. The state agency, which maintains all the data about chil-



Tatyana Semyonova

dren in foster homes, is currently the only group with access to the information.

"In 2012, the head of the committee Raissa Sher strongly supported our initiative, giving full information," she added. "But we have problems. Today we have only part of the information, because it isn't well provided by regional guardianship and custodianship agencies. The guardianship and custodianship agencies don't provide the information in time and to the full extent."

While the social fund considers the website "a really good tool," the work of matching children and families is a daunting one, she added.

"The problem is that we have thousands of children in foster houses and we have a number of potential parents. But the parents don't have access to information about the children," she said.

Usynovite.kz is completely operational and at no cost to the government.

"Some regional guardianship and custodianship agencies cooperate with us and the results of the cooperation are excellent. For example, recently several foster houses were closed in Pavlodar region. This is the result of effective cooperation between the Pavlodar guardianship and custodianship agency and our organisation. The same situation is with Almaty region," said Semyonova.

TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

Zerenda: Place to Enjoy Nature

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – For city residents who want to escape the urban setting for a weekend or visit a quiet place with picturesque nature, Zerenda can be a great choice. Located only 300 kilometres from the capital, the village is often called “mini-Borovoye” for its scenic views, or as people say, “more calm.”

The easiest way to travel to Zerenda is by bus, car or train to Kokshetau, followed by taxi to the town. Those with cars can initially drive to Kokshetau or Schuchinsk, then to Zerenda.

Part of the Kokshetau State National Nature Park, Zerenda is one of the most beautiful places in Ak-mola region. It spans 25-30 by 60 kilometres and has clear blue lakes and springs, pine and birch groves and poplar and willow basins. While walking in the woods, the mountains or the plain, visitors can enjoy crystal waters, golden sands and lakes with wild swans, ducks and geese.

A number of vacation homes line the shores of Lake Zerenda and hundreds of people visit every year. Tourists can enjoy hiking and horseback trails, while boats and

equipment are available for fishing fans.

The name is derived from the cloven-hoofed animals that once lived on the territory, according to online sources. The gazelles were usually called zeren and Kazakhs referred to the area as Zerenda, “the place where zeren live.”

One of the popular spots to stay is Zeren Recreation Centre, located on the shores of the lake. It offers rooms, as well as houses equipped with a kitchen, fireplace, lounge and two bedrooms, where visitors can spend time with family and friends. Prices start at 17,600 tenge (US\$52.36) per night for a double room, including three meals a day, swimming pool and gym.

Sunkar Recreation Complex also provides a wide range of options. Prices start at 18,400 tenge (US\$57.54) per night for a double room with the same services as part of the package.

Visitors may also choose Karagaily Holiday Home. The inn has tennis courts, a playground, Finnish sauna with relaxation room, bar, cafe, fishing, crabbing and boats for rent. Accommodations can be in rooms or houses. Prices start at 9,850 tenge (US\$29.30) per night for a double room, excluding meals.



Many Zerenda vacation spots offer health treatments such as mud baths, cedar barrel saunas and baths with herbs and a relaxing massage. It is a great way to not only see the beauty of Kazakhstan, but free the mind and body from everyday stress.

North Kazakhstan Encourages More Diverse Investment, Seeks to Boost Tourism

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – North Kazakhstan region is seeking to maximise its unique potential to develop the areas of agriculture and tourism, the region’s deputy akim (governor) Mukhtar Mankeyev said as he outlined the priority sectors for investment and an action plan to develop both portions of the economy.

The region plays a special role as the country’s major agricultural area, with a gross agricultural output last year amounting to 39.2 billion tenge (US\$115 million). In May, the administration announced plans to attract more than 170 billion tenge (US\$503 million) in investments in 2016.

Taiynshinski district anticipates drawing more than 21 billion tenge (US\$63 million) for construction of the EFKO SKO and Taiynsha Mai oilseed processing plants, a flour production organisation and construction of a Classic Agro deep processing grain plant. Musrepov district expects to attract 36.1 billion tenge (US\$107 million) in investments. Projects such as processing straw into cellulose, construction of a cattle feedlot by Atameken Agro Shukyrkol, dairy farms and a mini-elevator built by Priishimsky AF are expected to begin this year.

“We have a clear plan to attract more than \$300 million in investments, including nine projects with international partners during the period of 2016-2018,” Mankeyev said in an exclusive interview for this story. “Some of the foreign direct investment projects have already started.”

“One of the main tasks that has been set by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in the 100 Concrete Steps Programme is to attract investments. The attraction of additional investments is the only way to be a competitive region. Due to the work in a given direction, it is possible to create new jobs and increase the state budget income, thereby providing the overall successful socio-economic development of the region,” said Mankeyev.

North Kazakhstan is placing significant emphasis on attracting domestic and foreign direct investment, he added. The current period of low oil prices has provided a stimulus for developing the agricultural region by expanding agriculture processing.

A joint project with a Russian Machine-Building Plant to produce agricultural machinery and construct a greenhouse complex was also announced in May.

“One of the foremost and most important projects for the region is the localisation of tractor production and agricultural and domestic machinery jointly with the Russian Machine-Building Plant,” said Mankeyev.



Mukhtar Mankeyev

“It is a joint enterprise with Petropavlovsk Tractor Plant that is being prepared for the plant facilities, delivery and installation of equipment and carrying all communication lines for the opening in July 2016. Today only in our region, about 14,000 vehicles have been operating more than ten years and need to be replaced. By launching this project, we are aiming to cover 30 percent of the region’s needs for high-power machines. The technical characteristics of the tractor are not inferior to foreign counterparts, but the cost of the tractor is three times less.”

The region is known for its inviting nature and unforgettable places to enjoy eco-tourism, such as Shalkar and Imantau lakes. Another unique location is the Botai village, the settlement of ancient breeders who are believed to be the first to domesticate the horse, which is now included on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage List.

Ensuring comfortable accommodations for tourists is equally important. Hampton Inn by Hilton is scheduled to open next year in Petropavlovsk.

“Last year we attracted almost one billion tenge (US\$2.9 million) for the development of tourism, including the construction of Green Park, a modern recreation centre, and a European hotel-restaurant complex. The Greenwich four-star hotel and Mirage, a premium class restaurant, were also launched this year. By the end of the year, there are plans to implement 12 investment projects in the tourist heart of our region – Aiyr-

tau district – including the construction of modern recreation areas and hunting grounds,” he said.

The region has the largest number of lakes, totaling more than 3,000, and conditions have been created for fishing and hunting.

“One of the lovely places for local and visiting fishers is Tarangul Lake that is well known for its magnificent diversity of fish. In May, the event entitled ‘Den Karasya’ (The Day of the Crucian Carp) was held with Kazakh and Russian fishers to develop the field of fisheries. We are planning to build new hunting bases and develop new kinds of tourism including horse and dog riding, quad bike, fire shows and a lot more,” said Mankeyev.

In June, Petropavlovsk hosted the first regional exhibition, Kyzylzhar – Tourism 2016, with the participation of 23 representatives from nine Kazakh and Russian regions and more than 1,000 individuals from North Kazakhstan region.

The number of tourists from neighbouring Russian regions, including the cities of Kurgan, Omsk and Tyumen, recently increased three fold.

“The information materials were sent to 85 tourist firms in Astana, Ak-mola region, Kostanai and Pavlodar and to the nearest Russian regions. The information about tourist places of Aiyrtau district and the country’s landmarks was also broadcast on the national channels. The information about tourist facilities was placed on international websites such as Booking.com and Apartamenty.kz,” he said.

Mankeyev noted the tourism industry has the largest multiplier effect on economic development; therefore, one of the main emphases of the region’s work has been placed on its growth.

“Our region is included in the state concept of tourism development until 2020. This fact suggests the possibility to provide higher employment, conserve natural biological resources and improve awareness of the North Kazakhstan oblast as a tourist region by using a comprehensive approach to boosting tourism. This would be done using the cluster approach in tourism industry development. Schuchinsk-Burabay Resort, Iman-tau and Shalkar lakes and Kokshetau National Park are included in the Astana cluster and have common history and cultural attractions, as well as are connected to a common transport infrastructure. This creates conditions for the further development of high-grade domestic and international tourism in our region,” he said.

EXPO 2017 to Host Tourism Ministerial Forum

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and EXPO 2017 plan to hold a joint conference on “Tourism and the Energy of the Future” in late June during the exposition. More than 150 tourism ministers will participate in the event, reported the expo press office.

Astana Expo 2017 Board Chairman Akhmetzhan Yessimov and UNWTO General Secretary Taleb Rifai signed a memorandum of cooperation between the company and the UN tourism organisation.

“We believe that this forum held during our exhibition will become an effective platform for promoting sustainable tourism in Kazakhstan, because EXPO 2017 in Astana will be the largest international event next year and the UN WTO is the leading organisation in the field of tourism,” said Yessimov.

The memorandum envisions participation by representatives

of the national company at UN-WTO working group meetings dedicated to the Silk Road programme, as well as training tour operators and instructors as exhibition guides.

“The memorandum will provide a new level of bilateral cooperation between our organisations and, hopefully, will make a significant contribution to the promotion of Kazakhstan’s tourism brand,” said Rifai.

During the EXPO 2017 report presented at the 159th session of the International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE) General Assembly in Paris, representatives stated Kazakhstan will unilaterally lift visa requirements next year for Malaysia, Monaco, Singapore and 35 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), most of which are members of the European Union (EU). The decision will have a positive effect on the inflow of foreign tourists during major international events in Kazakhstan, including the expo.

At least 5 million visits are expected at the exhibition that will

host approximately 3,000 thematic activities and entertainment events during a 90-day event.

In an effort to attract foreign tourists during major international events, successfully promote its tourist destinations as well as develop the Kazakh brand, Yessimov met with Marta Blanco, general director of Turespaña in Madrid.

“Taking into account that Turespaña is in charge of Spanish marketing in the world and manages the tourist brand of the country that enabled the kingdom to become a third country in the world for the number of received foreign tourists and to receive 6 percent of all tourists in the world, we hope our strategic partnership with your national organisation will primarily be in the sphere of attracting a large number of foreign guests,” said Yessimov.

The parties agreed to continue negotiations on issues of mutual interest with the aim of bringing the partnership agreement to a new level.

Kazakhstan to Expand Visa-Free List of Countries

Staff Report

This solution to grant more countries visa-free regime will increase the inflow of foreign tourists during the major international event EXPO 2017.

This statement was made during the reporting of the delegation of Astana EXPO 2017, headed by Chairman Akhmetzhan Yessimov at the 159th session of the General Assembly of the International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE) in Paris.

So, from next year the visa-free regime will be established for 35 countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), most of them from the European Union, as well as for Monaco, Malaysia, Singapore

“This decision will have a positive impact on the inflow of foreign tourists during major international events in Kazakhstan, among which the most important will be the EXPO 2017 specialised exhibition in Astana,” explained the press service of the Astana EXPO 2017 national company.



(L-R) Kazakhstan’s EXPO 2017 Commissioner Rapil Zhoshybayev, Bureau of International Exhibitions (BIE) Secretary-General Vicente Loscertales, Chairman of Astana EXPO 2017 NC Akhmetzhan Yessimov and Kazakh Ambassador to France Nurlan Danenov.

Yessimov in his report said that in conjunction with government agencies, they are working to ensure a comfortable stay of tourists at the exhibition in Astana in particular, by improving transport infrastructure. EXPO tickets sales have already been launched. EXPO will develop a network of restaurants and food courts that

will promote the event abroad and establish cooperation with more than 100 tour operators in Kazakhstan and abroad.

“To create favourable conditions for the stay of foreign guests in Kazakhstan, the authorities unilaterally abolished the visa regime for 20 developed countries,” the press service stated.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

FC Astana Starts UEFA Champions League Qualification in Vilnius

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – Four Kazakh clubs have entered another qualification campaign to reach the Union of European Football Associations Champions League and the Europa League. Last week, the teams learnt their opponents following the draw in Nyon, Switzerland.

In 2015, FC Astana made his-

tory by becoming the nation's first club to reach the UEFA Champions League's group stage where they managed two draws with Galatasaray Istanbul and two more in home matches against the tournament's eventual quarterfinalists Benfica Lisbon and runners-up Atletico Madrid.

The new European season for the Kazakh champions will open in Lithuania where in the second

qualifying round, they will play Zalgiris Vilnius. The qualifying round's first matches will be held July 12-13, and during the return leg on July 19-20.

"In the Champions League there are no weak teams. Our pair also has no underdogs. For us, it is important to show our game and bring players in peak shape for the European challenges," commented on the results of the draw FC Asta-

na's Manager, Bulgarian specialist Stanimir Stoilov.

Three other clubs, FC Kairat Almaty, FC Ordabasy Shymkent, and FC Aktobe will start in the first qualifying round of the UEFA Europa League. As a result of the draw, Kairat will now play Albanian KF Teuta Durrës, while FC Aktobe face the challenge from Serbian MTK Budapest and FC Ordabasy will play FC Čukarički from Serbia.

Fans look forwards to a successful performance by Kairat, which last year stopped just a step away from joining the group stage of the Europa League.

FC Kairat's manager Kakhaber Tskhadadze believes that his team has a good chance to pass to the next round.

"Our analysts have already started working on gathering as much information as possible to prepare for a challenge from our opponents. Albanian football is very combative, as players always play with passion, which is the case for both the national team and individual clubs. They move forward in football terms, [which is why] their national team played in EURO 2016. Of course, [Teuta] will be no different: they are a serious contender. However, we will get ready and we must move past the first round," said Tskhadadze.



Kazakh Gold Medallists among Doping Failures



Ilya Ilyin

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) has reported that as a result of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) reanalyses of samples from the 2012 London Games, the samples of gold medallists Zulfiya Chinslanlo, Ilya Ilyin, Maya Maneza and Svetlana Podobedova showed positive results.

"The International Olympic Committee will consider the issue of our athletes concerning their medals and participation in the Olympic Games. If the decision is negative for us, we have 20 days to appeal the decision. After that, the decision is sent to the International Federation and only after that will the final decision be made," said Deputy Minister of Culture and Sport Saken Musaibekov.

The IWF imposed mandatory provisional suspensions upon the athletes. Under the relevant rules and regulations, they will remain provisionally suspended for potential anti-doping rule violations until their cases are closed. The IWF said it will assume the results management of the cases and report the current standings of the Beijing reanalyses as soon as possible.

The results of the re-analyses showed all four athletes had stanozolol anabolic agents in their samples. Dehydrochloromethyl-testosterone was found in Ilyin's sample and Chinslanlo's sample also contained oxandrolone.

Musaibekov noted all the samples are considered to be suspicious and the athletes can't be considered guilty.

"The ministry will help the athletes. We will stand for the athletes to the end," he added.

Ilyin reacted to the news.

"The information about the positive doping test result was like a thunderstorm on a sunny day to me. According to the IWF regulations, all detailed information about me specifying every day and hour of my life including my locations – everything is available in the ADAMS international system," he wrote in a post on his Instagram account.

"I am always available and open for anti-doping controllers and meanwhile I have passed anti-doping tests twice this year. The first one was submitted in Poland during the trainings and the second one in Almaty," said the two-time Olympic and four-time world champion.

Ilyin emphasised each international competition starts with a mandatory anti-doping test for all athletes. He has been submitting to the test since 2004 and all his results have been negative.

"I am continuing my training ahead of the Olympic Games in Rio and I am planning to fight till the end. Our country and sport management authorities are exerting every effort to clarify this awkward situation. I sincerely believe that the situation will find its solution by the end of June," Ilyin continued.

"I have time till mid-July to apply for the Rio Olympic Games. I truly believe that we can prove the absurdity and groundlessness of all the accusations. Apart from the decision concerning my eligibility, I want all of you to know that I have spent 20 years of my short life in a gym, training three times a day. I have always felt responsibility for my country, my people, and I have always fought to win," he said.

Kazakh Boxer Ivan Dychko Trains with Wladimir Klitschko's Team

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's boxer, bronze medalist of the 2012 London Olympics Ivan Dychko has returned from Austria, where he

spent two weeks training at the invitation of Wladimir Klitschko and his team.

For Klitschko, the Ukrainian former champion, the training in Austria was part of preparations for a rematch with Briton Tyson

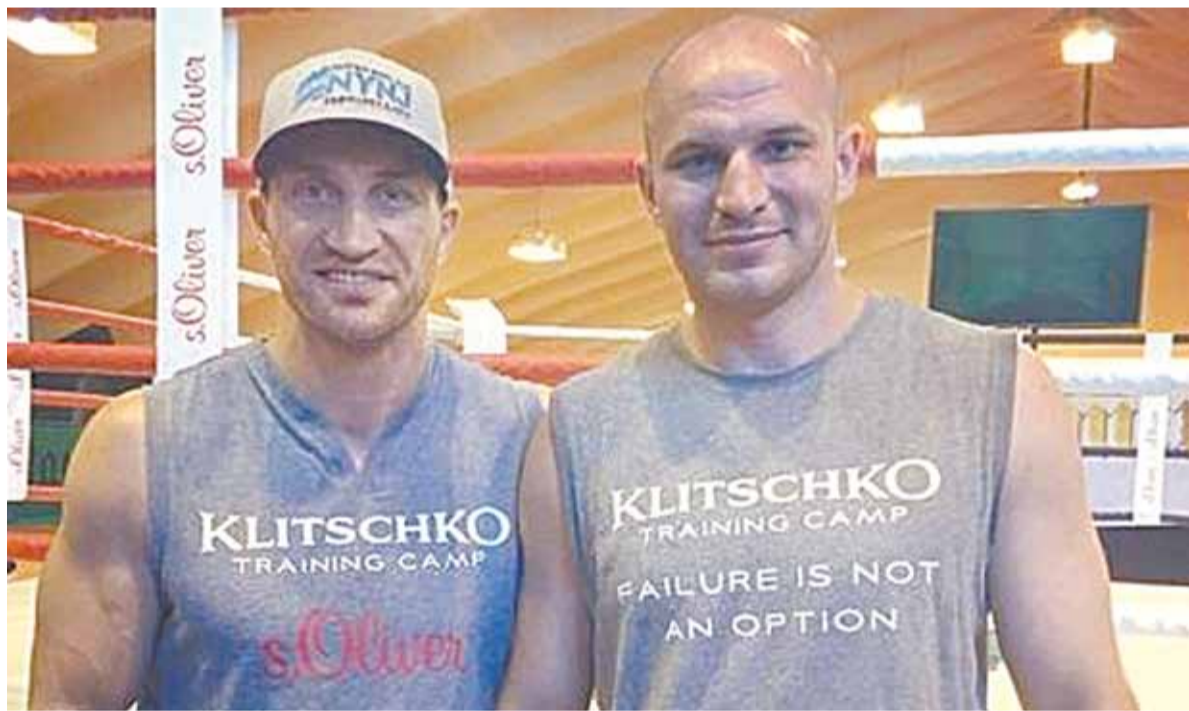
Fury, which is contracted to take place later this year following Klitschko's defeat last November and the subsequent loss of his heavyweight champion titles from the World Boxing Association, the International Box-

ing Federation, The International Boxing Organisation and The Ring.

Training sessions took place at the Klitschko team's base in the mountain village of Going in the Austrian Alps. A total of eight boxers trained alongside Dychko. Despite the fact that he was the only amateur at this gathering, coaches and fellow fighters noted the quality of the Kazakh boxer, who won bronze in the 2012 London Olympics and is preparing for the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

"Everything was top notch. Of course, it was interesting to check yourself in sparring against such a great and experienced fighter as Wladimir Klitschko. ...The two weeks with Klitschko's team were a great experience," commented Dychko. He also confirmed that the date for the rematch with Fury had not yet been scheduled.

Ahead for Kazakhstan's 25-year-old boxer are final training sessions before he travels to Rio along with the entire Kazakh Olympic team. Dychko will represent Kazakhstan in the heavyweight category (more than 91 kg).



Wladimir Klitschko (L) and Ivan Dychko.

Kazakhstan Narrowly Misses Promotion in Women's Volleyball World Grand Prix

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan just missed in its effort to move up to Group 2 of the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) Grand Prix, losing the crucial match to Croatia during the 2016 FIVB Grand Prix Group 3 Final Round in Almaty June 18–19.

During the Group 3 Final Round, winners of the two preliminary stages – Kazakhstan, Colombia, Croatia, and Peru – vied for a single promotional place. The FIVB World Grand Prix, the largest commercial tournament for women's national volleyball teams, has been held each year since 1993.

Kazakhstan currently plays in Group 3 of the FIVB Grand Prix, which is the third tier of the tournament. The winner of Group 3 wins a promotion to the next level. Group 1 contests the gold medals.



In the first preliminary round (Pool A3), held June 3–5 in Algiers, Kazakhstan won against the hosts (3:0) and Mexico (3:1) but lost to Peru (1:3).

The second preliminary round (Pool C3) was held June 10–12 in Cali, Colombia. Kazakhstan again won twice, against Australia

(3:0) and Mexico (3:1), but was beaten by the hosts (1:3). That was enough to secure the Kazakhs the second place and qualify for the Group 3 final, which this year was held in Almaty.

In the semifinal, Kazakhstan again met Colombia. In the previous meeting of the teams, Kazakh-

stan's team leaders Irina Lukomskaya and Nataliya Akilova did not take part because of injuries. Aliya Baikuldinova was called to strengthen the team. As urgently hoped for by the Kazakh coaching staff, Lukomskaya recovered for the final games. Her reappearance, despite a minor injury in the early minutes of play, strongly enhanced Kazakhstan's performance, especially compared with their loss in Cali.

With one of their leaders back, Kazakhstan won the two starting sets with the same score of 25:20. But in facing Colombia, they once again had to contend with one of the strongest teams in South America. The guests, led by experienced players like Madeleine Montano and Kenny Moreno, won the next two sets, 25:21 and 25:18, bringing the competition to a tiebreaker. Supported by home fans, Ka-

zakhstan head coach Vyacheslav Shapran's team seized the initiative immediately and won 15:9 in the set and 3:2 in the match.

The hosts' most productive player was Yekaterina Zhdanova, who earned 14 points. Lyudmila Issayeva earned 12 points and Katerina Tatko 11.

"It was a very tough match for us. We relaxed a little bit and lost concentration after we earned the 2:0 lead, but we are very pleased that in the decisive set we managed to get together and achieve victory. Big thanks to all the fans who supported us," said Kazakhstan team captain Radmila Beresneva.

In the decisive match for the promotion to Group 2, the hosts challenged Croatia. From the first ball, the taller Croatian players created big problems for Kazakhstan's defences. Among them was Croatia's team leader Samantha

Fabrice, who plays in the Italian league. By the end of the game, she had earned 27 points.

Shapran's team fought hard in each set, but the Croatians were stronger in each of the three: 25:19, 29:27, 25:16. Thus, the Balkan team returned to the second division, from which they were relegated last year. Team Kazakhstan will once again play in the third division.

"This is a sad day for us. First, a big festival of volleyball ended. It was a pleasure to see a lot of young people watching our games on the stands, as well as on television. This means that the development of Kazakh volleyball is growing. Second, we lost the final. Of course, we gave way to a stronger team. Thanks a lot to my players for the great play they showed [throughout the tournament]," said Shapran.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2016

Astana Art Fest 2016 Focuses on Local Artists, Encourages Digital Creativity



By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – More than 40 artists and media art leaders from Kazakhstan and Russia are slated to participate July 4-6 in the Astana Art Fest, organised with the support of the Akimat (city administration), Astana's Sun Media and Almaty's Funk agencies. For three days, Nurzhol Boulevard in the centre of the capital will become the space in which modern art objects meet an audience.

The programme for the open air festival includes contemporary art installations, video, sound and street art, DJ sets, street theatre, clowning, pantomime and an in-

teractive performance. The best design objects and works are expected to be displayed at the Milan Furniture Fair and London Design Festival.

For organisers and young artists, the event is an opportunity to make connections with new people, share constructive ideas in the company of friends and professionals and use human energy for artistry and development.

"The main idea of the event is human energy," said festival curator and Russian Union of Artists member Yana Malinovskaya in a recent interview with The Astana Times. "An urban art festival is like a camp of modern nomads who are open to the sun, wind,

craftship, communication and joy. We will generate creative energy and direct it to produce joint ideas, solutions and projects in one space and in a short time."

"We will speak the language of art, design, architecture and new technologies that we are the nomads and our task is to realise that we are an important but not the most important part of this world," she continued. "And how can we define the volume, quality and value of our energy to the other part of the world? The festival can be one of the answers to this question."

A number of new areas will be introduced this year including digital art, media poetry and art sessions. Several educational pro-

grammes are also expected to be presented as part of the festival.

"We plan to organise an 'Art in Public Space' forum. We invite experts on culture and science and participants of the festival to take part in our discussion platform. The main idea of the forum is the artist in the city. What can the artist do for the city? Why is art necessary in the city and what should residents do with art? How does the artist feel in the city and how do the artists interact? Participants also can talk about their projects. I plan to talk about public art and its concept," said Malinovskaya.

A chief curator will lead a press tour twice a day for media and guests. The visitors will have the

opportunity to meet with the artists, architects and designers, ask questions and talk with curators in each field.

"There are schedules to organise DJ sessions of musicians from Italy, Germany and Switzerland and local musicians. Our eminent Kazakh artists such as Almagul Menlibayeva, Yelena and Victor Vorobyevs and ZITABL will take part in the event together with young artists. We will show high quality and conceptual things," she said.

Moscow-based artists and curator Elena Demidova will present a laboratory of digital poetry. She is an author who displays a wide range of approaches to poetry using computers, sound and video.

"Media poetry is a completely unusual and interesting experience for our country. Demidova and sound artist, composer and musician Oleg Makarov will deliver lectures and make joint performances with any visitor. We'll also produce a digital art performance. Renowned artists and teachers at Rodchenko School of Photography and New Media Alexei Shulgina and Aristarkh Chernyshev intend to present an electroboutique digital installation. This year we have invited various professionals, as we want to study the subjects of discussion more deeply and give impetus to the cultural development of the city," said Malinovskaya.

Astana Parks Designed for Any Mood and Occasion

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Summer is the time for outdoor activities with friends and family. The capital's green city parks are the perfect place for enjoying some alone time.

One can stroll for an hour or more or spend an entire day at Stolichniy (Capital) Park. From tranquil gardens with paved paths and benches to rides, it is a fun place for family outdoor weekend leisure. Smell cotton candy, hear mixed music and sounds and experience various feelings while walking on the grounds. Residents and guests enjoy colourful flower beds, picturesque areas and an amusement park with a roller coaster and Ferris wheel.

Should one tire of walking, the Yessil River offers other possibilities. Swim or travel on one of the comfortable passenger ships sailing from the dock near Kenessary Khan monument to the Radisson hotel, Chubary Micro District, Vremena Goda Park and back to

the monument. As of May 2015, tickets were 1,000 tenge (about US\$2.96) for adults and 500 tenge (about US\$1.48) for children aged 7-16.

When passing under the Kaz-MunaiGas building arch towards Khan Shatyr, one can see Vlublyonnih Park (the Park of Lovers). Considered one of the most romantic places in the city, the bronze sculpture of a girl and a boy gave the park its name. The grounds are the perfect site for wedding ceremonies and photo-shoots, while families with children and couples of all ages can also enjoy a stroll.

A large fountain with unique architecture, benches, flower gardens and thousands of trees decorate the more than 14 hectares of the park's area. Young linden trees, spruces, pines, birches, poplars and maples and elms, neither of the last two typical for the area, are among the species.

All the lawns and flower gardens were planned and planted according to German technology, where

landscape construction has deep roots and long traditions, according to the website of construction company KazGerStroy.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev, accompanied by more than 5,000 school students, contributed to the opening of Presidential Park. Surrounding the Palace of Peace and Harmony, it has become the capital's landscape emblem and another favourite leisure site for residents and guests.

The park, the city's largest at 23 hectares, is unique for its hilly surface, fountains, rills, numerous flowers and freshwater ponds that create feelings of harmony and contentment. The setting is one of ecological cleanliness and serenity.

The panorama is especially impressive from above, as its architectural concept becomes clear – the image of a Samruk, a fairytale bird and symbol of independence and life.

Zheruyik Park, another of the city's picturesque spots, allows visitors to rest in the cool shade of its trees and freshness of its grass. Its 21 hectares are filled with 10,000 trees and bushes representing eleven species, including pine, birch, cottonwood and bird cherry, according to Cultural Map of Kazakhstan (culturemap.kz).

One of the city's first projects, the park was planned in 1998 when the capital began its transformation, noted the website. The official opening was in 2008, giving the young plants a decade to grow and become stronger.

Zheruyik now has pedestrian and bicycle lanes, benches, sculptures and other smaller architecture elements. The park is located along Bauyrzhan Momyshuly Avenue at the intersection with Magzhan Zhumabayev Avenue.

The availability of essential infrastructure, convenient driveways and parking lots, proximity to residential areas, magnificent nature and picturesque views make it an attractive spot for a variety of family leisure activities.

Industrial Production Grows in Astana



By Yerzat Sergazin

In the current year, the volume of industrial goods and services in the capital amounted to 145.5 billion tenge (US\$428.3 million).

Since the beginning of the year, the physical volume of production has increased in the manufacturing industry, construction industry, food production, electricity

and water supply, according to the press service of Astana's Akimat (city administration).

The volume of production in the manufacturing industry increased by 2.1 percent compared with the first half of 2015 and amounted to 113.1 billion tenge (US\$332.9 million). The growth of volumes in the industry was observed in mechanical engineering, production of fabricated metal products,

except machinery and equipment, manufacture of rubber and plastic products.

In the manufacture of food products, the volume index was 113.4 percent. Flour production increased by 26.7 percent compared to the first half of 2015.

In construction, there was an increase in the creation of doors and door sills, windows and metal frames (190.3 percent), mortars (150.7 percent). In engineering, the growth of the physical volume of production is mainly due to the production of other transport equipment (129.9 percent).

In electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning, volume of goods and services amounted to 27.7 billion tenge (US\$81.5 million). The volume of services in water supply, sewerage system, control over the collection and distribution of waste increased by 23.2 percent and amounted to 4.7 billion tenge (US\$13.8 million).

