



President Nazarbayev Congratulates Almaty on Millennial Anniversary



President Nursultan Nazarbayev (C) and Almaty Mayor Bauyrzhan Baibek congratulate more than 7,000 Almaty residents who gathered to celebrate the millennial anniversary on Sept. 18.

President Says CIS Should Stimulate Economic Growth

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

President Nursultan Nazarbayev attended the Sept. 16 25th jubilee summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

In his remarks to his counterparts from other CIS countries, Nazarbayev said the CIS remains a unique platform for cooperation. The fact that the commonwealth implements its improvement plans proves its viability, feasibility and prospects, he said. The experience of the Commonwealth is useful to other integration associations, such as the EAEU (Eurasian Economic Union) and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation). Thus, the CIS, established in Almaty Dec. 21, 1991 has great

historical significance, he stressed. The Kazakh President underlined that during the recent G20 Summit in China, the sides agreed to coordinate economic policies to ensure sustainable development of the world economy.

"The summit discussed issues of changing the outdated model of development and transition to a new digital economy followed by the global industrial revolution. This is a signal to open and begin the new ways of social production, based on new forms of energy, new classes of currencies and new forms of social relations. In the face of these challenges, the CIS should cooperate more closely and accelerate our joint projects," Nazarbayev said.

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Kazakh FM Addresses 71st Session of UN General Assembly in New York

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov addressed the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) while in New York Sept. 24. His participation contributed to further advancing the global peace initiatives of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, as well as quality preparations for the nation's upcoming membership in the Security Council in 2017-2018 and comparing notes on the most important issues for Kazakhstan with the widest range of international partners, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"This year Kazakhstan celebrates the 25th anniversary of its independence. I remember that back in 1991 some observers doubted Kazakhstan's ability to

survive as a sovereign nation given its multi-ethnic, religiously-diverse population, an unbalanced economy and the huge material and moral burden in the form of military infrastructure and a nuclear arsenal," he said.

"That legacy was a challenge which we managed to turn into an opportunity. Over the last quarter of a century, we have completed a journey from a country non-existent on the political map to a stable middle-income nation and respected member of the international community. We take our election to the Security Council as an international recognition of the soundness and maturity of our foreign policy and a deserved achievement of our independence," said Idrissov.

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Citi Country Head: Kazakhstan's Market Is Good for Business

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Citigroup, one of Kazakhstan's largest foreign banks, continues to expand its operations amid today's uncertain economic situation. The Astana Times spoke with Andrey Kurilin, Citi's country manager and a CEO of its daughter bank in Kazakhstan, to find out how and why Citigroup has decided to keep growing.

"The market conditions in Kazakhstan are fully suitable for a global player with high standards around product offering, client selection, regulatory compliance and staff qualification, like Citi," he said. "The fact that Citi finds Ka-

"This date has been included in UNESCO's calendar of commemorative and anniversary dates of humanity, which emphasises the unique role of Almaty in regional and global development. The holy land at the foot of the Alatau peaks has seen many events in its history. The Great Silk Road was a great trade route that crossed this

city and connected East and West, North and South, of vast Eurasia. Almaty has become one of the main centres of the unique urban culture of Central Asia," said Nazarbayev.

He also noted that the socio-economic development of Almaty has always been a priority for the government. "Last year, we adopted Almaty's development programme

until 2020 as a concrete action plan to improve the lives of citizens and the ecological situation in the city, creating favourable conditions for business. Modern Almaty has become a reflection of the steady and sustainable development of the whole of Kazakhstan.

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Kazakh Economy Experiences Inflow of Foreign Investments

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – National Bank of Kazakhstan Chairman Daniyar Akishev announced the total amount of foreign investments in the Kazakh economy during the current year so far was \$5.7 billion. The statement was made at the Sept. 9 enlarged session of the government with the participation of President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

In his report on the GDP growth, Akishev noted a key factor triggering the 4.8-percent increase of investments in fixed assets was the Nuryl Zhol state programme initiated by the President.

"The total investments in fixed assets amounted to 4.3 trillion tenge (US\$12.7 billion), includ-

ing 1.5 trillion tenge (US\$4.4 billion) invested by the public sector," Akishev said. He also noted a significant increase of investments in non-oil sectors, including the manufacturing industry, which increased by 19.5 percent and totaled 429.3 billion tenge (US\$1.3 billion).

"The growth in agriculture increased by 39.4 percent and totaled 113.5 billion tenge (US\$334.6 million); in the financial sector, the investment share increased by 22.2 percent and totaled 34 billion tenge (US\$100.2 million) and in trade the increase composed 21.3 percent and amounted to 72.5 billion tenge (US\$213.7 million)," he said.

The flow of foreign direct investments totaled \$5.7 billion, which is almost five times higher than in

and disciplined about regulatory compliance, he can succeed."

Following the currency adjustments of the past year, the banker withstood from making predictions. He did, however, offer his take on the factors that affect the currency situation.

"Currency is tied up with the other pillars of the economy," Kurilin said. "It's clear that the conjuncture in the global commodity market, specifically in oil, is important, especially for a country like Kazakhstan, an oil exporter. So when oil got cheaper, the country's currency reacted accordingly. This was logical and expected and that's what happened in a lot of countries with

similar economic models. So the price and demand for oil would be the factor that influenced the current situation with the national currency in Kazakhstan. If major factors that can impact Kazakhstan's economy remain stable, then we should expect certain predictability."

But what's more important, according to Kurilin, is that Kazakhstan has been an attractive market for two decades in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI). "The country has attracted a significant volume of FDI and investors take Kazakhstan seriously, they think of Kazakhstan as a market where they could invest. No one is saying [investing here is] without challenges or things that need to be addressed but many other markets have not attracted anything near what Kazakhstan has managed to attract. So long as this continues, the focus would be not only on new investors but on existing investors."

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composed 1.9 percent as per Aug. 1, said Akishev.

Another positive factor was the restoration of economic crediting.

"If between January and April we could notice a decline of loans, since May there has been a growth tendency," he said.

According to the report the general amount of loans increased by 0.5 percent and composed 12.7 trillion tenge (\$37.4 billion), while the amount of newly-issued loans increased by 7.8 percent and reached 5.4 trillion tenge (\$15.9 billion) between January and July.

At the same time, the foreign trade turnover decreased by 30.4 percent during the first half of 2016 and totaled US\$28 billion, including the exports of \$17.1 billion.

"There is also a slowdown in the inflation process. The annual inflation reached its peak of 17.7 percent in July 2016, after which it gradually began to decline. The monthly inflation slowed to 0.2 percent in August 2016, while at the beginning of the year it composed 5.4 percent," said Akishev.

Kazakh Chess Champion Opens Academy in Astana

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Four-time world champion and women's grandmaster Dinara Saduakassova opened a chess academy Sept. 16 in the capital.

A charismatic and intelligent person, Saduakassova is full of ideas concerning the new school

and her contribution to popularising chess in the country.

"I am proud that I managed to be the first and win the title of world champion under 20. I would like to dedicate my victory to the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence, my supporters and all fans of chess," she said in an exclusive interview with The Astana Times.

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NATION

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

More Seminars on Innovations and New Technologies to Be Held for Farmers

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

Approximately 10,000 farmers will learn about new technologies and effective ways to lead an agricultural business during seminars organised by the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs.

Nearly 700 seminars are expected to be held for 217,000 agricultural producers, said Atameken Agrobusiness and Food Industry Department Deputy Director Dinmukhammed Absattarov during a Central Communication Service briefing.

"We started to work on the programme in March. More than 100 domestic and foreign experts as well as lecturers will conduct free seminars and provide advisory support to farmers. The seminars



Photo credit: erhanik.kz

include both theory to explain the working principles of best practices and current innovations as well as internships to master skills on how to use new technologies," he said.

All the events will be held in

the framework of the agrobusiness entities informational support programme, the implementation of which was transferred in the form of a state task to the Atameken. The programme covers 212 farms, including 70 crop farms and 142

livestock farms. About 400 workshops have already been held.

In selecting the seminar topics, the programme developers took into consideration the specificity of the regions, according to Centre for Agroc capacity head Toleutai Rakhimbekov. For example, most of the seminars on camel breeding are held in Almaty, Kyzylorda, Mangistau and South Kazakhstan regions, while the cereal crops topic is demanded in Akmola, Kostanai, North Kazakhstan and Zhambyl regions. Seminars on corn are organised in Taldykorgan, rice in Kyzylorda, cotton in South Kazakhstan region and beekeeping and maral breeding in East Kazakhstan region.

"We imposed three important rules for local and foreign programme developers. First of all, it

should have an economic effect a farmer will benefit from after he introduces new breeds or technologies. Secondly, it is about an increased awareness on state support of the agro-industrial complex. Finally, we ask our experts to focus on agricultural cooperatives," said Rakhimbekov.

Farmers.kz, an information-analytical portal, has been launched to support farmers. The extension section provides all necessary information concerning the workshop schedule, as well as study materials and an opportunity to ask online questions of experts and lecturers. The agromarket section can be used to place advertisements and buy or sell agricultural products. The portal was visited by 9,000 users, including from foreign countries.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev met with Supreme Court Chairman Kairat Mami, reported Akorda.kz. The two discussed issues to implement the Plan of the Nation – 100 Concrete Steps, as well as the results of the court's activity in the first eight months of the year and preparation for the upcoming Seventh Congress of Judges. Mami reassured Nazarbayev that all 10 steps of the Plan of the Nation related to the judiciary sector are currently being implemented. The optimisation of the judiciary allowed facilitating access to the justice system and reducing the time of final decisions. In addition, Mami reported on the work of the specialised board on investment disputes, Astana specialised board of court and the international board under the Supreme Court.

The ban on smartphones during school hours in Kyzylorda region, which applies to students and teachers, is effective as of Sept. 1. Some 299 secondary schools in the region have already made the proper changes, however, they allow the use of mobile phones without Internet access. "The proposal was accepted by teaching boards and parent committees. We agree that the use of smartphones has a negative impact on the educational process and uncontrolled access of children to the Internet has a negative impact on their moral and spiritual development. In addition, expensive phones often get lost," said Kyzylorda region education department head Bakhytzhana Sailybayev. Officials expect these measures to have a "powerful preventive effect" in the education of students in secondary schools. The ban is also aimed at reducing the crime rate in schools and introducing new approaches in educational work.

A Mazhilis ethics council tasked with preventing violations by parliamentarians has been formed in the lower house of Parliament, reported Khabar 24 news agency. The body will include a total of seven members representing all party factions. One of the appointments will be Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security member Kuanyshtanov. Jointly with the Central Election Commission, the members of the council will develop disciplinary measures designated for the members of Parliament. Mazhilis Speaker Nurlan Nigmatullin said this practice already exists in many countries. The ethics rules shall be defined by the constitutional law "On the Parliament of Kazakhstan and the status of its members." According to Sultanov, everything must comply with the legislation. If members demonstrate criticism against anything, they should back it up with verified facts and not pure speculation or assumption. "This should be taken into account," he said, adding "on the whole, the council should increase the responsibility of parliamentarians and their work."

On Sept. 21, Mazhilis ratified the agreement on continuing the International Science and Technology Centre. Minister of Education and Science Yerlan Sagadiyev noted the centre "contributes to the improvement of international mechanisms to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, providing scientists and engineers with the knowledge and skills applicable to weapons of mass destruction, opportunities for training and alternative employment in areas where their knowledge can be used for peaceful activities." The activity is relevant, he added, because Kazakhstan is currently one of the world leaders in nuclear-weapon non-proliferation. The centre's headquarters have been moved from Russia to Kazakhstan. It is located in Nazarbayev University and after EXPO 2017 it is expected to move to the grounds of the international exhibition.

Bill Giving Local Governments Move Budgeting Power to Be Introduced in Parliament

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – A new bill on local self-government might be introduced in 2018, Minister of National Economy Kuandyk Bishimbayev announced during the presentation of the draft law "On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of Kazakhstan on the development of local self-government" at the mid-September meeting of the Committee for Economic Reform and Regional Development of the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament).

The introduction of an independent budget and communal property for local self-government, empowerment of local self-governments in the management of the budget process and municipal property are provided for in the bill, reported the ministry's press service.

"The adoption of the bill will increase the financial independence of local self-governments in addressing pressing local issues and

opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making through the development of local government," said Bishimbayev.

The bill introduces some changes and additions to the budget, tax and civil codes and laws "On state property," "On local government and self-government in Kazakhstan" and "On advertising."

At present, the budget system of Kazakhstan consists of three levels. There is no independent budget at the level of regional cities, villages, towns and rural districts but there are almost 2,500 administrative units.

"The local self-government budget at the level of cities of regional importance, villages, towns, rural districts is being implemented as a fourth level of the state budget in 2018 in the administrative territorial units with populations over 2,000 people and it will be implemented nationwide in 2020," said Bishimbayev.

The revenue sources of the local

self-government budget consisting of tax and non-tax revenues are also identified in the bill. The tax revenues include personal income tax on income not subject to withholding; property tax of individuals; transportation tax for individuals and legal entities; land tax for individuals and legal entities on populated locality; payment for placement of outdoor (visual) advertising on roads that pass through the cities of regional subordination, villages, rural districts. The non-tax revenues include revenues for property lease (rent) of the state property; voluntary duties of natural and legal persons; fines levied by akims (mayors) for administrative offenses provided by the code "On administrative offences"; proceeds from the sale of municipal property; transfers from the regional budget.

"The local self-government budget will be approved by maslikhats after discussion at the local community meeting. Akim (mayor) of the village will work to execute

the local government budget. Thus, the mechanisms to plan budget expenditures taking into account the interests of the local community are provided," said Bishimbayev.

The expenditures of the local budgets will be determined at the level of the current budget code in 19 areas of expenditures of a village akim, including pre-school education and training, landscaping and planting of settlements, construction, reconstruction and repair and organisation of water supply and others.

"The introduction of local self-government independent budgets also raises the need for the institution of 'local self-government communal ownership,' which is not established today. All communal property in the village is a part of the communal property and the area controlled by the regional akim," said Bishimbayev.

The bill also introduces rules to the civil code and the law on state property, defining the concept of

local self-government communal property and the formation and management of the property.

According to the minister, the local self-government property will consist of the assets of the local treasury and property assigned to the communal legal entities.

"The formation and management of local self-government communal property will be similar to the communal property of the district. Akim of the village in consultation with the local community takes under control the management of local self-government communal property," he added.

The amendments and supplements to the law "On local government and self-government in Kazakhstan" in terms of granting maslikhats the authority to approve local government budget, expanding the powers of akims and their staff on budget execution and management of local self-government communal property are also provided in the bill.

President Nazarbayev Congratulates Almaty on Millennial Anniversary

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The city area has doubled over the past five years," highlighted the President.

In addition, the President emphasised the important role of small and medium-sized businesses, which, he said, produce a quarter of the products and services of the country. Almaty is known to be a city with the largest number of SMEs in Kazakhstan.

Nazarbayev also drew attention to Winter Universiade preparations, which, he said, have given new impetus to the development of the tourism industry of the city, helping to increase employment.

"We invested 107 billion tenge [US\$312.9 million] for the construction of its unique facilities. The Winter Universiade provides work for more than 1,500 small and medium-sized businesses and creates more than 30,000 new jobs. The event will bring together more than 2,000 athletes from 57 countries. The development of the Almaty tourism cluster will provide employment for 90,000 citizens," he said.

During his visit, Nazarbayev visited new sports complexes including Khalyk Arena, a 3,000-seat ice arena and Almaty Arena, a 12,000-seat ice palace, as well as the venerable Medeo skating rink and the new Athletic Village for athletes and delegations.

The main building of the Athletic Village includes areas for accreditation, sports information and multimedia centres, as well as a dining room and rooms for volunteers.

The President also spoke with representatives of the International University Sports Federation and expressed his hope for the success of the World Winter Universiade 2017 with their direct support.

The President was informed that all Universiade facilities would be used as training centres for sports schools and professional and amateur teams.

In addition, Nazarbayev visited

the Multimedia Centre of Traditional Music, which has unique Kazakh instruments from the collections of the Museum of Folk Instruments, the Kasteev State Museum and the Museum of the

History of Almaty. The President presented to the centre his personal dombra and the sculpture "Steppe Melodies," dedicated to the legendary folk singer and dombra player Dina Nurpeissova.



EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

About \$2 billion has been invested in Kazakhstan by Turkish business people as part of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects, reported Kazakh TV. Further possible cooperation between the countries was discussed at a special forum, as foreign investors are interested in sponsoring the development of transport infrastructure, health and tourism. Plans are underway to implement more than 270 projects with the participation of foreign companies, one of the largest of which is construction of the Big Almaty Ring Road, which will start next year. "We have invested \$2 billion in various sectors of the economy of Kazakhstan. In general, Turkish investments are constant. Our country has the necessary experience in the field of PPPs, so we always support the cooperation and knowledge-sharing between PPP centres," said Turkish Ambassador in Kazakhstan Nevzat Uyanyk.

International pavilions will be passed over to EXPO 2017 exhibitors next month, according to Astana EXPO 2017 chairman Akhmetzhan Yessimov, who made the announcement during the recent meeting with Azerbaijani Minister of Energy Natig Aliyev. Azerbaijan, one of the first countries to support the idea of the exhibition, will present its best developments for the specialised exhibition. To date, 103 countries and 17 international organisations have confirmed their participation in EXPO 2017. "I must say that I am impressed by the preparations, its scale and organisational arrangements. All of this is impressive. I am sure that when the exhibition starts it will be even more impressive. As for Azerbaijan, we appreciate the honour you have given us by inviting us to this exhibition. Our President immediately responded to this offer," said Aliyev.

The 2017 Winter Universiade in Almaty will be broadcast in 100 countries, said International University Sports Federation (FISU) President Oleg Matytsin, reported 24.kz. "We've partnered with Eurosport to broadcast the Winter Universiade live in 100 countries of the world," he said. He noted the Universiade is not a mere sports event, but the project is aimed at creating a powerful heritage for many years to come. "Residents of Almaty should realise that the Universiade sports facilities will be used in the future in order to develop mass sports," he added. It was reported earlier that the high-profile FISU delegation led by Matytsin, including heads of the national students' sports federations from Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Russia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and many other countries visited Almaty in September. The delegations visited all the Winter Universiade facilities.

Sibinsk Lake remains the centre of attention as the new tourism project was launched in Ulansk district. The lake is only a one-hour drive from Ust-Kamenogorsk. More than 15,000 people visited it during the summer, about a half of whom are Russian citizens. The project will require 220 million tenge (US\$646,360) in funding, with approximately 50 million tenge (US\$146,900) already allocated from the regional budget.

Kazakhstan continues to attract investors and new technologies in the field of passenger transportation. Numerous foreign companies launched operations in Kazakhstan in the last few years, including Yandex Taxi from Russia. Director General Tigran Khudaverdyan finds the Kazakh market quite interesting with "a large and solvent population," he said. "There are many cars and taxis. There is a very liberal and democratic market regulation. Therefore, the market is quite interesting and it would be more convenient to call a taxi from a mobile application and use this service. Customers can track the taxi's location and specify the exact location. They can pay in cash and with a credit card," he added.

Kazakh President Says CIS Should Stimulate Economic Growth

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According to Nazarbayev, CIS is proceeding to the third phase of the Economic Development Strategy adopted in 2008.

"Today, the situation in the world economy has changed significantly. Therefore, Kazakhstan proposes to update the package of measures to stimulate economic growth in the CIS countries," he said.

Nazarbayev also pointed to the important role of the efficient use of transport and transit potential in the CIS countries' development.

"Often there is duplication and inconsistency between the countries concerning the implementation of major transport and transit projects. In this regard, we need to coordinate our policies in this area, thus, greatly improving the efficiency of our projects," he said.

Nazarbayev reminded participants of the agreement to trans-

form the CIS to the standards of modern reality reached during the previous meeting.

"The continuous work should be held on improvement of CIS ac-

tivities and ensuring its functional flexibility," he said.

Nazarbayev welcomed the decision on the chairmanship of Russia of the CIS in 2017.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev,

President of Russia Vladimir Putin and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, as well as Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov attended the event.



Leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States meet at the 25th jubilee summit to address the most pressing economic issues on Sept. 16 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

In New York, FM Idrissov Promotes Security Initiatives, Discusses UNSC Role

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov participated in the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, taking part in the opening session of the general debates, as well as multilateral events and bilateral meetings on Sept. 20-23.

"This session of the UNGA is held on the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's Independence. Therefore, at our meetings and in our statements, we note the importance of this date for Kazakhstan in terms of the need to adequately assess the past and adjust development plans for the future," Idrissov emphasised.

According to Idrissov, the most important task for the Kazakh delegation is to promote the initiatives of President Nursultan Nazarbayev regarding global security, a nuclear-weapon-free world, the fight against international terrorism and for sustainable development put forth by him at the 70th UNGA session last year.

The current session was special to Kazakhstan in light of its election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018.

"All meetings of our delegation in New York this week will be mainly dedicated to our membership in the Security Council. We explain to our international partners our priorities, which will define our work in this vital political body. Our membership programme will be based on the peaceful policy of President Nazarbayev, the struggle for nucle-

ar-weapon-free world, the fight against new threats and challenges, such as international terrorism and radicalism, and, certainly, ensuring sustainable development for all states, especially for developing ones. In this context, we will actively work to emphasise the development priorities and challenges in our region, as well as stability and security issues in Central Asia. This is directly re-

lated to the situation in Afghanistan and we will focus on these issues," Idrissov said.

Traditionally, besides promoting Kazakh initiatives at the general debates, the annual UNGA session provides a platform for the Kazakh delegation to organise or participate in multilateral events and bilateral meetings with

a large number of international partners. In particular, Idrissov took part in the Eighth Ministerial Meeting in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The minister informed the participants on the outcomes of the recent Astana International Conference "Building a Nuclear Weapon-Free World," which was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the closure

and Swaziland, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission. As reported earlier, Kazakhstan and Japan are co-chairing the Article XIV Conference of the CTBT in 2015-2017, whose purpose is to advance the treaty's entry into force.

The Kazakh delegation also took



Foreign ministers of four Turkic-speaking states as well as secretary general of the Turkic Council meet in New York on Sept. 20.

part in the ceremony of depositing instruments of ratification of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. Kazakhstan signed this important international document on Aug. 2 and confirmed its commitment to complete the ratification process by the end of this year.

The Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the UN also hosted

the Ministerial Meeting of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States. Its participants discussed preparations to the Sixth Summit of the Turkic Council in Bishkek later this year and coordinated promotion of common interests at the international platforms, including the UN.

Kazakhstan also initiated an informal meeting of foreign ministers from Central Asia, where they discussed international and regional issues. Participants also discussed opportunities to promote common interests in light of Kazakhstan's membership in the UN Security Council in 2017-2018.

Following the events, Idrissov discussed bilateral cooperation and interaction during multilateral platforms with his colleagues from Austria, Bolivia, Canada, the EU, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and Ukraine.

Kazakhstan and Ethiopia also signed a memorandum on political consultations between their foreign ministries.

Idrissov also discussed preparations for the First Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Summit on Science and Technology with OIC Secretary General Iyad Ameen Madani. The summit will take place September 2017 in Astana.

Idrissov and the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All Rachel Kyte discussed cooperation on preparations for EXPO 2017 in Astana. Idrissov also met with José Graziano da Silva, director general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and Peter Thomson, president of the UN General Assembly.

In addition, Idrissov attended official receptions on behalf of the UN Secretary General, heads of the U.S. and EU delegations, where he had meetings with his foreign colleagues.

Kazakh FM Addresses 71st Session of UN General Assembly in New York

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The foreign minister emphasised Kazakhstan's foreign policy is a reflection of the country's deep-rooted belief in the power of discourse.

"A call for dialogue is the central message of President Nursultan Nazarbayev's Manifesto 'The World. The 21st Century,' which has been distributed as an official document of the Security Council and General Assembly. This manifesto offers a realistic take on the world and offers an ambitious vision based on unity rather than division, on cooperation rather than rivalry," he said.



Erlan Idrissov

In this context, Idrissov recalled another of Nazarbayev's initiatives to reach a world free of nu-

clear weapons by the UN's 100th anniversary in 2045, as well as reported on the results of the international conference dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site closing held Aug. 29 in Astana. He also alerted the international community to the Astana Peace Summit to be convened in November.

In addition to his speech, Idrissov took part in the traditional coordination meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers. OIC Secretary General Iyad bin Amin Madani and other participants stressed the relevance of the joint declaration on Islamic reconciliation adopted by

the presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkey during the OIC Summit in Istanbul in August. Issues were reviewed regarding preparations for the first OIC Summit on Science and Technology scheduled next year in Astana. Idrissov also called on the participants to become involved in EXPO 2017.

The minister attended a working lunch of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) Foreign Ministers, as well as a number of side events dedicated to climate change and its impact on small island states and the consolidation of international efforts to implement the goals of sustainable development approved last year by the UNGA.

Idrissov held separate meetings with colleagues from different countries, including the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Foreign Ministers Walid al-Muallem (Syria), Sebastian Kurz (Austria), Sergey Lavrov (Russia), Murray McCully (New Zealand), Salahuddin Rabbani (Afghanistan) and Mohammad Javad Zarif (Iran). The sides exchanged views on topical issues of bilateral relations and the international agenda, including Kazakhstan's membership in the UN Security Council. A memorandum on political consultations was signed with the Gambian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Nation to Increase Gas Production by 2020

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

Kazakhstan's annual gas production will reach 65 billion cubic metres by 2020, said Minister of Energy of Kazakhstan Kanat Bozumbayev at the Energy of the Future forum in Astana.

He noted that gas sector development is one of the priority directions of domestic energy. According to recent forecasts, the volume of annual gas production will reach 65 billion cubic metres by 2020. This year, production totalled 43 billion cubic metres. Increased production will not only increase gas export, but also make it avail-



Kanat Bozumbayev

able for greater use in the domestic market, helping displace coal.

According to the minister, it will also enable Kazakhstan's energy system to significantly reduce its

environmental impact, including decreasing harmful emissions.

"The oil and gas sector is one of the most important drivers of economic growth. In spite of the current market prices situation, Kazakhstan continues to demonstrate its investment attractiveness. In July 2016, the shareholders of Tengizchevroil approved the expansion of the Tengiz deposit project, worth more than \$37 billion. It is expected that the production at one of the largest deposits in the world, Kashagan, will start as well. In light of global trends and challenges, gas industry development has become a priority for our country," explained Bozumbayev.

He also spoke about the ministry's plans to further develop renewable energy sources. He believes that Kazakhstan will actively introduce many more such sources by 2030. Extensive research in this area is to be carried out in the near future, Bozumbayev said.

"We plan to hold a large-scale study, 'Foresight 2050: a New World of Energy and Kazakhstan's Place in It.' The study will involve local and international experts. The study will provide answers to questions related to the transformation of the country's energy policy and serve as its long-term foundation," added the minister. The study's results will be pre-

sented at the opening of EXPO 2017, he said.

"The global trend of renewable energy development indicates a significant reduction in electricity costs over the past decade. For instance, the latest auctions organised in the United Arab Emirates and Chile presented 2.9 U.S. cents for one kilowatt-hour [of solar generated electricity]. This is clear evidence that renewable energy can compete with both gas and coal generation. An important task for any state, including our country, is to find the right balance between the use of various forms of energy to produce electricity and heat," concluded Bozumbayev.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister of National Economy Kuandyk Bishimbayev presented an updated forecast for Kazakhstan's socio-economic development for the period from 2016 to 2020, Kapital.kz reports. This year's budget was calculated based on an average annual oil price of \$35 per barrel. The macroeconomic indicators' forecast was updated taking into account the current global economic situation, the situation in the commodity markets and the results of development in different sectors of Kazakhstan's economy since the beginning of this year. The average price of oil was increased from \$30 to \$35 per barrel; the price fluctuation index for metals was reduced from 15 to 12.7 percent; the average U.S. dollar exchange rate remained at 360 tenge per one U.S. dollar; the volume of oil production was increased from 74 million to 75.5 million tonnes; gross domestic product growth this year will remain at the level of 0.5 percent, while GDP per capita will be \$6,900 in nominal terms.

To continue the active diversification of investment tools and to preserve citizens' savings, the National Bank of Kazakhstan is planning to launch a programme to popularise refined gold bullion along with the existing gold and silver coins, Chairman of the National Bank Daniyar Akishev said. The National Bank and second-tier banks will provide liquidity for this market, giving Kazakhstan's citizens the opportunity to buy and sell gold at any time they choose to do so.

More than 350,000 citizens have signed on to waiting lists for housing, according to Mazhilis (lower chamber of Parliament) member Nurtai Sabilyanov. Minister of National Economy Kuandyk Bishimbayev announced that more than 700 billion tenge (US\$2 billion) was allocated for housing construction last year. However, according to Sabilyanov, the problem of housing will not be solved quickly. The distribution of funds between programme operators has raised some questions. The minister, however, assured that the launch of the new housing programme Nurly Zher will relieve the budget by attracting private investments of budgetary funds to housing construction. He said that Nurly Zher will fully reflect important housing issues regarding mortgage lending, the provision of private housing and rental housing, as well as those affecting loan depositors in the Housing Construction Savings Bank and the most vulnerable segments of the population.

A decline in prices for real estate has been recorded in July for new (0.2 percent) and secondary (0.5 percent) housing compared to the previous month, Ranking.kz reports. According to the experts from portal, a square metre in July was worth 252,200 tenge (US\$740) in the new and 191,300 tenge (US\$562) in the secondary market. The difference in price in the new and the secondary real estate markets was 24 percent. As for the regions, the most expensive new housing in August was in the East Kazakhstan region (361,600 tenge or US\$1,062 per square metre, which is 43 percent more than the national average), in Astana (341,700 tenge or US\$1,000) and in the Atyrau region (322,600 tenge or US\$947, 14.9 percent higher than the national average). Compared to last August, the highest rates for new housing prices were in the capital (18.4 percent) and the Pavlodar region (17.2 percent). In the Zhambyl, Kyzylorda, Karaganda and Almaty regions, the cost for new housing remained unchanged. In the North Kazakhstan, West Kazakhstan, Aktobe and Akmola regions, housing prices dropped slightly. Experts also note that the volume of transactions in high-rise apartment buildings in July dropped 11 percent compared to the previous month and totalled 9,826 deals.

Introducing Time-Restricted Deposits Will Help Stabilise Local Banks, Says National Bank Head

By Kseniya Voronina

The head of the National Bank of Kazakhstan Daniyar Akishev suggested introducing irrevocable deposits for Kazakh citizens during a recent session of the government with the participation of President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

According to Akishev, the second

half of the current year will showcase a gradual recovery of the lending process.

"We can see some positive improvements today. Despite the fact that general loans of the economy have increased by only 0.5 percent, some sectors of the economy show a significant increase. Since the beginning of the current year, small business loans have increased by 36 percent and loans in

the agricultural sector grew up by 13 percent," said Akishev.

According to the head of the bank, prolonged deposits in tenge are needed to enable local banks to issue long-term loans.

"Now, even in the case of a concluded contract for a long-term deposit, any investor has the right to withdraw his savings upon the first request. This is the right thing and

this practice should be maintained for the majority of investors. However, for those investors who are willing to allocate new financial funds in banks with the condition not to withdraw the funds in advance, but at a higher rate, an opportunity to open the irrevocable deposits can be provided in the future. This means you can't remove the deposit before its expiry date.

It also provides a greater amount of remuneration for such a restriction. That will allow banks to offer a wider range of deposit tools, at the same time creating a more stable funding base for a long term lending in tenge," explained Akishev.

In conclusion, he said that the bank is ready to work with the government to examine this issue and make further proposals.

Country's Economy to Return to Growth in 2017, Says Latest S&P Global Outlook

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – S&P Global has affirmed Kazakhstan's rating at 'BBB-/A-3,' according to a press release from Sept. 9. The outlook on long-term ratings remains negative. The agency also projects that the Kazakh economy will return to moderate growth rates in 2017.

"We consider that the commodity-dependent economy of Kazakhstan continues to face pressures in an environment of low and volatile oil prices. At the same time, our view of Kazakhstan's creditworthiness remains supported by its still strong balance sheet underpinned by sizable sovereign wealth fund assets of about 50 percent of [gross domestic product]," according to the statement.

The prediction of growth next year is supported by projections of stronger investments and recovering private consumption, as well as by stronger export performance as the oil price outlook improves and "the giant Kashagan oil field will finally be launched after a long string of delays."

"Kazakhstan's economy depends heavily on the oil sector: official estimates suggest it directly comprised about 15 percent of GDP and accounted for over half of exports by value in 2014. We anticipate that, as oil prices remain low, Kazakhstan will register this year its weakest economic performance since 1998, with output stagnating in real terms. We believe export volumes will decline not only due to price effects but also due to the aging of the main oil fields, resulting in flat

or slightly reducing oil output. At the same time, private consumption will contract in real terms as consumer purchasing power is hurt by the considerable Kazakh tenge depreciation in 2015," said the press release.

According to the data in the report, Kazakhstan's real GDP for the next year is projected to be 1.5 percent, while in 2018 and 2019 it will be 2.2 and 2.5 percent respectively.

While S&P Global predicts 0 percent growth for 2016, the Kazakh government says it will be nearly 0.5 percent.

The agency's negative outlook primarily reflects the risk that Kazakhstan's troubles may not be over and that fiscal and external profiles, still relatively strong, may weaken over the next 18 months. "It also reflects the risk of Kazakhstan's economic growth rate declining more than we presently anticipate," said the statement.

Also in the view of S&P Global, Kazakhstan's banking system remains weak.

"We expect a rise in reported nonperforming loans (NPLs) this year as last year's tenge depreciation affects the capacity of some borrowers to service their foreign-currency denominated loans. We also believe that the official NPL statistic of close to 8 percent as of July 2016 underestimates the credit risk in the sector. This is because some banks have created special purpose vehicles to which they have offloaded NPLs at face value. Adjusting for this effect, the underlying NPL level is likely to be considerably higher," the statement predicted.

Kazakh President Directs Banks to Eliminate Bad Debts

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev recently ordered the government and National Bank of Kazakhstan to get rid of so called "bad" debts.

"We have learned from the bad experience we had in 2007-2009. We have to be strict with banks to make them responsible for all financial institutions they manage. We have to inform the citizens about what the National Bank of Kazakhstan doing, as well as about the current state of the financial and credit system of the country. This information has to be transparent," said Nazarbayev at an enlarged meeting of the government on Sept. 9.

Chairman of the National Bank Daniyar Akishev also reported on the work being done in this domain.

"Last week, for the first time over the past eight years, the National Bank issued tenge notes with a term of one year at a rate of 12 percent. The demand for this tool exceeded

the supply by four times. This is only the beginning. At a time when economic growth has slowed and the situation requires effective measures to recover economic activity, the restoration of the banking sector is considered one of the priority tasks for us. It is not only an important element to ensure financing of the country's economic needs, but also, as it was in previous years, one of the leading drivers of growth and the conductor of economic reforms in the real sector of economy. We have gained considerable experience in anti-crisis solutions for the banking system, but, unfortunately, progress in rebuilding the sector remains limited," Akishev said.

He explained that banks remain dependent on governmental assistance programmes. Furthermore, mechanisms to write off bad debts are poorly used and a high vulnerability towards international estimations remains, as well as relatively low credit ratings.

"The National Bank was forced to

freeze the previous decisions on the implementation of BASEL 3 standards, in particular, the requirements to improve bank capitals. However, this measure only exacerbates the situation and throws the banking system a few years back, which is unacceptable in such a competitive market," the bank chief said.

Akishev also believes that new digital technologies and innovations may radically change the rules of the game and lead to further displacement of the Kazakh banking sector to the periphery of international trends.

"We need to have a modern, high-tech national banking sector, which will allow the country to solve its economic problems. Therefore, we are ready to work with the government before the end of this year to make concrete proposals on qualitative improvements of the work of the banking sector and restoring lending activity, including consideration of possible financial support from the state," concluded Akishev.

Citi Country Head: Kazakhstan's Market Is Good for Business

Continued from Page A1

Kurilin is optimistic about Kazakhstan's future growth. "It is an accomplished country now. Fifteen years ago it was only emerging [out of the shadows] of another country but now it is a well-recognised, sovereign economic player. Also, there is a new generation of people who are more open-minded and better prepared for the competitive environment."

As of July 2016, Citibank Kazakhstan ranks seventh among Kazakhstan's banks in capital (113.66 billion tenge), and 11th – by assets (a 93.5 percent increase year-on-year). However, Kurilin insisted, not everything is reflected on balance sheets alone. "You should measure banks not by the size of their balance sheet but by their reach within their client segment, the quality of their services and the business volumes they process – and not always do those volumes appear in the balance sheets statistics," he said. "Especially if you specialise in transactional services, you focus on processing, not the assets build-up."

Citigroup opened its representa-



Andrey Kurilin

tive office in Kazakhstan in 1994 and in 1998, with a full banking license from the National Bank of Kazakhstan, opened its doors to corporate customers. In 2015, Citibank Kazakhstan was named Best Cash Management Bank in Kazakhstan by Euromoney and Best Institutional Internet Bank in Kazakhstan by Global Finance.

"We are one of the most efficient banks in Kazakhstan," Kurilin explained. "We have a high share in the target market segments, a strong

team and a strong reputation." Citibank Kazakhstan has more than 130 employees in Almaty, Astana, Aktau, Atyrau, Kyzylorda and Temirtau, according to the country head, who has been with Citi in different assignments and countries since 1996 and has been in his current job since 2014.

"Kazakhstan is an open economy, more so than some other emerging markets. If you look at the big industrial players in Kazakhstan you can see that foreign investors play an important role in oil, metals, and consumer products. Citi's mission is to be a bank of choice for larger local corporations and our global network clients. Our competitive advantage is global reach and a strong international client network. Citi is the only bank in the world that has staff in almost 100 countries. Some of our network clients are the largest players in their respected industries in Kazakhstan. Our primary mission is to be a bank of choice for day-to-day transactional needs of our clients."

"I have an exciting job," noted Kurilin. "We in Citi are pleased with our Kazakhstan story."



Photo from kapital.kz

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan-made car batteries are to be supplied to China, Kazakh TV reports. A Taldykorgan plant has already shipped the first batch to the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China. The company produces 250,000 units every month. The plant manufactures all kinds of automotive batteries, including industrial and military equipment. The production complies with all international standards, the management says. "We have been exporting our products abroad for more than 10 years already. We started exporting to Afghanistan first. Now we will export to Poland and Germany," said Deputy Director General Yesset Kanayev.

Kazakhstan has attracted over \$220 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the past 10 years, Kazakh TV reports. This was brought up during a round-table discussion in Almaty where officials of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Investments and Development and representatives of foreign companies and the diplomatic community met for discussion. The most urgent issues affecting the investment climate and changes and trends in the investment policy of Kazakhstan were on the agenda. According to the Ministry of Investments and Development, starting from 2015 there has been an increase in investment in the sectors of the national economy targeted as part of the country's industrialisation programme. According to Vice Minister of Investments and Development Yerlan Khairov, face-to-face meetings with representatives of the European Business Association, which includes 150 foreign companies, have had a significant impact on the country's investment climate, as investors' opinions and wishes provide insight into what still needs improvement.

Prices for the most popular brand of gasoline, AI 92, shot up 16.4 percent in a year to 125 tenge (US\$0.36) per litre at the end of August, Energy.kz reports. This summer, the diesel price grew by 3.3 percent to 99 tenge (US\$0.26) per litre. In the period from January to June, Kazakhstan's manufacturers met 73.3 percent of the country's demand, including aviation. For comparison, at the end of 2015 the share of local production was at 67.1 percent. The Pavlodar Oil and Chemistry Refinery is leading gasoline production with 45 percent of the total produced in Kazakhstan.

The automotive industry of the country is increasing production, Today.kz reports. This August, some 1,954 passenger cars were produced in the country, four times more than last August, when 488 cars were produced. The production of passenger cars in the country has shown continuous growth over the three summer months. The share of sold cars assembled in the country was 35 percent, while in 2015 this figure was 17 percent. With regard to sales in 2016, more than a quarter of new car buyers preferred models from local assemblies, and in August their share reached 35 percent. Chief Editor of AutoBusinessReview Yevgeny Yesskov believes that the shrinking demand for new cars is a good opportunity for local producers to increase market share, including through public support for industry measures that directly affect the growth of production volumes in the future may affect the reduction in exports. According to Yesskov, despite this, Kazakhstan is still one of the largest export markets for Russian companies. Manufacturers of the two countries are implementing a joint project to create a car plant in Ust-Kamenogorsk with the participation of Russia's AvtoVAZ. Nevertheless, although Russia and Kazakhstan are working together, it is more important for Kazakhstan to establish its own production. The joint project plant in Ust-Kamenogorsk will produce Lada models in Kazakhstan, which would significantly reduce imports from Russia.

Kazakh Company to Create Probiotic Based on Bifidobacterium, Lactobacillus

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Kazakh National Agency for Technological Development has allocated a 4 million tenge (US\$11,788) grant to Biostem Company to develop a medicine based on bifidobacterium and lactobacillus, reported Kazinform on Sept. 14. The new drug claims to be a much cheaper probiotic than existing ones on the market.

"At the moment the project is still at an initial stage, at the laboratory level. We will be developing it during this upcoming year. The financing was given only for the development of the drug," head of the Group on the Development of the Probiotic Akmaral Khasenova told The Astana Times, adding that in the future, additional financing will be needed to bring it on the industrial level.

The production is planned to be in Stepnogorsk city of the Akmola region under Kazakhstan National Centre of biotechnologies. It is aimed at creating a drug, which is a probiotic based on the microorganisms of active bifidobacterium and lactobacillus. The method is



based on a special cultivation and encapsulation into hard gelatine capsules. It will improve therapeutic efficacy and significantly reduce the cost of the new drug.

"The first stage in the project is taking active strains of bifidobacterium and lactobacillus that will be used in the drug. The next step is the establishment of the commodity form of the drug, getting it in a dry form and turning it into

capsules and blisters," said Khasenova.

At the moment, such drugs are imported in the country, mainly from Russia. According to her, the finished product will not differ from its imported analogues.

The price of the medicine will be within 30-35 tenge (US\$ 0.08 – 0.1) per capsule, which is more than two times cheaper than its counterparts from Russia.

At present, no pharmaceutical company in Kazakhstan has a production of finished dosage forms containing bifidobacterium and lactobacillus as an active component, so the demand in the country is huge. In addition, state medical institutions buy those drugs a lot, so the company targets to work with them as well.

"We want to produce our local probiotic based on bifidobacterium and lactobacillus and distribute here in Kazakhstan and abroad in the future," added Khasenova.

The project will enable the formation of Kazakhstan's pharmaceutical production and a significant reduction in the dependence on imports of essential medicines and will provide the population with quality medication at a much lower price.

Today, 20 people are working on the project. Biostem Company works under National Centre of Biotechnologies. It also makes fertilisers and bio fertilisers and other projects in biotechnologies.

Probiotics can improve health by restoring the normal functions of the body and protecting it from infections.

Bifidobacterium and lactobacillus are natural constituents of the microflora of the gastro-intestinal tract of a human being. The first attempts to use them were carried out about 100 years ago. Both of them are actively involved in the synthesis of vitamins, affect the metabolism of toxic substances and act as antioxidants, protecting against pathogenic bacteria and reducing blood pressure.

Lactobacillus increase immunity as they live everywhere in the body, in the intestines and stomach, and even in human saliva. Their bactericidal function is to destroy pathogens. Settling down in any mucosal they contribute to increase immunity.

Bifidobacterium is a kind of bacteria living in the large intestine only. Its purpose is the utilisation of everything that was not digested and cleansing the body from the products of the gastrointestinal tract. Modern human needs bifidobacterium, especially regarding the fact that his or her nutrition includes fast food and semi-finished products, in order to maintain normal digestion.

Kazkommertsbank Becomes Exclusive Acquirer of Diners Club Cards

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Diners Club International and Kazakhstan's largest private bank, Kazkommertsbank, are launching the Diners Club Card business in Kazakhstan, according to a press statement issued Sept. 15. The deal represents a step toward Kazakhstan's global economic integration, the bank said.

"Our collaboration with Diners Club is another step toward the integration of Kazakhstan into the global economy, which increases the tourism potential in our country," said Managing Director of

Kazkommertsbank Nurlan Zhaparov.

Diners Club International is a part of the Discover Global Network. Diners Club cards are accepted in more than 185 countries and territories via millions of merchant locations and at more than one million ATMs and cash access locations.

"In the near future, Kazakhstan will become more attractive to foreign visitors due to significant events such as the Universiade and EXPO 2017. Expecting a great inflow of foreign tourists and business travellers, we are trying to

provide them with the comfort they are accustomed to in transactions. The additional benefit from collaboration with Diners Club is that the holders of cards issued for local payment systems in India, South Korea and certain other countries could be serviced via Discover Global Network, which means that in Kazakhstan, they would be able to use their cards," he stated.

According to Managing Director of Discover in Europe, the Middle East and Africa Matt Sloan, Kazakhstan is in a prime location for facilitating trade among countries throughout Asia

and Europe. It is "a pivotal country to help increase Diners Club's presence in the region."

"Working with Kazkommertsbank will not only expand our global footprint, it will also allow Discover Global Network cardholders to use their cards throughout the country," he said.

Kazkommertsbank is the largest acquiring bank in Kazakhstan, as well one of the largest issuers of payment cards in the country. Now it will also be the exclusive acquirer of Diners Club cards in Kazakhstan, as well as all of cards issued by the Discover Global Network. Accord-

ing to the statement, this will enable card acceptance at more than 42,000 payment terminals at different locations and 2,266 ATMs.

Founded in 1950, Diners Club International introduced the world's first credit charge card, which was the beginning of a financial revolution in how consumers and companies pay for products and services. Today, Diners Club is a famous brand that also offers access to VIP lounges in the airports throughout the world and provides corporations and small business owners with a range of cost management solutions.

Aktau Northern Port Now an International One

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Aktau's new northern seaport officially became an international port when an Iranian ship was loaded with Kazakh metal and grain there.

"This is the first Iranian ship that has arrived for loading at the new Aktau seaport. The seaport was put into operation in the summer of 2015, but it was only used as a domestic seaport, because it had no customs body. ... Today, the first foreign vessel arrived at the northern port, because it can operate with foreign ships from today and now has the status of an international seaport," said Deputy Akim (Governor) of Mangistau region Rakimbek Amirzhanov, Kapital.kz reports.

Amirzhanov noted that the event also became possible after the removal of sanctions against Iran.

The vessel was loaded with 45 tonnes of metal from Karaganda and grain from North Kazakhstan. The northern seaport is technically equipped for large weights and has the ability to unload 80,000 tonnes of grain at once with its new cranes. The port also has an elevator that can store 30,000 tonnes of grain.

Having two seaports gives Kazakhstan's producers of grain and other goods an option, and today, a real competition between the seaports has started.

The opening of the new port has made it possible to employ more people. A state programme supported a staff training programme for local young people, who now

work as dockers, tallymen, mooring masters and slingsmen.

It is possible that the port will be used to import goods from Iran in the future. Amirzhanov said it was highly likely that agricultural products from Iran will be imported, especially oranges and mandarins, which can't be grown in Kazakhstan. This will enhance cooperation and will make such goods cheaper in Kazakhstan.

"It is very important that we can have Iranian mandarins on our tables on New Year's Eve, and they will be cheaper than last year, despite the devaluation of the tenge," he added.

Amirzhanov highlighted that the new international seaport will surely contribute to the competitiveness of Kazakhstan's grain and metal.

Iran's Ministry of Transportation subsidises all Iranian vessels that use Kazakh seaports, covering their expenses, he said. This makes transport via Kazakh seaports profitable for Iranian buyers of Kazakh metal and grain.

Thus, cooperation with Iran, with its previously inaccessible market of 80 million people, will be very important for Mangistau region. Amirzhanov emphasised the solvency of the country and said that it has a very good, stable and strategically important market.

"Increasing export is beneficial for our economy. Exporting grain is even more beneficial than oil, because it is a renewable product. It is very important that the farmers of the North Kazakhstan region have an opportunity to sell their goods, their grain, to foreign markets for

foreign currency. It is important for the economy and at the same time it ensures the domestic food security of our country," he said.

Consul General of Iran Mahmoud Adib congratulated Mangistau on the event.

"I congratulate you with the opening of the northern port of Aktau. ... The opening of the northern and southern corridors will enable Kazakhstan to enhance cooperation with Iran to go beyond the sea to the oceans. Today, we have witnessed such an event. We plan to carry up to 200 tonnes of metal from Kazakhstan to Iran in the end of October. Today's shipment amounts to 45 tonnes of metal. This is the first cooperation with the new port. I am very happy for Mangistau and Kazakhstan," Adib said.

Aktau Seaport Reaches Record Shipping to Iran

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – In August, the Aktau port increased its shipping by 50 percent over previous years, reported the press service of Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ).

In particular, 159,000 tonnes of metal products were sent to Iran, reaching record levels. Previously, the average monthly shipment figures reached 100,000 tonnes.

The daily metal handling reached 6,700 tonnes in the second half of August compared to the usual 4,000

tonnes. The port reached such impressive results for the first time in four years. It has become possible thanks to the coordinated work and cooperation of all participants of this process, including the operating companies of the port.

Today, significant changes are taking place in the port of Aktau that are aimed at reaching maximum transparency of its activities, the elimination of unfair attitude to work and the prevention of manifestations of corruption.

Innovations are related to changes in the structure

of the port, in the customs code of the port, in rules and standards governing the norms of behaviour, movement of transport on the territory of the port, safety and occupational health.

The Aktau Seaport Special Economic Zone (SEZ) established by a presidential decree, has been operating since Jan. 1, 2003. Engineering infrastructure subzone No. 3, which is the most compact on the territory, was built from 2009-2012 at a cost of 3.3 billion tenge (US\$17.8 million). All networks, roads and railways have been built.



EDITORIAL & OPINION

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

FM's UNGA Address Outlines Commitment to Global Security

This year's UN General Assembly session in New York was especially poignant for our country. Coming just before we celebrate our 25th anniversary and take our place on the UN Security Council, it presented an opportunity to show the world not just the great progress our country has made but the path we are paving for the future. As the dust settles, we can be proud of the efforts made by our representatives to promote Kazakhstan's world-leading security initiatives.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov's speech in the opening debate of the 71st UN General Assembly outlined our country's priorities and strategy for our tenure on the Security Council. Idrissov clearly outlined how Kazakhstan's approach to foreign policy is borne out of our deep-rooted belief in the power of dialogue and our country's commitment to act as a trusted, objective and steadfast partner of the UN and all member states.

We face an increasingly complex and dangerous world – threats from terrorist organisations, globally networked criminal gangs, the impact of climate change, the continuation of nuclear proliferation, the mass movement of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa all pose real risk to the global community. It is vital we work together to develop a new clear-headed and mutually supported strategy for retaining global security and prosperity.

As the "new kids on the block" of global diplomacy, Kazakhstan can offer fresh perspectives and a revitalised approach to security issues. Our position as a bridge between Eastern and Western powers has meant Kazakhstan is uniquely placed to bring together different cultures, nations and religions to act as a stabilising force in times of crisis.

Idrissov's speech made it clear that countering global threats depends on the country's ability to overcome the barriers that divide us and find a common language. Over many years, we have seen how promoting dialogue and constructive relations has helped smooth over conflict and bring those in disagreement back to the negotiating table. From our President, Nursultan Nazarbayev's, recent success in helping restore relations between Russia and Turkey, to our long-term strategy on Iran, this approach provides greater security to all parties.

It is right, therefore, that Idrissov outlined how this approach will define our tenure on the United Nations Security Council, informing how we make progress on the four key priority areas for achieving a more stable world: nuclear, energy, food and water security.

As the first country from Central Asia on the Council, our membership provides an occasion to draw attention to regional security issues, which affect

stability globally. A priority for us is to work with others to secure a successful outcome to the situation in Afghanistan. Only through a genuine and inclusive political settlement can progress be made on its wider social and economic development.

Idrissov used his address to highlight Kazakhstan's investment of more than \$50 million for educating Afghan students, as well as resources for building schools and hospitals and providing humanitarian assistance. Tackling the root causes of extremism through providing hope and prosperity is a cornerstone of our international development commitment and one that supports our security objectives.

Global terrorism has become one of the most pressing security concerns of our time. The foreign minister articulated how Kazakhstan's strategy of encouraging dialogue aims to build cooperation between states to combat and destroy this threat. The Kazakh President's idea of creating a global anti-terror coalition is at the centre of this approach and is designed to strengthen and synergise efforts between multiple counter-terrorism structures.

In this age of networks and globalisation economic sanctions are counter-productive, creating new division lines which serve to alienate nations, rather than drawing them together. This is why Idrissov called for the further re-integration of Iran in political and economic areas. Our record of promoting a mutually beneficial deal on the Iranian nuclear programme is well known. We can be proud that our country helped break the deadlock on the Iranian programme by supporting constructive dialogue among stakeholders and by hosting two rounds of multilateral talks.

The issue of nuclear security is one the world knows we hold extremely close to our hearts. Indeed, it was our country who initiated a General Assembly resolution on the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world, which was adopted in December 2015. Although we have just celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Treaty on the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone, this was the last major breakthrough in global disarmament. Idrissov's address put forward how upcoming efforts will be focussed on building a coalition of states that will help to stigmatise the possession of nuclear weapons and ensure that international treaties are respected.

As Kazakhstan plans the celebrations for its 25th anniversary, we can and should take pride in our country's many achievements. As we enter this new chapter we have a responsibility to lead and shape a successful future not just for our country, but for the global community as well. In his final comments, Idrissov declared: "We approach this task with healthy optimism, but also healthy pragmatism." A fitting reflection of our country's confidence and experience in this special year.

Expert Says the Deaf Still Face Challenges

By Ainur Kembayeva

Tell our readers about the association.

International Deaf Day, marked annually the last Sunday of September, was launched in 1951 to honour the creation of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). It is marked during the International Week of the Deaf. This year, the day fell on Sept. 25.

To better understand the lives of the deaf, Vice Chairman of the Association of the Deaf "Zhasnur" Aigul Bulatova discussed the challenges they face in everyday life.

What problems do people with a hearing disorder face daily?

For our country where more than 200,000 deaf people live, the problem of development and social inclusion in society is still urgent.

The potential of deaf children is underestimated, and conditions for realisation of their abilities aren't created.

All this forces deaf individuals to join the ranks of people who are hopelessly jobless due to a lack of speech communication and dependence on sign language translation under the conditions of the modern economy.

The leisure of children isn't organised; there are no creative circles and classes for them. They have no choice of professions; they aren't involved in the cultural public life of the city or country. This is characteristic of all cities of Kazakhstan and is discussed only by the few non-profit organisations working with people with a hearing disorder.

The organisation was created in 2008. Chairperson of the organisation Kyzylgul Sembina, having two brothers with a hearing disorder and helping with the solution of problems not only of her brothers but also of their friends, created the organisation to unite children and youth with a hearing disorder together to solve problems they constantly face.

We began to organise lectures and seminars on various subjects with the invitation of specialists in AIDS and from the Centres for Healthy Living and the Centre of Family Planning. Thus, we have drawn the attention of these organisations that teenagers with a hearing disorder have questions on which they would like to hear answers from experts in a language clear to them and the questions they would be ashamed to ask parents. Such lectures and seminars began to be held regularly. It is no secret that the main professions for deaf people are in the shoe and sewing business, being a janitor or cleaner.

But modern youth are interested in new types of professions. And with the assistance of grants, we have organised courses on training in hairdressing and manicure skills for 25 children of the senior classes, and also to ethnic applied art, such as work with felt, tree, skin, etc.

By doing it we have shown society that children with a hearing disorder can and have the right to choose professions which are pleasant to them and they can realise the creative potential in them.

Also, for the first time we have

organised a festival of sign song and dance among children and youth with a hearing disorder.

Similar competitions became then traditional in all cities of the country; courses in acting skills and performances on the stages of Astana, such as "Thumbelina," "Shewolf" "Kyz Zhibek" are organised.

Organising roundtables with the invitation of representatives of public authorities, deputies and people with a hearing disorder, we pay attention to the problems existing at the moment and express them at the government level.

Our purpose is to change the situation that has been developed in society concerning people with a hearing disorder.

Organising various training courses, we give the chance to master new professions, to get a job.

We hold festivals of creativity featuring people with a hearing disorder to showcase their creative abilities, development their talents and their integration into society.

We want the deaf to have equal opportunities. Therefore we have opened the centre for social help Komek, which includes shops, trade boutiques, sewing workshops, polygraphs, furniture production, a deli, cookery, a dry cleaner, a laundry and beauty shop work. We have also opened a creative workshop Theatre of Mimicry and Gestures for realisation of creative potential, possibility of self expression and transfer of the look and outlook on current events.

See full version of this story on our website.

New Project on Afghanistan Highlights Focus on Assistance

On Jan. 1, 2017, Kazakhstan will take its place on the United Nations Security Council. It is a symbol of how far this country has come since independence and of our status within the international community.

But it is also a big responsibility. The country has been trusted by our international partners with helping make decisions which will have a major impact on the lives of many millions of people and peace and stability in our world.

The challenges are great – whether politically, economically or environmentally. Conflict, for example, has plunged regions into chaos. Prosperity has by-passed too many countries and communities.

Conflict, poverty and despair have also provided fertile ground for violent extremism. In contrast, the evidence shows how it struggles to take root in societies where the economy is growing and opportunities are on the increase.

It is why it is vital that each nation does what it can to help reduce tensions, tackle poverty and provide hope for those who see no prospects for themselves or their families. It is not only morally right to offer a helping hand to the less fortunate but, in an inter-connected world where dangers and threats easily leap borders, is also strongly in our own national interests. There is little to be gained and a great deal to be lost by sitting on the sidelines.

This is the background against which the evolving role of Kazakhstan's international development assistance should be measured. When a national operator for official development assistance (ODA), branded KazAID, is established, it will formally mark the country's transformation from being a recipient of development aid to a donor – the first country in Central Asia to make this step.

Kazakhstan had quietly been providing financial and food support to meet humanitarian emergencies for years. But through KazAID the country will have a single body to direct and coordinate efforts so they do the most good and build partnerships with its international counterparts to maximise impact.

The government in Astana is working, for example, with the United Nations Development Programme to make sure it has the right structures and processes in place to provide effective aid and value for the money.

At a national level, a partnership has been forged with Japan's International Cooperation Agency (JICA), announced by the Kazakh Foreign Ministry's press release in August, to strengthen the role of women in Afghanistan's civil service through a series of educational activities involving Kazakh professionals in training capacities.

As a close neighbour and a country with a deeply troubled history and continuing unrest, Afghanistan is rightly a priority for Kazakhstan's aid efforts. If Afghanistan again descends into outright civil war, it will cast a dark shadow over the whole region. It is in all our interests to support its economy and society.

It is why Kazakhstan has already funded around 1,000 Afghan young people to study at our universities so they can return home with the skills and expertise to improve their communities. The new joint programme with Japan focused on expanding the economic independence and rights of Afghan women shows Astana's determination to step up this help.

While Afghanistan and Central Asia have rightly been made the priority for aid projects, KazAID's influence will also be felt wider. Last year, training courses, for example, were run to pass on Kazakh expertise in energy, health and agriculture to professionals from 23 African countries.

Overseas aid is not without its critics. As politicians in Europe and America know from experience, there will always be those who question spending public money on aid efforts abroad. And these complaints get louder when economic conditions are harder as they are across the world.

But provided the money is directed to achieve the right goals and the way it is used is monitored closely, it is money well spent. It is not charity but investment in our security and stability and in our collective economic future as much as of those who directly receive the help. It is this professionalism and transparency which KazAID needs to provide.

Kazakhstan has a solid record of promoting peace and international cooperation. As Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov said, KazAID should turn into an important new instrument to help deliver these goals and build a safer, more prosperous world.

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General Manager, Atyrau Valve Plant
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OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Brazil and Argentina: 25 Years of Nuclear Cooperation

By José Serra
and Susana Malcorra

This year we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing by Brazil and Argentina of the Guadalajara Agreement for the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy. Among the new elements introduced by the Agreement was the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), created to monitor the two countries' commitment to unequivocally pursuing the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy and to administering the newly created Common System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials.

A few months later, in 1991, the two countries signed the Quadripartite Agreement with ABACC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It was the first time Brazil and Argentina had negotiated as a joint delegation with an international body. Within a short space of time, important milestones in the strategic bilateral relationship between Brazil and Argentina were reached, help-



José Serra (L) and Susana Malcorra

ing to establish the atmosphere of peace, mutual trust and cooperation that prevails between the two countries.

Given the importance we attach to our bilateral relationship, which is one of the priorities of our respective diplomatic endeavours, it is natural that we work together, in integrated fashion, in many different areas. The commitment of both our societies to this objective is due in no small part to the decision to increase our cooperation in the nuclear field.

In the 1970s, different political and historical factors hindered the pursuit of closer ties between our countries. Disagreements about the construction of the Itaipu and Corpus power stations, and suspicions generated by our respective national nuclear programmes, threatened to create a situation of spiralling insecurity in our region.

Fortunately, the re-democratisation process in both our countries, from the 1980s onwards, paved

the way for a radical transformation in the way Brazil and Argentina viewed each other, making possible a broad relationship characterised by cooperation and integration. Presidents José Sarney and Raul Alfonsín played a key role in this change. The process was continued by their successors, whose efforts, accompanied by a strong commitment on the part of scientists and diplomats from both countries, culminated in the creation of ABACC.

Today, the bilateral cooperation process allows us to engage without fear in the development of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes, with a view to achieving technological, economic, and social advances. Brazil and Argentina currently cooperate not only in the reciprocal verification of their nuclear activities but also on a series of joint projects that seek to concretise the strategic nature of our relationship. This is the case with the building of the Brazilian Multipurpose Research Reactor and Argentina's RA-10 Research Reactor, both emblematic projects conducted jointly by the

two countries, capable of supplying the entire regional market with the radioisotope Molybdenum-99, which is extremely important in the medical industry.

We must remember that nuclear energy has an essential role to play in sustainable development and in reducing the dependence of our economies on fossil fuels.

Through the creation of ABACC and the Common System for Control of Nuclear Materials, our negotiators conceived an arrangement that had previously been unthinkable in such a sensitive area. Through that arrangement, the inspections of the Argentine nuclear installations are carried out by Brazilian inspectors, and the inspections of Brazilian nuclear facilities are conducted by Argentine inspectors. Since its creation, ABACC, in close cooperation with the IAEA, has conducted more than 2,500 inspections in both countries, the results of which are published in annual reports on its website. ABACC also participates as an observer in meetings of the IAEA Board of Governors.

This dynamic requires a level of

trust and a degree of reciprocity that attest not only to the uniqueness of the Brazil-Argentina relations but also to its contribution to the region and the world, the agreement being paradigmatic with regard to security and non-proliferation. This experience today serves as a model of how impasses might be overcome in other regions.

Our experience with ABAAC demonstrates that it is possible to create new levels of confidence through diplomacy and the creation of original institutions. In politics, it is necessary to be daring in pursuit of a greater good: that of peace. Based on this strategy and on our peaceful vocation, Brazil and Argentina will continue to strengthen their ties of friendship and cooperation both in the nuclear field and in all those other areas that contribute to the sustainable development of our countries and the welfare of our peoples.

José Serra is Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and Susana Malcorra is Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina.

Europe and Kazakhstan: A Trade Link Made in Heaven

By Zhanbolat Ussenov

Is Kazakhstan part of Europe? A rhetorical question with no hard and quick answer.

Geographically, about 14 percent of the republic's territory is in Eastern Europe. But even that relatively small portion of land makes Kazakhstan the 7th largest European country. Needless to say that the remaining 86 percent of the territory allows Kazakhstan to be considered one of the biggest nations in Asia.

Kazakhstan is a member of the European Football Association but at the same time it is part of the Asian Boxing Confederation. Kazakhstan is an important partner of the Asian Development Bank as it is of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Kazakhstan successfully chaired the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe but the country also authored and initiated its Asian peer – the Conference for Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

It is indeed hard to tell. At the same time, there is a simpler yet more practical question: is the Europe-Kazakhstan relationship important? And here the answer is clear-cut: yes, it is.

Firstly and most obviously – Kazakhstan is one of the largest suppliers of energy resources to Europe. For instance, it accounts for more than 25 percent of Austria's overall oil imports and a good third of Romania's imports. Every third litre of gas bought by German car owners is produced from Kazakh oil.

Besides, Kazakhstan is an important global security partner not only due to its role in supporting the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan but also because the infamous "great arc of instability" lies not so far from Kazakhstan's borders.

Commercially, Europe is Kazakhstan's No.1 trade partner with European nations accounting for more than a half of the country's trade turnover. They have also put the largest amount of investment



into Kazakhstan's economy: \$110 billion out of the total of \$222 billion that the Central Asian country has attracted over the past decade.

However, there is more to the Kazakhstan-European bond than meets the eye.

Coming back to geography, there is an unclearly defined term "Eurasia" – a reference to the land-mass in the centre of the Eurasian continent, which includes Kazakhstan. "Eurasia" used to be the most important focal point of trade routes between Europe and Asia, including the Silk Road.

The region thrived on transit and lived in fame and prosperity until the development of maritime navigation lured away the shipments and put an abrupt end to Eurasia's relevance to pace and requirements of the global development. Our part of the world fell into obscurity and was colonised by the great powers, including the British and Russian empires.

Today, the picture is changing. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and dismantling of the "Iron Curtain," Eurasia opened itself to the world. And the world figured that with modern day land transportation infrastructure, the region could become both a very viable alternative and an important complementary element to sea transportation routes.

Although intraregional trade in Central Asia is still very far away from fulfilling its potential, the region's role as a transit space for Asia-Europe trade is rapidly increasing. The rise of China, e-commerce and time sensitive deliveries, including Chinese flagship e-commerce giant Alibaba Group's encroachment on the region, make land shipments through Central Asia ever more relevant.

Kazakhstan authorities can see this path back to global prominence quite well and are doing their utmost to expand both the infrastructure and Kazakhstan's presence in key destinations for land shipments, including sea ports of Lianyungang in China and Bender Abbas in Iran.

So far, the motto of Kazakhstan's government has been to

"transform land-locked into land-linked." In practice, it means "grab all transit opportunities you can."

For example, the TRACECA project connecting Asia to Europe through the Caucasus and Central Asia has been there for more than two decades and has seen a continuous increase in shipments. TRACECA is a few times shorter than maritime transportation options from Asia to Europe and at least 600 kilometres shorter than other land transportation routes. Kazakhstan is investing heavily in making this route more attractive. The recent launch of railway connecting the two Kazakh cities of Zhezkazgan and Beineu made the TRACECA route at least 1,000 km shorter.

Kazakhstan and Europe may seem to be many thousand miles apart but in fact they are fitting pieces of a global trade puzzle. With a continued increase in land shipments and transportation, Kazakhstan will claim back its well-deserved role of a golden bridge bringing Europe closer to the rising Asia.

In this regard, transit routes through the country's huge neighbour – Russia – are supposed to be one of the options on the "menu list" that Kazakhstan offers to potential customers. Northern routes are decades old, tested and reliable. Through Kazakhstan and via the Russian territory, for instance, Asian customers can get a fast and

convenient access to Belarus or the Baltic seaports of Ventspils and Klaipeda.

Of course, "replacement" for the Russian destination may be required if the current geopolitical game of sanctions and counter sanctions between Russia and the West becomes too heavy a burden for cargo shippers to bear. Kazakhstan will be able to redirect some of its transportation through Russia to other destinations but only some. So, the sanctions regime, which is already affecting Kazakhstan, could potentially hurt the country's transit business even more severely.

In terms of Europe-Asia land transit, Russia, quite naturally, is not only a partner but also a competitor to Kazakhstan. It is true that

13 countries and the same number of various tariffs and customs requirements. Creating a common set of intergovernmental regulations and tariffs is the key challenge not only for TRACECA but for other transit routes where Kazakhstan is participant.

Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (national railway company) believes that by 2020 shipments through TRACECA will increase to 17 million tonnes meaning that the Caspian port of Aktau in western Kazakhstan will remain busy despite a decline in oil transportation as part of Aktau-Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan route.

Through Aktau runs another important route. A couple of years ago, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran opened a railway connecting the three countries as part of North-South route. In theory, it means that European customers now have access to the Persian Gulf through Kazakhstan and Iran's seaport of Bender Abbas. China and East Asian nations may also use that route as an alternative to their traditional Malacca Strait transit.

Kazakhstan and Europe may seem to be many thousand miles apart but in fact they are fitting pieces of a global trade puzzle. With a continued increase in land shipments and transportation, Kazakhstan will claim back its well-deserved role of a golden bridge bringing Europe closer to the rising Asia.

The author is Director of the Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs (ECFA) and a member of the Public Council at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan.

THE ATOM PROJECT

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On August 29, 2012, President Nazarbayev put forward another initiative, The ATOM Project (Abolish Testing. Our Mission.), to galvanise global citizens to take resolute action toward a more peaceful future—one that is safe for all. Honour the memory of victims of nuclear testing in Kazakhstan and elsewhere around the world by joining us in our quest for a nuclear weapons free world!

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EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Days of Astana in Moscow Celebrates Modern, Traditional Kazakhstan

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Days of Astana, marking the celebration of the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence, were held Sept. 19-20 in Moscow. The best works of Kazakh craftsmen, filmmakers, modern art masters and masterpieces of musical heritage and Kazakh culture were presented to the Russian public.

The mayors of the two cities met the first day of the celebratory events to discuss issues of business cooperation and prospects for coordination, reported the city administration's (akimat) press service.

"Your city with its rich experience in urban development is important to us," said Astana Akim (Mayor) Asset Issekeshiev at the meeting with Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin. "We are now reviewing the concept of the city's development with an emphasis on the smart city formation, the introduction of new technologies to create a comfortable environment for living. In this regard, we would like to explore Moscow's experience in the fields of urbanisation, urban management, transport systems, urban policy and the construction



Sergei Sobyenin (L) and Asset Issekeshiev.

and development of Moscow as a smart city."

A bilateral business forum was held Sept. 20, where the parties discussed prospects of expanding cooperation and mechanisms to implement joint projects.

Moscow Government Minister and department of foreign economic and international relations head Sergei Cherebin said the Russian side is interested in strengthening relations with the Kazakh capital.

"Astana is a dynamic young metropolis which demonstrates the unique pace of attracting investment and the most advanced technologies in the field of urban development. Today, the relationship between the business communities is not simply built as we are experiencing quite a difficult economic situation and the prospects of integrated interaction between Astana and Moscow are not fully developed. Our relations will continue to develop. We plan to con-

duct a business mission in Astana and take an active part in EXPO 2017," he said.

The expo will be an excellent platform for Moscow enterprises to showcase electricity generation technologies, its preservation and urban innovations related to energy facilities, Cherebin added.

Issekeshiev noted Astana and Moscow have much common ground to work together.

"Astana is an actively developing city and its population has already exceeded one million people. We want to establish cooperation between our business communities, as the economic models of our metropolises are generally similar. Both sides have interesting programmes and technologies and we have to implement them," he said.

Issekeshiev also noted income growth through the new employment structure and economic model and improving the quality of life are the key priorities of the young capital.

"A whole range of smart solutions that we are currently exploring will contribute to improving public administration efficiency. It includes openness of work, more transparent work of housing and communal services and the introduction of smart solu-

tions in public transport, education and health. We have already implemented a number of pilot projects," he said.

Many smart technologies that have been successfully executed or are in the planning stages in the Russian capital were presented at the event.

"Astana and Moscow are classic examples of big cities where it is necessary to introduce the smart cities technology. For example, we introduced Mosrobot, a direct notification service of citizens about the events that take place on their street or route... We are in an anonymous form that will receive

programme with the participation of about 400 Kazakh artists. We wanted to show our culture and traditions in this exhibition. The expo pavilion announcing the upcoming international exhibition in Astana is also represented here," said Astana Department of Culture, Archives and Documentation head Bolat Mazhagulov.

A grand gala concert featuring Kazakh songs, kuis (an instrumental musical composition) and classical masterpieces performed by Alibek Dnishev, Maira Mukhamedkyzy, Aiman Musakhodzhaeva, Roza Rymbayeva

ISSEKESHEV: "Astana is an actively developing city and its population has already exceeded one million people. We want to establish cooperation between our business communities, as the economic models of our metropolises are generally similar."

data on the flow of people moving around the city and on the basis of these data, we plan to develop the city's infrastructure by means of major mobile operators," said Information City State Budget Institution General Director Alexei Chukarin.

In addition, as part of the celebrations, the Kazakh Auyl (Kazakh Village) exposition and jewellers' and craftsmen' workshops were organised.

"We have a very extensive

and other singers was held at the State Kremlin Palace.

The Astana Russian Gorky Theatre staged the play "Tomiris – Saka Queen" Sept. 20 while "The Smell of Sage" exhibition highlighting the best works of contemporary painters and sculptors opened the same day. The exhibit, previously on display in Beijing, Berlin and New York, was a great success with local professionals and art lovers.

Kazakh Officer Appointed Commander at MINURSO

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakh Lieutenant Colonel Askar Kozhagaliev has been appointed a commander of the UN Mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO), reported the press office of Ministry of Defence of Kazakhstan.

Kazhagaliev was appointed the commander of the UN military base in Ausard camp with an area of responsibility of 43,000 square kilometres located on the southern part of Western Sahara, on the territory controlled by the royal army of Morocco.

There are 45 servicemen from Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil,

China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea, El Salvador, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia and Yemen.

Kozhagaliev was sent to the mission on Nov. 25, 2015 for 12 months. He graduated from the Military Academy of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan; he served in the Kazakh peacekeeping battalion, peacekeeping brigade and the Land Forces of Kazakhstan's armed forces.

Kazakhstan has been contributing to the peacekeeping efforts in the region of western Africa. KAZBAT officers are serving in UN missions in Western Sahara (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, or MINURSO) and Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI, or United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire).

The UN has been seeking a settlement in Western Sahara since the Spanish withdrawal in 1976 and ensuing fighting between Morocco, which reintegrated the territory, and the Frente Polisario. MINURSO continued to fulfil its mandate by monitoring the ceasefire as well as supporting a range of assistance programmes to address the plight of displaced and separated Sahrawi families.



Kazakh Lieutenant Colonel Askar Kozhagaliev (L) is being congratulated on his appointment.

World Skills Kazakhstan-2016 Competition Opens in Astana

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

The World Skills Kazakhstan-2016 competition organised by the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science and Kasipkor national holding officially opened Sept. 12 in Astana.

World Skills is an international non-profit movement among 75 countries to promote the benefits of and need for qualified professionals through competitions, joint projects and shared experiences.

One hundred and forty participants from 16 regions of the country have come to the capital to take part in the event. The competition has 15 categories, such as gastronomy, restaurant service, confectionery and hairdressing. The winners will be included on the national team and defend Kazakhstan's honour in the European tournament in Switzerland.

"We are happy to open our favourite World Skills Kazakhstan competition on the first day of Qurban Ait holiday. We hold the competition for the second year in a row. I want to thank Kasipkor national holding, the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs and all those

who helped this important event to happen. On behalf of Minister of Education and Science of Kazakhstan Erlan Sagadiyev, I wish success to all of you," said Vice Minister of Education and Science Ministry Elmira Sukhanberdiyeva.

young people between the ages of 18-22 competed in specialties such as turnery, welding, cooking, hairdressing, IT management systems and brick masonry. Based on the results, Holding Kasipkor chose the national team, which represented



Kazakhstan became the 70th country of the World Skills Competition in 2014. Holding Kasipkor, a vocational and technical education company, was chosen in July 2014 to be the national operator of the World Skills Kazakhstan project. The first regional championship was held the following year in February in the Akmola region, where

Kazakhstan in an international tournament last year in Aug. 12-15 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

"I think that vocational and technical sphere professions, such as cooking, welding, and hairdressing are now becoming popular today. All students try to improve their skills and learn more," said participant Alina Keldikulova.

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Nation&Capital

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

PEOPLE

Ayrau Entrepreneur Volunteers Years at Ambulance Station

B2

CULTURE

American Publisher to Release Collection of Poems by Kazakh Poet Aigerim Tazhi

B3

SPORTS

Kazakhstan Wins Two Medals in Rio Paralympics, Finishes 58th

B7

Almaty Celebrates 1,000th Birthday



By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan’s former capital and current financial centre, Almaty, is celebrating its 1,000-year anniversary with gala concerts and a number of other events organised by the city administration.

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, attending the concert marking the millennium on Sept. 18, congratulated the country on the birthday of its beloved and beautiful city. He noted that the founding of Almaty is included in UNESCO’s calendar of commemorative and anniversary dates important to humanity.

“In 1929, the city took over the role of Kazakhstan’s capital, and since then it has grown to a metropolitan city of more than a million people,” he said. “Almaty was honoured by being the first capital of independent Kazakhstan. Therefore, it is symbolic that the 1,000th anniversary of the

city is celebrated on the 25th year of independence of our country. Here we adopted our constitution in 1995. We signed the constitutional law ‘On the Independence of Kazakhstan’ in this city. In Almaty, we established the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. Here we made the historic decision on the new capital – Astana,” he said.

Nazarbayev highlighted the unique role of Almaty in regional and global development, calling it ‘the holy land in the foothills of the Alatau peaks’ and said the city served as a connecting point for East and West, North and South, of the vast Eurasian landmass.

“Almaty today is a reflection of the steady and sustainable development of all of Kazakhstan. In the past five years alone, the city has doubled in population. The population of Almaty is 1.7 million. Almaty’s subway has transported more than 30 million passengers. In 2017, we’ll start construction of the Big Almaty Ring Road under

the Nurlı Zhol state programme, which will be a part of the Western Europe-Western China international highway,” the President commented.

In Almaty, celebrations started in the Park of the First President with the Almafest 2016 apple festival, the press service of the city administration reported. A record number of apples were delivered to the city: 150 tonnes of the fruits were supplied by 33 farms in the Almaty region. The festival consisted of eight theme-based sections with different entertainment and cultural programmes.

A concert, “Twenty-Five Peaks of Almaty,” took place in the city’s new Ice Palace. “Gakku Dauysy,” a Kazakh music concert, as well as the Art Energy festival of creative industries and creative initiatives were also devoted to the city’s birthday.

In the evening a fireworks show called Apple Fire was launched in three locations in the city.

“The Pyramids serve as evidence

for such ancient cities as Baghdad or Cairo. Those are things that we can look at and touch. Almaty lacks such specific sources. We rely on excavations and artefacts that were found – for example, coins and various utensils,” Deputy Director of the Presidential Archive Zhamilya Abdukadyrova said on the dating of the anniversary, Kazakh TV reports.

Almaty’s age used to be dated to the establishment of Fort Vernyi in the mid-19th century, but archaeologists have proved that people lived there long before. Experts have shown that Almaty has existed for more than 1,000 years, suffering through at least one devastating earthquake and changing its name three times. The main argument of the historians is a coin on which the phrase “Balad Almaty” is written. The coin dates to the 13th century and, these historians say, shows that at that date there was a mint and a monetary system at the place where the modern city is located.

Astana’s National Centre for Biotechnology Pushing the Country toward Innovation

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – The development of biotechnology is among Kazakhstan’s priorities, discussed creating an innovative economy, using new technologies and enhancing the competitiveness of Kazakhstan’s biotechnology industry in his recent interview with Kazakhstanskaya Pravda newspaper. Ramankulov, 49, has headed the NCB since 2005. He is a professor at the International University of Vienna and the Kazakh National Academy of Natural Sciences, and arrived at the centre via studies in Lomonosov State University, the Institute of Molecular Genetics of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Texas A&M University, where he did doctoral study.

Director General of the National Centre for Biotechnology (NCB) Yerlan Ramankulov

The NCB is Kazakhstan’s largest

scientific centre, with laboratories, high-tech equipment and a staff of 340 highly qualified specialists. Looking to the future, NCB is developing a doctoral programme, and holds meetings of the Bio Club for children in the Palace of Schoolchildren, to encourage children to study science, Ramankulov said.

According to Ramankulov, creating such a centre was a huge step forward for Kazakh science. In his words, its staff has a specific task: creating innovative technologies for the transition to the next industrial revolution.

“Kazakhstan now lives in the fourth phase of revolution, improving indicators step-by-step in different directions. The President and government put a lot of effort into diversifying the economy, thereby making the transition to the next stage of economic development.

Continued on Page B8

Tribute to Frank Sinatra, Edith Piaf Performed in Capital

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – The capital’s KazMedia Centre hosted a musical performance “Happy People Sing” Sept. 17 dedicated to the 100th birthdays of the late Frank Sinatra and Edith Piaf.

The production was a collaboration of musicologist and singer Iren Aravina, who wrote the script, and ARTISHOCK Theatre actress and director Galina Pyanova, who is staging the performance.

The concert featured one of the most popular and desirable Kazakh actors Chingiz Kapin as Sinatra and actress Aisulu Azimbayeva portraying Piaf. The music was performed by famous band Jazz House, with principal vocal parts performed by Aravina and Alexei Timofeyev.

The play is a kind of journey through Piaf’s and Sinatra’s careers. The destinies of both vocalists always excited historians, writers and filmmakers in theatre and

cinema. Although there are many performances and films about each singer individually, none has been presented showing them together.

“This is not my first project, as I produced some musical performances with different ensembles. But this is the first time I have worked on such a large-scale project. We set a difficult task, as there was no written script of a play. As for the actors, they are young and emotional. They both are unique personalities. I greatly respect them and I am excited to work with them. Now the preparation for the premiere is in full swing,” said Aravina in an interview for The Astana Times in May.

She explained the decision to combine the works of the two outstanding musicians.

“Sinatra and Piaf sang practically about the same things. They sang about feelings of love in different forms, from the light flirting to the deepest drama. We wanted to show this palette of feelings and how much they are close in spirit as the artists.”

Aktau Open Fest 2016 Gathers around 100,000 People, Promotes Sports and Art

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Aktau Open Fest 2016, held Sept. 15-17, welcomed 100,000 visitors and around 300 athletes, artists and musicians. Organised for the fourth year, the festival was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s independence.

For the first time, the event took place at three different sites. Aktau Open Fest included an art festival, fashion show, AmalTalks Motivation and international pankration tournament (NFC), as well as traditional competitions and street sports demonstrations.

The three-day event was organised by the Aktau city administration and Doma Doma Public Fund. This year the festival was supported by the Samruk Kazyna Trust Fund of social projects development, which has agreed to invest in Mangystau region by building special facilities for mini-football, basketball, skateboarding and street workout, according to the organisers. The land for the construction has already been allocated.

“With those facilities, we will be able to conduct master classes to teach children in rural areas. With such a material and technical base, the sport growth is two times faster. There are promises to solve those issues by the end of the year. The sports movement should



not finish with the end of the festival. The purpose of the festival is to leave the facilities behind, to support young athletes in their development,” said festival organiser Samson Arakelyan.

Such festivals should be held not only three days, but for the whole summer, he added.

“I believe that the festivals should go all three months. People could choose when they will arrive for a film festival in June or the festival of extreme sports in July. And it’s all real; Aktau is ready. We have the facilities; there is the sea. Of course, this cannot be done only at the expense of the [state] budget, but there are always partners and companies that are willing to invest their money to be rep-

resented at the festival,” he said.

The number of children joining sport clubs increased following each previous festival, noted Arakelyan, who added the trend should continue this year. In the future, an urban centre where athletes will train outdoors is planned for the Aktau embankment.

“Here I am working with the sponsors and I want to make an urban centre where there will be everything from street workout to a boxing room, similar to facilities in Thailand – without walls, just a roof. There will also be dance floors and much more. That is, it will become the place where people will be able to come from May to September and make small local festivals there. So that sports cen-

tre on the beach would become the city’s signature,” he said.

Mangystau region Akim (Governor) Alik Aidarbayev, who participated in the official opening, congratulated citizens and visitors to the holiday of music and sports.

“Again and again, health and sports unity events will be held. Years show that the festival is a powerful incentive for adults and children to start doing sports. And for those who cannot imagine their life without training, it is a stimulus to conquer new heights of excellence,” he said.

The launch was followed by a concert with the participation of Kazakh artists. One of highlights of the opening ceremony was the performance by Sundet Baigozhin, baritone and lead soloist of Astana Opera House. Tamara Asar and Nurlan Onerbai also performed and the five-volume book “Til tanbaly akyndar,” which includes works by 52 poets and storytellers of the region, was presented.

On day two, the festival took place at two different locations. The 3x3 basketball championship, qualifying round of Caspian Battle, a breakdance contest and the region’s street workout championship were held.

A total of 15 teams competed in the basketball tournament for the main prize of 600,000 tenge (US\$1,763).

Continued on Page B2

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

KAZMEDIA CENTRE

September 29 at 8 p.m. WE Art event, photo exhibition, poetry reading

ASTANA ARENA

September 29 at 9 p.m. Europa League: Astana FC vs. Young Boys, Switzerland

October 11 at 10 p.m. FIFA 2018 World Cup, Group E Qualifiers: Kazakhstan vs. Romania

ASTANA OPERA

October 1 at 6 p.m. Aida, Opera

October 12 at 7 p.m. Miyuji Kaneko, Symphonic concert

BARYS ARENA

October 3 at 7:30 p.m. KHL round: Barys vs. Neftekhimik

October 5 at 7:30 p.m. KHL round: Barys vs. Lada

October 7 at 7:30 p.m. KHL round: Barys vs. Ak Bars

PEOPLE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Atyrau Entrepreneur Volunteers Years at Ambulance Station

By Kamila Zhumbabayeva

ASTANA – Medical emergencies, panic, nightlong rides with an ambulance; one must have stamina and a strong mind for things like that.

A humble and kind-hearted entrepreneur from Atyrau devoted several years to the serious and hard work of volunteering at an emergency medical care station. In an exclusive interview with The Astana Times, Arman Kassymov shared how and why he made this decision and the challenges faced.

“I was riding with an ambulance all night. When you stabilise a patient’s condition and hand him over to the doctors’ hands, no words can describe the feeling when a patient is waiving a hand at us while being taken in. When later you meet him or her on the street alive and healthy, you realise this was not for nothing, even though my contribution is not as big as those of a doctor and a paramedic,” he said.

Kassymov enrolled in Astrakhan State Medical Academy after school, but due to family difficulties was forced to abandon studies and pick another specialty. Now 27, he has a diploma from a Western higher education institution and specialty in the oil field.

“However, the dream remained. I was working rotation shifts at an artificial ‘D’ island of Kashagan offshore field when I began to assist an ambulance. I went out to help an ambulance when the shift



Photo credit: Kun-hamiyev Sabnam

was resting,” he said. “Everything was starting with the question ‘What did you do for your motherland?’ and at that moment I realised an ambulance lacks people who could help. I voluntarily asked to be helping them free of charge.”

Initially Kassymov performed simple tasks that did not require a medical education, such as bringing and taking things, running to get stretchers and washing the vehicle.

He was convinced that by helping the ambulance he was helping society; however, after trying once Kassymov was unable to stop.

“I developed a strong addiction to this job; I fell in love with it,” he said. “I believed that even simply cleaning up the car salon or helping a mechanic to replace a light bulb in a headlight or performing

any other task, the ambulance crew would be able to depart at least a couple minutes earlier and even a minute means a lot in this job. All kinds of specialists are available at emergency care services, but yet an extra hand will certainly not be redundant. I was also very annoyed that there are those among us who always criticise everything and everyone. I wanted to contribute to developing our country and decided to act and not make empty conversation.”

When he got a call to depart with the ambulance team he noticed how hard it is for them to work, such as road issues and only few cars giving way to an emergency van, even with signal lights shining. He recalled one situation when a person was being taken to a hospital in grave condition, but an ambulance stood in a

traffic jam and no car would make way for it.

The team also had a hard time finding locations in the private territory of some city outskirts, where street names and numbers are usually not available. In some instances those calling give the wrong address or do not know the address, forcing the ambulance crew look for them.

In his opinion, many ambulance calls could be avoided.

“For example, a low fever is not an emergency in my opinion. I would rather go to a clinic on my own, by taxi,” said Kassymov.

Once a call was received and dispatcher was told a man broke his arm. When the ambulance arrived, it turned out he simply pinched his finger when closing a cupboard.

“He wanted to find out whether his nail would turn black because of an accidental pinch. Terrible! And yet at that very moment, someone seriously ill needs help and is waiting for an ambulance. I often felt that the work of medical emergency services was confused with those of taxi drivers, because as ill luck would have it an emergency call comes after such false call. Having arrived there, it was sometimes difficult to explain where you have been and why it took so long to get where you had to,” he added.

Kassymov found it hard to describe the feelings and emotions he experienced while being with the ambulance crew.

“But the more I went to see

them, the more I was drawn in and a month later I clearly understood that I cannot be without this work,” he added.

The volunteer likes the people with whom he serves.

“Those people are truly fans of their work. And it is not important where an emergency medical station is from, which city of our country. In every city, people who work for an ambulance are only those who were indeed born for this job. It was a great honour to work with them and I am proud of it,” said Kassymov.

He added an ambulance is a calling and enormous responsibility where everyone can help.

“It is not hard; simply giving way on road and not calling an ambulance over trifles is enough. Thereby, you may really save someone’s life,” he said.

Working in an ambulance fills him with optimism.

“There is a lot of kindness and a sea of positive emotions. A simple thank you and a patient’s smile cost dearly,” the volunteer noted humbly.

Kassymov recalled one medical crew performing resuscitative measures on a man inside the ambulance. The team managed to get him to a hospital and transfer him to the doctors.

“Some time later, I met the man on the street together with his daughter. She recognised me; they walked up and the father says to me ‘Thank you! You saved me. I had time to see my grandchild.’

He shook my hand and gave me a warm hug.”

“The merit is not mine. It is primarily the highest leadership, then an ambulance team and I was just alongside them,” he said with a smile. “Such moments give strength to move on further. Every ambulance worker is a superhero to me. They accomplish small feats every day. I see it all by being near them and when I tell them about it, they simply smile at me.”

Kassymov is currently involved in improving an appliance he assembled together with his colleagues. The changes prevent attempts at fuel and lubricant theft and make some processes automatic.

He also saw how injections are done and at home practiced on himself and later on his relatives. He can now do shots on his own at home, but under no circumstances as a volunteer at work where he only has the right to simply observe.

Volunteering for an ambulance is not something everyone can do, but Kassymov’s story shows when genuinely devoted, one does not need a medical education to help those who are weaker and even save lives. He plans to obtain a diploma and return to ambulance services no longer as a volunteer, but as a paramedic.

“My example has inspired other people... Three hundred volunteers decided to help emergency medical care workers,” he recently told Esquire Kazakhstan.

Jewish Community Celebrates Torah Scroll Introduction

By Raushan Shulembayeva

The twelfth Torah scroll introduction ceremony in Kazakhstan was called a holiday and a celebration of the peace, friendship and respect that prevail in the country and in its relationships with its neighbours.

“Unity, peace and harmony, which incorporate the successful experience of Kazakhstan as an independent country, are the foundation of the country’s future, where the members of the Jewish community live,” Chief Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen said at the event.

He called the introduction ceremony an important event. It was a tribute to Rabbi Levi Yitzhak Schneerson, the Lubavitch Rebbe’s father, after which the Jewish centre of Kazakhstan, Chabad Lubavitch, was named. Participants also mentioned the double celebration of the day: the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s independence and the remembrance day of the rabbi.

“The wisdom of the Kazakh leadership; the peace-loving policy of the President; and the tolerance, openness and friendliness of Kazakhstan have made it possible to revive the spiritual traditions of the Jews,” said the Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan.

The fate of Rabbi Schneerson was closely connected with the emergence of freedom of religion. He was born in Ukraine in 1878 and died in 1944 in Almaty. All his life, his greatest desire was to follow the traditions of ancestors while not hiding from the state and society. Soviet authorities condemned the rabbi to five years in exile in Shieli Village in

Constitution. Cohen added that he will never forget the moment when President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev transferred the case file of Rabbi Schneerson from the National Security Committee archives to the Lubavitch library in New York in 1999.

“Thus, [Nazarbayev] clearly confirmed that Kazakhstan follows a new political course and will not

COHEN: “Nazarbayev clearly confirmed that Kazakhstan follows a new political course and will not accept a ban on freedom of belief and religion.”

Kyzylorda region. After serving his sentence, he spent the last few months of his life in Almaty, where he died. Even in exile, Schneerson continued to study the Torah and support other Jews.

His efforts contributed to the prosperity of Kazakhstan’s Jewish community today, speakers at the event said. His struggle became part of the common victory of religious tolerance, which created room for the current government’s support for spirituality and guarantees of freedom of religion and belief as spelled out in Kazakhstan’s

accept a ban on freedom of belief and religion,” added Cohen.

The new Torah scroll was written in Israel for the central synagogue in Almaty. The Torah was written by a specialist on parchment made from the hide of a kosher animal. The scrolls were written in the same font as Jewish tradition holds that the very first Torah, revealed to Moses thousands of years ago on Mount Sinai, did, and as it did, contains 600,000 letters. Today the Torah can be freely read, studied and practiced in Kazakhstan.

Aktau Open Fest 2016 Gathers around 100,000 People, Promotes Sports and Art

Continued from Page B1

The final was held on the third day, when the team from Rudny city took first place.

The Caspian Battle brought together not only Kazakh street dancers, but those from Bulgaria, Russia and Ukraine. Seventy dancers challenged themselves in the contest.

BMX Freestyle Show, Kazakhstan’s only BMX team, showed its skills in one of the festival’s locations. Fifteen young athletes participated in parkour training demonstrations, a relatively new direction for Kazakhstan.

“Parkour in Aktau has been developing for around six years. The youth like that movement very much. The level of training of athletes is growing as well. Now we have facilities and I think in the future this type of outdoor sport will be growing a lot,” said Aktau athlete Bauyrzhan Tuyakov.

While one spot was fully dedicated to sports, the second was devoted to fashion shows. Kazakh brands Aida KaumeNOVA, KEN-

JE, Mariya Khanym and Nur Shah showed their works, as did young designers Madina Masakova, Nazipa Turysbekova and the brand BB Ladies. Turkish designers Kerime Dincerol and Ilknur Tutuncu were invited as guests.

For art lovers, the local gallery hosted an exhibit with master classes from famous Kazakh artists Bakytur Burdesbekov, Nurlan Kilibayev and Sembigali Smagulov, as well as a fair with handmade goods.

“Aktau has great potential for young emerging artists. There is a desire, which is the most important thing. I am grateful to the organisers of the festival for the opportunity to attract young people to contemporary art,” said Smagulov, muralist, painter, sculptor and member of the Union of Artists of Kazakhstan.

The international pankration tournament took place the same day. Twenty athletes from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia and Uzbekistan fought for two NFC belts. The day ended with a concert by Kazakh singer Zhanar Dugalova and Format.

Day three started with the AmalTalks Motivation platform. Ukrainian street workout movement founder Denis Minin and two-time Olympic champion Ilya Ilyin talked about how they reached their goals and shared their experiences with the audience.

France’s Junior Bosila Banya (Bboy Junior), Kazakh designer Kenzhe Devyatko, head of the professional sports club Naiza fighter, Smagulov and members of the popular Instagram project @Xaxa_show also talked about their challenges and motivations.

Aktau Open Fest was also highlighted by the first Kazakh national sports tournament, including wrestling, rope pulling, sheep lifting and others.

The Costar Battle 3x3 basketball tournament, with teams composed of artists and professional players, was held on the last day. The festival ended with another concert where BigSom, DrumAttack, Karandash, Luina и L’One and Skif performed their hits.

Father Bukowinsky Becomes First Person Beatified in Kazakhstan

By Natalya Ryzhkova

When Pope Francis prayed for peace in Gabon, asking for the rejection of all violence, he also mentioned the beatification of Father Wladyslaw Bukowinsky. The Holy Mass on the occasion of the beatification of Father Wladyslaw took place tens of thousands of kilometres from Central Africa – in the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fatima in Karaganda, Kazakhstan. The city is where the Catholic priest died and is his final resting place. The event was broadcast in 40 countries.

According to the Karaganda diocese, the total number of foreign visitors has exceeded 1,000 people, including embassy representatives from Italy, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Russia and



Father Wladyslaw Bukowinsky

Ukraine. The ceremony was also attended by more than 150 Catholic bishops and priests from different countries. It was headed by a representative of the Pope, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Cardinal Angelo Amato.

According to Bishop of Karaganda Roman Catholic Diocese,

Adelio Dell’Oro, the Catholic world has waited a long time for the beatification of Bukowinsky.

“The process was started by the diocese of Krakow in April 2004. The second stage was held in Rome. Finally, on Dec. 14, 2015, Pope Francis announced his beatification,” said the bishop. Father

Wladyslaw, a Catholic priest, performed his service to God and people in difficult circumstances. Arrested by Soviet authorities in 1940 in Poland, he was sent to the Dzhuzkazgan labour camp, part of the Gulag. He was sent to Karaganda for three years of administrative exile after his release from the camp in August 1954. He was obliged to go through mandatory registration in the commandant’s office and work at state enterprises. He worked as a night watchman at a construction site, while secretly keeping up the pastoral care of Catholics who needed him. Pope John Paul II called him a heroic witness and shepherd. Bukowinsky believed in his mission with deep faith. In June 1955, he turned down an offer to return to Poland and took citizenship in the USSR to stay in Kazakhstan. His first 10 years in Karaganda,

Bukowinsky called a paradise, exceeding his wildest dreams. He died in Karaganda in 1974.

In 1991, his remains were solemnly transferred to the former St. Joseph Cathedral and then re-buried inside the temple. During the days of his beatification, his hallows were transferred to a new gilded sarcophagus and put on the altar of the crypt of the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fatima. This is the first beatification organised in Kazakhstan and in Central Asia.

“This is an international event. This holiday of multinationality and religion serves as confirmation of the fact that there are holy men living in Kazakhstan,” said Chairman of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Kazakhstan Jose Luis Mumbiela Sierra.

The region’s Catholics were congratulated by Akim (Governor) of

Karaganda region Nurmukhambet Abdibekov. Chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Culture and Sports Galym Shoikin forwarded greetings from the head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and Kazakh Senate Chairman Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. A message from President of Poland Andrzej Duda was read by head of the President’s office Adam Kwiatkowski.

The Holy Mass to mark the beatification was held over two days. It was held in the Polish language at St. Joseph Cathedral and was attended by those who knew Father Wladyslaw. The Mass in the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fatima was held in Latin and was attended by Apostolic Nuncio to Kazakhstan Archbishop Francis Assisi Chullikatt.

CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

American Publisher to Release Collection of Poems by Kazakh Poet Aigerim Tazhi

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The manuscript of the book “An Astounded World: Selected Poems” written by young Kazakh poet Aigerim Tazhi in translation of famous American poet, literary translator and co-director of Zephyr Press publishing house Jim Kates recently received a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Fellowship to Support Literary Translation. Tazhi’s poetry collection was awarded the maximum grant amount and Tazhi was the only Kazakh among the winners.

The book “An Astounded World: Selected Poems” will be printed by the American publishing house and released in two languages and will include both original poems in Russian and translated into English. It will include poems and translations, which the author and the translator



Aigerim Tazhi have been working on together for several years.

“It is exciting that the book project in translation has become one of the most highly selected works of this year. I am glad that the English-speaking readers (and this is a huge audience) will be able to read the book with my poems in their own language. Although, it will be

released in foreign publishing houses, it can find readers in Kazakhstan too. And about the creative plans ... Our project has just won a grant. The next step is the publication of the book and it is a colossal work that can take a long time,” she said.

Tazhi recalled her first steps towards a literary career in the interview with The Astana Times.

“In 2002, I won the contest for a literary workshop in Almaty initiated by the Musaget Foundation that provided support for modern Kazakh literature. I was delighted to work with great teachers, such as Olga Markova, Victor Badikov, Lyubov Tuniyants and others,” she said.

Her debut book of poems “BOGO-SLOV” interpreted in English as “THEO-WORD-IAN” (it is a play-on-words that could come out as “GOD-OH-WORDS”) was published in 2004. She was the finalist of the International Literary Debut

Prize in the poetry nomination, the winner of the International literary competition Stupeni (Steps) and other contests.

Her works were released in many literary magazines in Kazakhstan, Russia, the U.S. and Europe, including “Druzha Narodov” (Friendship of Peoples), “Znamiya” (Flag), “Novyi Mir” (New World), “The Massachusetts Review,” “Words without Borders,” “Two Lines” and “Cyphers,” among others.

Foreign and Kazakh literary critics have repeatedly written about Tazhi’s style, naming it as “thinest, even sophisticated linguistic intuition” and mentioned “fragility, brittleness of being” in her poems. Her poetic thinking is considered succinct. She manages “to place the whole world” in the verses and “it turns to the reader its psychological and even metaphysical essence.” “Tazhi, a deep and thoughtful observer, creates poetic images that

remain long in the memory of the heart,” according to critics.

Poems by Tazhi have been translated into English, French and other languages. In 2012, editor of the American literary edition Sof “Words without Borders” proposed Kates to translate one of Tazhi’s poems in order to publish in its magazine.

Kates translated many famous poets, such as Genrikh Sapgir, Sergey Stratanovsky, Mikhail Aizenberg and others. He published several collections of translations of contemporary Russian poetry and poetic translations from the Russian and Spanish languages, which won U.S. national awards. He was also awarded the Cliff Becker Book Prize for the translation of selected poems by Mikhail Yeryomin.

Tazhi stressed that a translator should not only have an excellent command of the language, but also great literary experience for transla-

tion techniques, such as Kates who is a poet himself and has published several collections of his poems.

“Kates liked my literary works and offered to continue our cooperation. Since that time, most of my works translated by Kates were printed in some European and American literary magazines. We have been in constant correspondence with him and often discuss the nuances of the language. Three different translators tried to translate my poems but only Kates, in my opinion, really felt the original text and reproduced it in another language,” she said.

This year, the NEA allocated 23 fellowships for American translators for the translation of literary works from different languages into English, according to the results.

Since 1981, the foundation has supported the translation of literary works, representing 67 languages and 81 countries, including translations of Nobel Prize winners Pablo Neruda and Miguel Angel Asturias, Persian Sufi poet and Sufi master Rumi, Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke, Russian classics Anton Chekhov and Marina Tsvetayeva, Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz and many others.

Multinational Chamber Orchestra Wins Audience with Virtuosity and Mastery

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The Sion Festival, held Aug. 19-Sept. 4 in the Valais Canton in Switzerland, featured a concert by the Young Eurasian Soloists (YES) chamber orchestra. The appearance at one of the most prestigious festivals in Western Europe proved the young team has gained recognition in European musical circles.

The orchestra participated in concerts featuring various instrumental compositions ranging from a Baroque ensemble to chamber orchestra with wind instruments, percussion and piano.

“In addition to our solo performances, we have also been the official orchestra for A Feast of Duo, the final competition held during the festival and performed with outstanding musicians such as Pavel Vernikov, Ray Chen, Dmitri Jurowski, Francesco de Angelis and others. We performed Vivaldi, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saens, Mendelssohn, Wagner and Piazzolla,” said YES orchestra Artistic Director and famous Kazakh violinist Sherniyaz Mussakhan in an interview with The Astana Times.

The orchestra was founded in March 2015 in Lausanne. The 16 young professional musicians, winners of many international contests, come from countries including France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Latvia, Poland and Switzerland.

The first concert, which took place at the Kazakh State Zhambyl Philharmonic Concert Hall in the nation’s capital, was a great success. The team then held concerts in October 2015 in the largest halls of Zurich and Bern.

“The idea to create an ensemble belongs to me and my close friends in the orchestra. Jana Ozolina, the wonderful violinist from Latvia, is our manager and helps me with organisational issues. At the same time, each member of the orchestra has their own solo career. All the musicians are students of outstanding professors, the best teachers of our time with worldwide reputations. We are united by music and professional dedication to work. But beyond that, we are united by a desire for creativity and high-quality performance of classical music of different genres and styles. We are all friends and colleagues. We say ‘yes’ to the creative achievements and are committed to them,” said Mussakhan.

Born in Almaty, Mussakhan was quickly recognised as a talented and gifted musician with great

potential. He began studying the violin at five and continued his education at the Baisseitova School under Zaturinskaya. He has a master’s degree from Lausanne Conservatory.

Mussakhan has performed in many of Europe’s major concert halls. He has played with the London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow State Symphonic Orchestra, Symphonic Orchestra of Warminko-Mazurska Philharmonia and Kazakh State Symphonic Orchestra.



Sherniyaz Mussakhan

He was the first representative from Kazakhstan and the winner of the Lipinski and Wieniawski International Competition for Young Violinists and is a laureate of the David Oistrakh Competition. In 2014, Mussakhan received a Rahn Kulturfonds scholarship and became the Kiefer Hablitzel Foundation prize winner.

“When eminent violinist Vladimir Spivakov visited Almaty, I had a chance to meet with him. He gave me a master class and advised me to enter the Central Music School at the Moscow Conservatory, which I graduated from in 2011 in the class of Professor Revich. He also presented me with a violin specially made in Paris. At the moment, I have been doing a second master’s degree at the Basel Conservatory,” he added.

“Now we are preparing for the concert which will be held Oct. 26 in Bregents. It will be special for me, as the programme highlights the works of renowned Kazakh composers including Kurmangazy, Kazhgaliyev, Kanapyanov, Serkebayev and Tlendiyev. The New Year Music Festival of Gstadt held under the patronage of Princess Caroline of Monaco is organised every year in December and January. This year, Her Highness Caroline Murat kindly invited YES orchestra to participate in this festival. I was also invited by Caroline Murat to play at the opening ceremony of the Venice Art Festival in May,” said Mussakhan.

New Drawing by Kazakh Artists Appears in Moscow

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – New work by Kazakh street artist Pasha Cas has appeared in Moscow’s city centre. The drawing, a collaboration by Cas and artist Pavel Mokich, adorns a substation at Bolshoi Kislovsky Lane near the city’s Arbat District, Tengrinews.kz reports.

“We hope that this drawing, not far from Arbat, will become a peculiar cult spot,” said press secretary of Moscow high-voltage networks Olga Ashmarina, according to RusCable.ru.

“The substation itself is a facility with strict safety precautions, but the artists plotted their 17 metre drawing in a way that makes it comfortable to take pictures – and it is interesting exactly outside a protected area. There is a site in

front of the drawing that, when getting on it, puts one visually under a magnifying glass,” the report said.

According to the artists, the drawing at the substation symbolises attention to personality and individuality, preserved despite the crowded metropolitan environment.

The painters worked for free and completed the piece in one day. The substation was painted as part of Moscow’s international biennale of street art, “Artmosphere.” The official premiere of the artists’ new work was Sept. 13.

Both artists are known for their social focus. The two previously created the portrait of the early Soviet-era surrealist, absurdist poet, writer and dramatist Daniil Kharms in St. Petersburg, RusCable.ru notes.



Photo from tengrinews.kz

Almaty artist Cas is also known for the “This Is Silence” manifesto. He painted Edvard Munch’s picture “The Scream” on one of facilities of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site.

Cas and his colleagues also recreated French artist Henri Matisse’s “Dance.” In their version, people dance in a circle around a fuming pipe on a building in Temirtau, expressing a protest against environmental pollution. The local city administration (akimat) saw their action as a breach of

the rules of public services improvement.

Artmosphere began Aug. 30 and will run until Jan. 10 of next year. Participants of this biennale explore the boundaries of personal freedom, habitual self-doubt, setting limits, radical changes and exaggerating the meaning of obstacles, the website said.

Street art is a modern form of visual art expressed as monumental paintings, graffiti and urban installations in public locations. The works of street artists can be seen in large cities around the world.

Ballet Dancer Hits New Heights in National Contest

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Astana Opera House principal soloist Bakhtiyar Adamzhan won the Grand Prix at Astana’s International Ballet Competition, held Sept. 10–17.

Adamzhan has been on something of a tear recently, winning the Grand Prix at the Istanbul International Ballet Competition in July and in early August wowing the judges at the Seoul International Dance Competition, where he also took first place. He captivated both the international jury and the audience with his virtuoso technique and highly professional performance.

In Korea, Adamzhan performed variations from Minkus’s “Don Quixote” and “La Bayadere,” Asafiev’s “Flames of Paris” and Pugni’s “Esmeralda” ballets. He also performed a modern choreographic production, “In the Wake,” staged just for him by renowned Chinese choreographer Yixian Zhang after Zhang noted Adamzhan’s great potential and excellent physical abilities. Taking part in the Korean competition helped him learn more about the Korean school of ballet, which is extremely technically proficient, Adamzhan said, and spurred him to reach for new heights in his own dance.

According to Adamzhan, it is always difficult to switch between modern choreography and class-

cal dancing, but keeping in good physical condition and maintaining a positive attitude are crucial supports. And if you know the basics of classical dance, it is easy to explore other types of dancing, he says.

“I had only four days to prepare for the ‘In the Wake’ production. But thanks to the efforts of the choreographer and my great desire to learn the choreography, we did it,” he said in an interview with The Astana Times in which he also talked about the world of ballet, his career goals and the challenges of modern choreography.



Bakhtiyar Adamzhan

Photo credit: Karla Nur

Discipline and constant self-improvement are the greatest challenges of being a dancer, Adamzhan said.

“Discipline means health and time you spend at work and at leisure. It is necessary to keep a bal-

ance between your profession and personal life. My profession makes me get up every day at 7 a.m. and come to the theatre and work hard until late in the evening. But at the same time, I always have time for my personal life and other activities. Our bodies are our main instruments. You need to feel your body. If your body sends a signal of physical distress – just have a rest,” he explained.

Adamzhan’s parents enrolled him in ballet school after seeing an advertisement about auditions for the Seleznev Almaty Choreographic School in 2003.

“I trusted my parents’ choice, as they wanted the best education for me. When I became a father myself, I began to understand my parents better, their expectations and what goals they pursued when I was enrolled in ballet school at 10. While studying, I spent nine months at school and only three months at home. But I am immensely grateful to my parents for guiding me towards the right path. I love and respect them enormously,” he said.

“My first teacher at the dance academy was Farida Aliyeva,” Adamzhan said, recalling his first steps at school. “She supported and helped us while we were young newcomers. I was fortunate to know Nazira Abdulina, honorary education worker of Kazakhstan and Akhmedgali Burkibayev, honoured worker of Kazakhstan. They also gave us classes. I am

thankful for their work, patience and wisdom. Their dedication and knowledge made us technically equipped male dancers. My classmates perform in theatres in Seoul, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan. All have found their way and become in-demand artists due to the work of our teachers.”

Last season, Adamzhan performed in productions of “The Nutcracker,” “La Bayadere,” and “Notre Dame du Paris.”

“Astana is a city where my dreams come true. I grow together with this beautiful and booming city. To me, this is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. My dream was to play the role of Spartacus in the ‘Spartacus’ ballet. One year after arriving in Astana, I performed this role. Astana Opera stages productions that are recognised and loved by audiences worldwide. Astana Opera has become a true cultural centre of Eurasia. I understood this when the foreign dancers participating in the Astana Ballet Competition were amazed to see our theatre with its facilities and latest stage equipment,” he said.

The capital’s theatre will stage major productions as part of the International Silk Way Festival starting Sept. 22. A Gala Ballet, featuring pas-de-deux from classical ballets, dances from national operas and compositions by modern Kazakh and foreign choreographers, will be held Oct. 29.

“I am scheduled to start rehearsing for ‘Don Quixote,’ where I play Basilio. I am looking forward to meeting with spectators in our theatre in the new season. It is an immense honour to play in the premiere production and I will do my best to bring lots of entertainment and joy to the viewers,” Adamzhan said.

COUNTRY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Kazakh Universities Enter World's Top Universities

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – QS World University Rankings, designed to help prospective students choose the school to continue their education, presented its rankings of the best universities in the world. Al-Farabi Kazakh National University took first place among the nation's universities and entered the list of the 250 best universities of the world.

The rating takes into account the university's efficiency in four areas: research, education, employment and internationalisation, with 40 percent of the evaluation depending on its reputation in the scientific community. The rating is based on professors' opinions and

the views of almost 76,500 individuals were used for the assessment.

Twenty percent of the estimate is determined by the faculty/student ratio. Typically, the smaller the group of students, the more individual the approach each has an opportunity to receive from his professors. An additional 20 percent of the score is based on the number of citations for published research.

Of the remaining input, 10 percent depends on the feedback of employers who define what they are seeking in graduates of higher education institutions. The last 10 percent is divided evenly between the number of foreign instructors and foreign students attracted to university.

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University placed 236th in the world.

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Astana was ranked 345, higher than such Russian institutes as Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology and Moscow State Institute of International Relations, which are considered to be authoritative institutions in the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Kazakh National Research Technical University named after Kanysh Satpayev is among the three best Kazakh universities. Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abai achieved a ranking from 501-550.

QS World University Rankings only included universities with long histories; as a result, Naz-



arbayev University was not evaluated.

The top 10 universities according to the rating are:

* Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

* Stanford University
* Harvard University
* University of Cambridge
* California Institute of Technology (Caltech)
* University of Oxford

* University College London (UCL)
* ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)
* Imperial College London
* University of Chicago

New Kazakhstan Tourist Attraction: Observation Wheel in Almaty

By Botagoz Baltabayeva

ASTANA – A new 60-metre tall Ferris wheel, similar to London's famous wheel, will open Oct. 2 in Almaty. It will be equipped with 40 closed cabins with 208 seats. Each of the cabins will also have climate control and audio guide systems in Kazakh, Russian and English.

"We decided to construct the wheel four years ago and now we are developing a new direction of the Happyton project – installation of major attractions, which can become a significant element of the urban landscape. We consider the realisation of this idea can perfectly



fit in with Almaty architecture," said owner of the Happyton chain of amusement parks Rustam Ageyev.

The repertoire of the tour guide will contain unique information about Almaty and every visitor

will have an opportunity to see a panorama of the Zailiyskiy Alatau mountain range and learn interesting facts about the city.

The project has been overseen by a well-known company, which has great work experience in the construction of international networks of indoor amusement parks.

Construction was controlled by the city administration and the wheel corresponds to all safety standards. An Italian company managed the technical side of the project. Its experts have already constructed earthquake-proof attractions in earthquake prone regions in Japan and the U.S.

Emergency and Disaster Risk Reduction Centre Opens in Almaty

By Malika Orazgaliyeva



Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan jointly opened Sept. 14 the Emergency and Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (EDRRC) in Almaty.

Kazakh Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Yuriy Ilyin, Kyrgyz State Secretary of the Ministry for Emergency Situations Taalaibek Temiraliyev and other officials and representatives of international and non-governmental organisations, scientific institutions, as well as embassies and consulates attended the event.

In 2005, Kazakhstan initiated creation of the EDRRC during the second World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Kobe, Japan. The majority of the Central Asian countries and international organisations working in the field of disaster risk reduction supported the idea.

On May 17, 2013, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement to establish the EDRRC in Almaty. This year in July, the arrangements were completed.

According to the Ministry of

Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan, great support was provided by international organisations, especially the European Commission on International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, the United Nations Development Programme, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the German Society for International Cooperation and Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The centre has the status of a permanent intergovernmental body, an international organisation established to ensure effective mechanisms to mitigate the risk of emergencies and its consequences, as well to ensure joint responses from all stakeholders.

All interested countries can join the EDRRC. In addition, international organisations and states may be granted observer status. In April, Afghanistan has officially delegated its representative as an observer to the centre.

Mobile App Helps Expand Kazakh E-Government Services

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

The Kazakh government is now able to provide services in electronic form and through a mobile app meant to reduce the time and documents related to those services, announced Minister of Information and Communications of Kazakhstan Dauren Abayev at a Sept. 20 government meeting.

"We have already implemented 83 different services. With the help of mobile technologies it has become possible to send notifications about required documents' replacement, penalties redemption, tech inspection terms. Now, we can send the information not

only by e-mail, but also via SMS," the minister said.

He said the electronic services not only cut time and paperwork, but help prevent corruption, including eliminating direct interaction between service providers and service recipients. More than 5.5 million people or 61 percent of the country's work-capable population have used the electronic services.

Kazakhstan has three main channels to apply for public services: the electronic government portal, the "Government for Citizens" State Corporation and the Unified Contact Centre for Public Services Provision.

The register of public services

includes 739 services and 530 of them are available on the e-government portal or can be provided by the state corporation. The number of services will increase until the end of 2016 and will amount to 583 services, the minister said.

It was noted that the remaining 156 services can't be provided in electronic format because they require the presence of a service recipient. These include, for example, applications to obtain health certificates, official permissions to enter and stay in the specified border areas of the country or monitoring of Kazakhstan citizens abroad.

Citizens can call 1414 for infor-

mation on where and how public services can be provided and what documents are necessary.

The minister informed about the Digital Kazakhstan state programme development, the aim of which is to improve the quality of life and competitiveness of Kazakhstan's economy through the progressive development of the digital ecosystem.

The government also hopes to introduce data management (MDM) and internet service for rural areas.

He noted 85 percent of urban and 75 percent of rural residents of Kazakhstan will use internet by 2020.

HeartStitch and Nazarbayev University Open Innovative Medical Production Facility

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Nazarbayev University and the HeartStitch company opened a "clean room" for the production of medical devices in Astana Sept. 20.

The company is one of the first projects of the Astana Business Campus and is closest to commercialising some of its projects in the field of biomedicine. By producing high-tech medical products in Kazakhstan, the company hopes to significantly increase the country's export potential.

"I have built 28 companies in the medical devices production field. I have been building medical products during all my career. And I wanted to do something different, something more expensive. I didn't want to build another company and sell it. I really wanted to create something bigger to make a difference. The main motivation for me was that I can build an industry different from



that which you have in your country and I can also bring my way of teaching, my method of exciting people about the things we do," said Anthony Nobles, CEO of HeartStitch, about his decision to launch a production centre in Kazakhstan.

Until now, there were two main methods for treating structural heart diseases: open heart surgery or a less invasive technique to implant a device in a patient's heart. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages: open heart

surgery is efficient, but traumatic to the body. Implanting a device is a less dangerous surgical procedure, but perhaps not as effective. HeartStitch invented an alternative that combines the efficiency of open heart surgery and the benefits of minimal trauma to the body.

This new method allows cardiologists to sew cardiovascular tissue through a catheter, leaving no implants. Using this approach, HeartStitch developed a range of products. One is NobleStitch EL. The device is recognised around the world and is rapidly gaining popularity. The unit can be sold in Europe and was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. It is used to treat heart defects that can lead to stroke. This device helps to treat people who have had a stroke, especially young people, and people suffering from certain types of migraine.

The clean room opened by HeartStitch with the support of Nazarbayev University corresponds to

the highest international standards. After the necessary training and certification process, the new production site will send its products to hospitals in Kazakhstan, EU countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Currently, the clean room has one set of basic equipment and the staff has been trained in the company's production site in California. Kazakhstan has received a license for the production and manufacture of medical devices and is preparing for the certification of each type of product.

Head of the National Research Cardiac Surgery Centre (NRCSC) Yuriy Pya is a strong supporter of the project and contributes to the research, development and use of the devices.

"High quality things are produced by people like you and me. And we must believe in ourselves; believe that we can produce such devices. It is crucially important. The NRCSC was established recently from scratch, and I believe

that everything else can be made as well," he said.

Interventional Cardiologist of the NRCSC Saule Kadirova was the first expert in the former Soviet Union to use NobleStitch devices.

"We have been working with NobleStitch devices for a year and we have performed 16 surgical operations using the technology and the devices. The first eight operations were controlled by foreign experts, but other operations were performed without any control or contribution of foreign experts," she said.

"As for me, I am absolutely confident in any product made in Kazakhstan. I really trust our producers more than foreign ones, because our people do their best," she added.

Nazarbayev University continues to provide support for the company's business development and growth. In addition to the equipment of this industrial complex, the university plans to allocate additional space for a clean room and office that will allow the company to continue to grow. By producing high-tech medical products, HeartStitch hopes to provide employment opportunities and provide an example for other manufacturers of medical devices to launch production in Kazakhstan.

SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Student-Led Journal Releases First Issue, Fosters Research in Education

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – The first issue of the student-led, peer-reviewed research journal NUGSERIE Research in Education (NUGSERIE) was released at Nazarbayev University this June.

Instructor of the Graduate School of Education Philip Montgomery gathered students and alumni to create a publication focused on research in education. Articles submitted by the NUGSERIE students are peer-reviewed by an editorial board consisting of alumni and faculty of the Graduate School of Education. The journal is designed for researchers, educational leaders, policymakers and students wishing to share their analysis. The journal is released twice a year, every six months in the English language and it is available free to everyone.

“Our team is proud of publishing original and high quality articles that serve to advance research in education. This journal will open new avenues for novice researchers to unveil their ideas, share experience and their research results. It is a great achievement of the NUGSERIE staff and students,” NUGSERIE alumnus Aisara Yessenova said in an interview for this story.



Photo credit: gse.nu.edu.kz

The first issue of the journal comprises three articles. Lyudmila Kovaleva, graduate student in the English language and it is available free to everyone.

“The first issue of the journal comprises three articles. Lyudmila Kovaleva, graduate student in the English language and it is available free to everyone. Our team is proud of publishing original and high quality articles that serve to advance research in education. This journal will open new avenues for novice researchers to unveil their ideas, share experience and their research results. It is a great achievement of the NUGSERIE staff and students,” NUGSERIE alumnus Aisara Yessenova said in an interview for this story.

wards their participation in international programmes, scholarship and situation in the employment market. Finally, the third article, written by Rizagul Syzdykbayeva, is devoted to the role of language policies in developing plurilingual identities in Kazakhstan.

NUGSERIE alumnus Aisulu Sanat, 24, is a member of the journal’s editorial board. She graduated from the NU in 2014 and now works for Bolashak Engineering in Atyrau.

“We consider not only empirical research but analytical materials in education, also focusing on

certain issues. Our journal aims to share experience and promote understanding of the unique educational context in Kazakhstan,” said Sanat.

The idea first appeared in June 2015. Group of ambitious students led by Professor Montgomery started thinking of ways to assist and promote novice researchers to unveil results of their studies and analysis to the world.

Editors are aspiring to develop the understanding of academic integrity offering NU students and alumni the experience and knowledge of the publication process, peer-revision boards and critical analysis of quality scholarly work.

Yessenova pointed to an intention to publish research articles written not only by NU students, but also by students studying at other Kazakhstan’s universities.

She is confident their strong team commitment, studiousness, openness and expertise will lead NUGSERIE to greater success.

In addition to this new research journal, NU has a long-established magazine, first released in 2011.

Published quarterly, NU magazine captures the spirit of the university’s everyday life filled with scientific workshops, sports com-

petitions and conferences with eminent personalities.

Being an independent source for NU alumni and academic staff, students and their parents as well as for the university administrative unit and foreign partners.

“In fact, each issue of our magazine is a kind of joint work of the NU representatives who have something to share with others. It’s a mere crowdsourcing product. For example, the participation of our students at various Olympiads is a valuable article for our publication. We interview them, take photos. Further, we also report on important agreements concluded between the university administration and new partners. The task of our division – Department of Communication and Marketing – is to collect and process primary information and thereafter release the final product that shall be interesting for anyone who wants to know about the life of the university,” said Daniel Dushmanov, staff member of the NU Communication and Marketing Department.

Articles are published in electronic version in Kazakh, Russian and English languages. Thus, every employee and student could become familiar with the present-

ed materials on any of the three languages. Each new issue of the magazine is promoted on social media.

NU magazine staff admitted to having interesting ideas about new design and concept of the magazine, the introduction of new headings, feedback, etc. The university expands its activity and staff and welcomes more students every year.

“We are happy to collect, consider and try to implement all the suggestions and comments received from our readers. For example, in some editions one can find recommendations for reading books, practical advice on personal development, sports achievements of students and so on,” Dushmanov added.

At the moment, the NU press office team is collecting information for the new release. From the beginning of the new academic year, university witnesses important events and activities on a daily basis that will be engaging for magazine readers.

“Unlike traditional print and electronic publications, we try to equally describe significant events that occurred over longer periods of time and present a complete picture of the activities of the NU. We want our readers to be aware of the diverse and interesting life of the university, achievements of our staff, academicians and students, completed and new plans, programmes and promising areas of work of the university,” said Dushmanov.

Zhambyl Artist to Build Sculpture in Taraz as Symbol of Unity and Friendship among Nations

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Dom Druzhby, the new House of Friendship of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan of Zhambyl region in Taraz, will soon be decorated with an artistic creation. Zhambyl artist Kali Korlasbayev will be building the “Friendship Tree,” a sculptural composition symbolising unity and friendship among nations.

“I offered to present the styled Friendship Tree in a female character because a woman is a keeper of peace and accord in our world. Who is first wishing for peace, prosperity in life? Who is against war, poverty and devastation? Women! Men are always belligerents, conflicting. A woman bears a life inside of her, brings peace into the house. Women stopped nuclear madness with a wave of their white scarves (the ‘Nevada-Semipalatinsk’ movement).” Korlasbayev told Kazinform.

A multifaceted master from the Shu district, Korlasbaev is known as an artist, sculptor, caricaturist and graphic artist whose paintings are displayed in museums and private collections around the world. His first personal exhibition was held in 1987 in the district Culture House of his native Tole bi village, followed by exhibitions in

Zhambyl regional exhibition hall and Kastejev State Museum of Arts and Central State Museum of Kazakhstan.

Construction of the new House of Friendship began in April 2015 at Drevniy Taraz (“Ancient Taraz”) historic and cultural complex. The Friendship Tree is currently being built on the second floor under the building’s dome. The exhibition ring, an area framed by colorful glass windows, provides space for exhibitions by the region’s ethno-cultural associations, noted inform.kz.

The sculptural composition presents itself as three trees in the form of three women, a symbol of sustainability and stability in Oriental philosophy, said Korlasbayev. Above them is a handkerchief as a crown topped by a swallow’s nest as a symbol of peace.

“Nothing refers to some sort of national affiliation here. I deliberately did it in the way that no faces or some national ornaments can be seen. All of us are united under a single shanyrak, beneath a single dome of peace and concord and any nation can see itself here. Because all nations, women of every nation wish for one thing – peace throughout the world. After all, Earth is our common home,” he said, according to the news agency.



Kali Korlasbayev

Pokemon GO-Like Mobile Game App to Launch in Kazakhstan

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – A free mobile application similar to the worldwide known Pokemon GO game – “Urban corners: green energy in Astana” was recently presented in the capital in advance of EXPO 2017, Kazinform news agency reports. Android and iPhone users can expect to access the app by the end of this month.

“This game is about two students, grandparents, five guards, a magic river, ancient artefacts, five forms of energy, but also about a wolf, magpie, Astana’s sights and green energy. First of all, it’s a quest game that will offer a player to walk around the capital as stations are all over the city, test their imagination and creativity, recall logical thinking and elementary mathematics skills. Eventually

perform a task and get their score,” the head of the Urban Corners project in Astana Irina Hech said during the app presentation.

The mobile app is available in the Kazakh, Russian, German and English languages.

Goethe Institut Kazakhstan and The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) are the developers of this app. As organisers planned, the app should arouse an interest among the Kazakh youth to topics of environmental protection and renewable sources of energy.

The new mobile application was developed based on the world’s popular quest computer platform and will help attract as many young adults as possible, according to organisers. Game players will be looking for magic crystals across the city through geo-location and interactive map, the news report said.

“As for the similarity with the world famous game Pokemon GO, I can say that we were first who came up with this idea. It was born in Kazakhstan in 2011,” Director of Goethe Institut Almaty Barbara von Münchhausen explained when presenting the application in Astana.

The plot of the game is original and tells the story of Kazakhs: a brother and a sister named Talgat and Dina, who on a vacation went to visit their grandparents at a village, located in a picturesque places of Khan Tengri and unexpectedly found a magic stone with five different characters there, the news agency noted.

When asked about the meaning of the object, a grandfather and a grandmother tell their grandchildren a mysterious story of an ancient magic river and its guards.

“Once upon a time in a place where Astana is located today, as

adults told to children, there was a magic river, that lived with the help of five magic energies: fire, light, water, earth, wind, as well as time and the future. Guards were there to protect the river but one day they disappeared, the river of energy had lost its power and soon dried out. Then a player who acts as one of the guards comes into action, who tries to restore this river by filling it with the five forms of energy,” Kazinform reported.

“When I started this game, I was motivated to go through it in German, to practice the language. In addition, the game will be interesting for teachers of nature management, geography, as there are a great deal of questions concerning ecological situation in our city. This game will also be useful for pupils and help them to navigate through the map of the city,” the head of the project said.

Monument of Gratitude to Kazakh People to Open in Shymkent

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – A monument of gratitude titled “Kazak Eline Myn Algys” (“A Thousand Thanks to the Kazakh People”) initiated by the ethno-cultural centres of the South Kazakhstan region is being constructed in Shymkent.

At the top of the monument a shanyrak (the circular opening at the top of the yurt – the traditional portable home of nomadic peoples) will be placed, zakon.kz reports. It will be represented as a solar disk framed with beams and with an arched base symbolising the homeland and the warmth of the hearth, which people raise with their hands against the blue sky.

The monument will also have a stelle decorated with elements of the kerege, the wooden lattice part of a yurt, symbolising the unity of society in the consolidation of statehood. An arc-shaped pedestal in the shape of a horseshoe, a symbol of the pursuit of success, is to be located on the grounds of the monument.

An inscription saying “We fulfilled our destiny due to the Kazakh people. On behalf of all ethnic groups ...” will decorate the front side of the pedestal.



File photo of a similar existing monument in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

“The architectural monument will be not only a symbol of gratitude to the Kazakh people, but will also become a brilliant example of the unity and solidarity of the south Kazakh people in the formation of the Kazakh identity and the concept of the Land of the Great Steppe, Mangilik El (“Eternal Land”),” said Chairman of the regional Georgian ethno-cultural association Zaal Bochoroshvili.

Chairmen of various South Kazakhstan ethno-cultural centres and deputy chairman of the South Kazakhstan Regional Assembly of

People and head of the Regional Assembly Secretariat Muratali Kalmuratov are monitoring the progress of the monument’s construction.

A memorial of gratitude to the Kyrgyz people from the children of besieged Leningrad was opened in Kyrgyzstan in 2012. The monument was initiated by siege survivors. More than 140,000 people, including about 16,000 siege survivors from Leningrad and 3,500 children, were evacuated to the Kirghiz SSR in 1942. The dominant element of the monument is

a ring surrounding a stelle with the quote, “Alive, endure, we will win!” from a letter written by Soviet poet Olga Bergholz.

A monument of gratitude to the Uzbek people has also been constructed in Crimea. It was designed and built by the Crimean Engineering and Paedagogical University at the initiative of Rector Fevzi Yakubov.

“I want to express my gratitude to the Uzbek people for the fact that they shared with us their last bread and let us in their orchards and said ‘Eat all you want, but do not break the bushes.’ Uzbeks took part in the funerals of our loved ones; they adopted our orphans. Today you will find a lot of families whose members have Uzbek names. We constructed a monument of gratitude to the Uzbek people, who saved us at the university,” said Yakubov at the opening ceremony.

The Friendship of Peoples monument, which once was one of the symbols of the city, was moved from the centre to the outskirts of Tashkent. In fact, it was a monument to the Shamakhmudov family, who adopted 15 children including Russian, Belarusians, Moldovans, Ukrainians, Kazakhs and Tartars, during the war.

TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

FM Idrissov Briefs BIE Chief on Preparations for EXPO 2017

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov briefed International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE) Secretary General Vicente Loscertales Sept. 14 on the results of attracting international participants to EXPO 2017.

To date, 103 countries and 17 international organisations have confirmed their participation in the upcoming exhibition in the Kazakh capital.

Loscertales visited the city to inspect the progress on preparations for next year's three months long event. Commending the headway made in attracting countries to participate in the exhibition, he underlined a particular value of an agreement on the privileges and preferences signed between the Kazakh government and BIE.



Erlan Idrissov (R) welcomes Vicente Loscertales on Sept. 14.

In terms of creating favourable conditions for foreign guests, Idrissov noted Kazakhstan has intensified its work to establish a visa-free regime with foreign nations. The country currently provides a

visa-free regime for citizens of 20 developed countries and beginning 2017, a visa-free regime (up to 30 days) will begin for citizens of all members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as Malaysia, Monaco, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

The parties noted the successful preparations for holding countries/participants national days. Sixty-one applications have already been submitted.

Kazakhstan has signed 71 participation contracts with foreign countries and 92 national section commissioners have been appointed.

Loscertales also participated in "Future Energy: Energy for Everyone," an international forum held Sept. 14 in the capital. The event was considered to be a key element and the last of a series of three an-

nual Future Energy forums focusing on the development potential of sustainable energy, energy conservation and efficiency and reducing CO2 emissions, as well as the role of international organisations in achieving these goals.

Representatives of more than 60 of those groups, including leading experts of the energy industry, scientists and heads of non-governmental organisations, as well as individuals from the public sector, attended the conference. It served as a useful platform for research projects on the theme and sub-themes of EXPO 2017.

Astana EXPO 2017 national company chairman Akhmetzhan Yessimov noted construction of the exhibition facilities has been carried out in accordance with the schedule, adding 85 percent of the work has been completed so far.

"Tomorrow we are planning to sum up the results of a competition for the best international practices to be displayed in the Best Practices Area Pavilion. This pavilion is the heart of the exhibition that will be collecting and summarising the best technologies as well as projects and strategies related to the exhibition," he said.

Loscertales highlighted the special significance of the event in terms of developing international cooperation.

"EXPO 2017 is designed to support international companies in the most promising industry of today's economy – renewable energy. The upcoming exhibition is able to provide a high priority stage for the exchange of experience and discussions of various frameworks in order to achieve peace and harmony," he said.

Best Energy-Generating Projects Selected for Presentation at EXPO 2017

By Azamat Syzdykbaev

ASTANA – The 17 best energy-generating projects out of 136 submitted have been chosen to be showcased in the Energy Best Practices Area (eBPA) Pavilion at EXPO 2017.

A commission headed by Secretary General of the International Exhibitions Bureau Vicente Loscertales chose the winning projects from submissions made from more than 25 countries. The international selection committee includes two Nobel Prize winners.

"At the moment, we have almost finished selecting the best projects. But this is only the first stage. Now engineers and other experts will transform the projects to exhibits," the head of the commission said at a press conference in Astana on Sept. 15.

Commission member, Nobel Prize winner in physics and Professor at the University of Califor-

nia George Smoot described the selection procedure.

"We can say that we have looked into the future and see how the energy of the future will look. We have received a lot of applications for participation in the competition. I would like to thank organisers who have searched projects and ideas in different cities and countries. The work continues to this day. In the beginning, we had selected 64 projects from 136 ones. After that, we chose 32 projects from 64. As a result, we have finally chosen the 17 best projects, which will be presented in the Pavilion of Best Practices at EXPO 2017," he said at the press conference.

Also selected were 4-5 additional projects to be presented in the territory of the exhibition pavilion. Loscertales shared his opinion about the preparation for the whole event.

"I am very impressed with the construction of EXPO because almost all the work coming to an

end. The participants of the thematic pavilions will start to fill their pavilions with exhibits this October. Those objects that I saw at the construction site of EXPO are modern and unique. I would like to note the progress that has been made in terms of operating activities, cultural programmes and the promotion of EXPO at both the international and national level. We are very satisfied with the state of preparation for the EXPO," he stated.

The zone of best practices is closely connected with the idea of the event, "Future Energy." It is dedicated to the demonstration of successfully implemented methods and projects in the field of energy technology. The zone is the symbolic centre of the exhibition, which will feature the best technologies, projects and strategies in various fields of sustainable energy: production, conservation and use of electricity, combating climate change and ensuring energy access in developing countries.

Gennady Golovkin, Mike Tyson Expected to Visit EXPO 2017

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Gennady Golovkin and Mike Tyson are expected to come to Astana for a professional boxing event and WBC Convention during the international exhibition EXPO 2017.

The Astana EXPO 2017 National Company, the Akimat (city administration) of Astana, Kazakhstan's Boxing Federation

cooperation among the above-mentioned organisations to hold professional boxing-related events, including the 55th jubilee Convention of the World Boxing Council and a so-called boxing evening in September 2017 in Astana during EXPO 2017.

"On behalf of the World Boxing Council, I would like to say that I am glad that the WBC jubilee summit will take place in Astana during EXPO 2017. More



Photo credit: @GChang

"EXPO 2017 is a world-class event to be hosted in the Kazakh capital city. Plenty of large-scale events will be organised in this period and some of them are of international importance. In my opinion, the memorandum will occupy a special place in the range of events to be held within EXPO 2017," Deputy Mayor of Astana Yermek Amanshayev said.

To date, 103 countries and 17 international organisations have confirmed their participation in the upcoming exhibition. In general, the event is expected to receive more than 2 million visits.

To date, 103 countries and 17 international organisations have confirmed their participation in the upcoming exhibition. In general, the event is expected to receive more than 2 million visits.

and World Boxing Council and Diamond Ring Promotions signed Sept. 16 a memorandum of cooperation

The memorandum's goal is to establish partnership and develop

than 165 countries will send their delegates to it. All of them will be able to see the capital of Kazakhstan and admire its beauty," WBC Spokesperson Oksana Semenishina noted.

Bishkek – Getaway for Pleasure and Business

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – You're a non-native, have been working in Kazakhstan for a while, maybe years, and have done some travelling around the country but seeking new experiences and adventures? Ever thought about going to Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan? Here are some tips of dos and don'ts of visiting Kazakhstan's neighbour and what to look for while you're there.

This trip could save money for those passport holders who need to travel outside the country every three months to get their Kazakhstan visas reissued, as they won't need to fly but could easily take a cab, train or bus. All they have to do is travel outside Kazakhstan and return, so why not check out Kyrgyzstan? Surely, this seems the most convenient option for those residing in Almaty. But, as easy as it might seem, this could be the worst nightmare. Here is how to avoid trouble.

Numerous online reviews and feedbacks indicate it is best to be at the border either before the early birds or after the night owls and avoid weekends, unless elbowing and sweating in long queues is something one enjoys.

"It is an absolute disaster during rush hours, unfortunately," said a source who preferred to only reveal his first name – Andrew. "We arrived at around 12 a.m. once and it was just fine; the immigration officers were friendly, did take a while but that's part of their job, let's be objective. But on the way back we were coming back at around 5 p.m. on Sunday and let me tell you, it was



Grigoriev Gorge

a catastrophe if anything! The tiny corridor was packed; it was stuffy and it took us about four hours to eventually cross the border. So stay away from the place during the rush hours. I wish someone had told us to do the same before we had started this trip."

The taxi ride takes about 2.5 hours to get to the border, according to our source, and can be as cheap as 3,000 tenge (US\$8.80) if bargained hard enough.

"But once in Kyrgyzstan, there are so many places to visit," said Andrew. "Lake Issyk-Kul is definitely a go, which is about three-hour drive. Lake Song Kol as well, absolutely stunning scenery," he said.

The lack of infrastructure and conveniences along the roads, however, is a concern.

"Stay away from the road toilets if possible, especially when in rural areas, and also be particularly picky as to what you choose to eat," he

said. "When travelling your stomach is extremely sensitive to unknown foods and liquor, so better be specific with what you eat and be picky, especially if you're not too fond of the local cuisine."

In general, the things to do are similar to those in Kazakhstan.

"We went to the Grigoriev Gorge around Issyk-Kul Lake and there are ethnic yurts and tiny villages where you can dine and even stay overnight. They do their little acts and manifest just how their nomadic ancestors lived, cooked, played and so on. You get to eat traditional dishes much like in Kazakhstan and go horseback riding around the lake and the mountains. Two things that are absolutely gorgeous and outstanding about the place were the freshest-ever air and the breath-taking views of the mountains that are overlooking the cleanest-ever Issyk-Kul Lake, as if gods are watching you repose in

their grace. Everything about the place was magical, even the manner that once in every fifth step did interfere between the sky and the ground," said Andrew.

The capital city of Bishkek, however, didn't feel the same.

"The capital has not changed much from the Soviet days as far as I could tell; it didn't give the feeling of a major transformation. The bleak old-fashioned streets, tacky billboards, cocky drivers and contemptuous local drifters

didn't necessarily make us feel safe, throwing glances over our shoulders every now and then. The old Soviet monuments can be found around the city squares, and overcrowded bazaars on weekends are something to experience but overall, it was safe and fun. People are friendly and nice, everything was dirt cheap and the food was delicious. Right off the bat, go and check out the main square and Ala Archa Park, which is about 20 minutes away from the downtown. Nice fresh air, mountainous views, murmuring brooks – that all is, of course, perfect for socialising with locals; they're really, really friendly, at least they were to us – foreigners," said Andrew.

"What really impressed me about this country was nature, which is absolutely captivating. Standing on the tops of smaller hills and I am not imagining beating the taller peaks and mountains, I can truly appreciate the doings

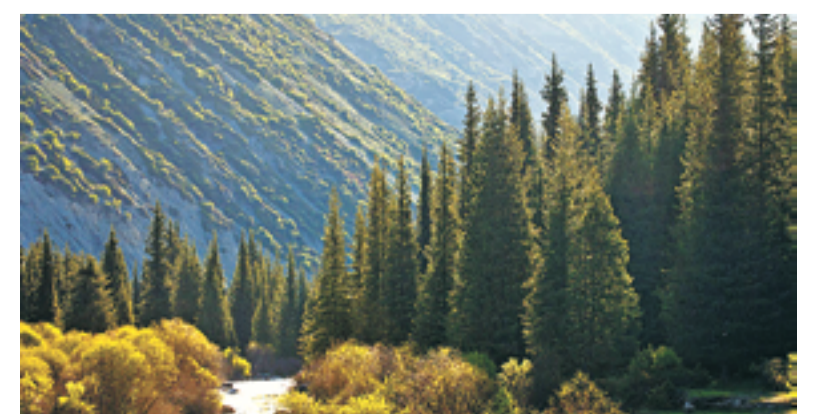
Grigoriev Gorge or Chon Ak Suu

Located on the northern shore of Issyk-Kul Lake 60 kilometres from the town of Cholpon-Ata, Grigoriev Gorge is one of the biggest settlements on Issyk-Kul Lake's northern shore. It is often cited as the best place to visit on the trip to Issyk-Kul. The area is prided with green mountain slopes and covered with red poppies, coniferous aroma and three beautiful crystal clear lakes. After horseback riding or trekking and hiking visitors are invited to the ethnic village, which opens up the Kyrgyz culture and the national cuisine in one of the yurts specially set up in the village. There one can also listen to Kyrgyz folk music, drink kumys and submerge oneself into the Kyrgyz lifestyle. Those who seek extreme adventures should try falcon hunting. Getting there would be easier from the town of Cholpon-Ata; any taxi or local tour guide would be able to book the yurt for anyone or by contacting tour agencies in Bishkek.

Ala Archa Nature Reserve

The reserve is a small valley inside a gorge; its ridges are covered with ice, while the slopes are covered with the finest spruce forests. The streams flow down from the glaciers along the slopes and eventually run into the Ala-Archa River. The park is great for group picnics and also for hikers and climbers. There are numerous trails of various difficulties. Some go for over 10 kilometres of steep climbing and as a reward you get to witness the snow-capped peaks, freezing turquoise lakes surrounded by snow and rocky slopes and unearthly views from the top of the mountains. For such ascends, however, it is strongly advised to have proper gear.

of the almighty and all the paths that intertwined throughout the bumpy roads in our way. Would I go again? Oh, yes!" he said.



Ala Archa

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Kazakhstan Wins Two Medals in Rio Paralympics, Finishes 58th



Kazakhstan's national Paralympic team.

By Zhazira Dyussembekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan won one gold, one silver and placed 58th in total medals out of 168 countries at the Paralympics Games, which ended Sept. 18.

Kazakh swimmer Zulfya Gabidullina became Kazakhstan's first ever athlete to win gold in the Paralympic Games. The fifty-one-year-old Paralympian set a new world record in the 100 metres freestyle swimming. At the Paralympics in London she finished 12th.

She is also a champion of the Asian Para Games and was a bronze medallist at last year's World Championship in Glasgow. Gabidullina is one of the top eight swimmers in the world ranking. "At first, I was a bit afraid but my coach has believed in me. Here I am, thank God, a champion [of the Paralympics]. It was a long road for me. This medal was earned through hard work," Gabidullina said, adding she dedicated her victory to Kazakhstan and her personal coach.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev congratulated her the following day.

"By winning the first gold medal at the Paralympic Games in the history of our country, you have brought great joy to all people of Kazakhstan. The world knows you as a strong athlete, who has glorified Kazakhstan. A new world record in the 100 metres freestyle is another confirmation of this. Your victory is the result of many years of hard work," he said in his special telegram. Gabidullina plans to participate

in the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

"I continue training in intensive mode, athletes from other countries congratulate me on the victory. I am very happy. I follow one principle – life after 50 is just beginning," she said.

The second medal of Kazakhstan belongs to 50-year-old powerlifter Raushan Koishybayeva. She won silver in the up to 67 kilogrammes weight category with a final result of 113 kilogrammes.

She has been engaged in sports since 2010. Two years later she became Master of Sports and in 2013 she has received the International Master of Sports title. At the 2014 World Championship, she took 13th place and in the Asian Games she was sixth.

Both champions will receive money awards from the Kazakh government. Gabidullina will get \$50,000 and Koishybayeva \$35,000.

This year, 11 athletes went to Rio to represent Kazakhstan at the Paralympics. In 2012, at the London Paralympics the number was seven.

Overall, more than 4,300 athletes with disabilities from more than 160 countries participated in the event. The Paralympic team of Kazakhstan consisted of swimmers Roman Agalakov, Natalya Zvyagintseva, Anuar Akhmetov and Zulfya Gabidullina, judokas Anuar Sariyev, Orynbasar Kuralbai, powerlifters Gulbanu Abdykhalykova, Raushan Koishybayeva, Vadim Dukart, archer Alexander Medvedev and Amanat Kalkayev, who competed in athletics.

Universiade 2017 Foreign Medics Assure Safe, High-Level Assistance



By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The official foreign medical staff visited the Almaty venues and medical facilities to evaluate the quality of the medical services ahead of next year's Winter Universiade, reported the Almaty Universiade 2017 press service.

"We have been very impressed both in terms of set up of the facility and the equipment, but also with the clear planning and preparation arrangements aimed at receiving athletes that will be competing during the Universiade. I am quite confident that they will be in safe and expert hands," said Chief Medical Officer Ajayi Abo-sede Olugboynwa.

The visitors were taken to City Clinical Hospital No. 4 and the city's acute care hospital, noted the press service.

"These facilities provide emergency aid, medical care and high-level and qualitative assistance for the residents of Almaty and the whole country. Medical care is provided in many areas: surgery, traumatology, neurosurgery, gynaecology, urology, therapy, neurology with a stroke unit, toxicology, etc. The hospitals are fitted with modern equipment which allows diagnosing rare diseases and conducting complex operations," added the press service in a statement released shortly after the visit.

The visitors also had the chance to check out an emergency medical assistance station with an automated system and new ambulance.

"[I'm] most impressed that our athletes will be well adopted here," said Chief Medical Officer from the United States Ronald Olson, who noted the importance of providing emergency services for the athletes. "The enthusiasm, preparation and facilities are very good. I have no hesitation in reassuring my delegation and others as well. The facility is great and the staff is very qualified and knowledgeable."

About 40 new ambulances have been purchased, eight of which include intensive care units. Eight city stations will also be available

to provide medical care during the Games.

"Our medical services are ready for the Winter Universiade 2017," said Almaty Health Department head Valikhhan Akhmetov. "The rooms in hospitals are fitted with modern equipment. Currently, our medical professionals that will be involved during the Winter Games are taking English classes in order to be able to understand the concerns and provide needed help for the athletes and guests of the city."

Plans have been outlined to use the services of medical professionals from the Almaty Health Department as well as the Republican Emergency Rescue Squad, State Enterprise Sport Medicine and Recovery Centre, Emergency Medicine Centre, south regional branch of KazAviaSpas and English-speaking volunteers from medical universities.

Ambulant Medical Centre, providing assistance for athletes and accredited representatives (doctors, physicians and other specialists, laboratory diagnostic unit, isolator, pharmacy) and recovery activities (physiotherapy, LFK, massage), will be functioning at the Athletes' Village, while hospitals will provide unrestricted access to their facilities for urgent cases.

Additional training will be held to provide medical assistance, as well as special training for winter sports rescue personnel suited to work in mountainous areas and educational training for medical personnel on sports medicine and the anti-doping code.

More than 130 medical personnel representatives are currently learning English.

Each venue will have doping control units. In addition, the Universiade's anti-doping command centre will be located in the Athletes' Village. The Organising Directorate, together with the FISU (International University Sports Federation) Medical Committee, developed a procedure for holding doping control and distribution plan for athletes' testing. The doping control procedure will be held in accordance with the regulations of the World Anti-Doping Code and international standards.

Kazakh Chess Champion Opens Academy in Astana

Continued from Page A1

The 19-year-old talent won the world champion title in August in the Indian city of Bhubaneswar. The event brought together 58 chess players from 42 countries. The main peculiarity of the championship was its 13-round length, as championships are usually decided in nine rounds.

"Despite the fact that this is my fourth world title in the age category under 20, each time the feeling of victory is a powerful experience. It is the best achievement of my career. However, I do not want to stop and want to only move forward. I hope to bring gold medals to my country among adults at the world championships. Generally, this year was very successful for me. I won the second prize at the Asian Women's Championship. Previously, there were no winners from Kazakhstan at this tournament," said Saduakassova during the ceremony opening the chess academy.

The school is situated in the heart of the city surrounded by a beautiful apple orchard. Classes for children from the age of four are delivered in the Kazakh, Russian and English languages and

classes for adults will be held in the evening. The school offers tuition-free classes for children from low-income families.

"I had thoughts to open the school for a long time because there were requests from parents, children and the chess federation. I believe that after my victory at the world cup the right time came for this. The mission of the academy is to raise grandmasters, the future champions of the world and the country. I hope that we will succeed and the strongest Kazakh chess players will appear soon," she said.

Russian grandmaster Yuri Yakovich, the school's main curator, was specially invited to the opening. The academy is scheduled to hold sessions with Asian Games winner and grandmaster Murtas Kazhgaleyev, French champion Vladislav Tkachiev and Yakovich to improve students' skill levels.

There are also plans to invite two trainers from Armenia – international grandmaster Vahe Bagdasaryan and FIDE master Grigor Dilanyan.

"We plan to collaborate with the world's best coaches. I have a busy schedule as I often take part

in tournaments, but I will definitely organise master classes in the near future. I also coordinate all the activities held at the academy. I believe that all children have the talent and the most important thing is to develop it, find potential and help the child," said Saduakassova.

Her mother and current manager Oral Utesheva brought her to chess classes at five. She also joined a music school and gymnastics.

"Initially, it was just a hobby. I had no great professional tasks ahead. I only was excited to play. And only after the first results – I won the silver medal at the championship under the age of 12 in 2007, I decided to play professionally," she said.

Saduakassova's book, "The first steps in chess," was released in 2014. Copies were later distributed for free to regional schools and other cities nationwide.

"The book was my idea and my dream. Prior to that, there were no such books in our country where the grandmasters share the experience of their games and open the veil of the chess world for new players. I decided to fill this gap. Now the books are available in schools," she said.

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Shaping Holds its Niche in Exploding Fitness Market

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – With many Western fitness programmes and fancy private fitness franchises in major cities of the country, the once much in vogue practice of shaping gymnastics has stiff competition these days. However, the state-owned shaping federation offers cost and training efficiency, Secretary-General of Kazakhstan's Shaping Federation in the capital Marina Gudina assures.

"Shaping is quite popular these days. [It] has been around since the end of the 1980s, and therefore proved itself in the market. However, these days are a little challenging for it due to many competitors, too many venues and large fitness clubs set up in Astana and nationwide. They offer a variety of programmes and have swimming pools, saunas and more," Gudina said in a recent interview with The Astana Times.

Shaping means configuring and perfecting one's body shape. It first came to Kazakhstan at the end of the 1990s. Shaping was then completely new to the country, arriving in the midst of a host of new products and ideas. At the time, coaching staff used to buy VHS cassettes to conduct lessons – that was the extent of their training. Today, of

course, there are proper training courses and shaping nowadays requires coaches to have either medical or sport qualifications.

The Shaping Federation of Kazakhstan is a public association in Astana that has been operating for over 15 years. Created with the goal of improving the nation's health, the federation offers low prices and a flexible discount system. Morning trainings twice a week start at 8,000 tenge (about US\$23).

The capital's shaping venue offers 13 different courses that take into account a person's age, physical capabilities and health. They offer a flexible training schedule, nutrition consultations and individual training programmes.

Gudina believes that shaping has no equal in terms of workout efficiency, because its individual training programme depends on the needs of each person. According to her, in a group where 30 people train with one coach, one person might end up working too hard while another isn't challenged enough. The level of effort in shaping is selected strictly for an individual person.

"A diet, in shaping, is by no means restrictive," the secretary-general stressed. "A person should eat a lot, providing an intake of all nutrients, vitamins and minerals,



Photo credit: shaping-astana.kz

and at the same time efficiently solve workout tasks. Shaping has its special features. Our body burns fat tissue effectively if after a day of training we follow certain nutrition principles."

Shaping focuses on a different physical outcome from other fitness programmes, Gudina explained. A female fitness model is usually quite muscular, while in shaping all programmes start with

visually seeing a girl as a gazelle – thin, long, stretched forms without muscles and a flat belly with a thin layer of fat.

According to her, shaping is similar to bodybuilding, because building a body and working separately with each muscle and area of the body in a certain mode and level of effort is the main goal of bodybuilding.

"Shaping has the same goals. We

work like sculptors, which is actually impossible in fitness. The body works in two modes: either disintegrating or building up; if we are speaking about fitness programmes, this refers to a muscle. It is impossible to pump up the buttocks and slim the waist area simultaneously, as these are two different modes. As of today, many of our clients who transferred to other fitness clubs come back to us because after two

or three months they do not see certain results; or not where they want them to be," Gudina says.

The shaping federation has lot of different tests for beginners to undergo their first month. Anthropometry, the measurement of the individual, is the most important of them, which according to Gudina no other fitness venue has. With a special instrument, more than 40 indexes in the body are measured top to toe, including height, weight, girth, skin and fat folds.

"The entire system is computerised. A big file is created for each person, where results are constantly tracked and corrected. Anthropometry indices are recorded on a computer that makes a 3D model of a woman's body shape to compare with her personal shaping model and ideal," she added.

Via anthropometry results, shaping participants can learn how much fat and muscle mass they are carrying and where it is. The results are used to inform their individual nutrition programmes, Gudina said.

Losing or gaining two to four kilograms over a month is normal for men and women, Gudina noted. Greater gains or losses are considered unstable and hard on the body because the entire hormone system has to adapt to weight changes.

Capital's National Centre for Biotechnology Pushing the Country toward Scientific Innovation

Continued from Page B1

Even on such common social parameters as life expectancy, we have made huge strides in the last 10 years, and today the figure exceeds 70 years," Ramankulov said.

Biotechnology, with its enormous possibilities and prospects, is regarded as one of the surest ways to enter a new level of development, as it is not only science based on plant, animal and human cells, but also is the development and commercialisation of innovation. In developed countries, the industry has become a leading economic sector and is already beginning to outpace computer and information technologies both on turnover and capitalisation. Kazakhstan today is on the way to this.

"We are a young country. Our science is young, too, and it is developing dynamically due to state scientific and technical policy. We must strive to be at the forefront, to keep up with the advanced part of the world. One of our functions is to create a zone of competencies that can help quickly perceive what the next cutting-edge technologies will be, adapt them to our domestic conditions and be able to use them for the good of individuals," the scientist said. Under the leadership of Ramankulov, the NCB is actively involved in state programmes and projects promoting industrial biotechnology and creating diagnostic products and vaccines using molecular and genetic methods to ensure veterinary security. Medicine, environmental protection and processing, the food industry and agriculture are the priority areas for scientific development. More than 2,000 new genetic lines of wheat, new varieties of spring-planted soft wheat resistant to fungal infections, and new varieties of potato are just part of the developments created in the scientific institution.

Not long ago, NCB scientists received an order from the Ministry of Agriculture to conduct genetic testing on breeding animals in order to confirm their breed. Steers are given passports not at the whims of their owners, but because "highbred" animals with proven high reproductive success are estimated to be several times



Yerlan Ramankulov

more expensive than their fellow animals and bring a considerable profit.

"Here we must compete with many foreign companies and give reliable results. If we are able to do it, we should do it ourselves," Ramankulov noted.

In recent years, NCB scientists have developed a number of methods, technologies and products for the treatment of certain diseases, including tablets to treat severe anaemia. One cell-based medicinal product, a type of "artificial skin" for the treatment of moderate to severe burns, was patented in 2011 and is recognised by the Kazakh Ministry of Justice as invention of the year.

"The idea is not ours, but we made it from scratch," Ramankulov noted. The process has now been used to treat more than 100 patients at the Research Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedics in Astana, and has exceeded all expectations.

"We saw that healing occurs twice as fast," Ramankulov said, citing as an example the case of a fire fighter who, after receiving extensive burns, could not recover. By applying the new treatment using aerosol, his body was able to build up skin, literally putting the victim back on his feet.

A large sector of medical technology refers to genetics, in which local scientists have achieved considerable success. Now, according to Ramankulov, medicine is entering its personalised development stage, and is fast approaching a time when a doctor will prescribe medications to a patient that take into account not only weight, age and gender, but also metabolic

indicators based on the results of genetic analysis. Indeed, the NCB has developed a diagnostic panel that calculates an individual dose of drugs to reduce the risk of thrombosis. NCB works with chemistry issues as well, particularly stem cells, which researchers hope can be the building blocks of treatments for everything from treating complicated diseases of the cardiovascular and nervous systems, to restoring ligaments and bone tissue, to warding off the processes of age.

Regarding genetically modified products, Ramankulov says that although GMOs are threat to biodiversity, they present no danger to man, and the debate over their use in food is based only on commercial concerns.

"[We must] take into account the fact that the development of modern biotechnology is impossible without the development of new genetic lines of research, not only medical, environmental, but also the bioengineering of plants and microorganisms. In this regard, genetic modification should be considered from the perspective of its benefits and profitability. Not so long ago, GMO cotton was created in the laboratory. In the traditional Kazakh cotton variety, "Turkestan," was introduced a bactericide gene for resistance to an herbicide widely used in agriculture," Ramankulov informed.

"Thus, the variety was significantly improved, and as a result, the productivity of an important agricultural crop was increased and hence the competitiveness of domestic cotton producers. And the main thing: now, there is no need to order such technology from foreign companies," added the scientist.

Meanwhile, he thinks, people do not think about the bigger dangers lurking in seemingly ordinary food that has a long shelf life, like semi-finished products, sausages and canned goods thickly seeded with preservatives and stabilisers. Or about fruit and vegetables containing herbicides and pesticides. The risk of harm from these chemicals is far greater than from GMOs, he believes. "I am an atheist. What do I believe? I believe in universal moral principles, which nobody should betray," the doctor said.

Int'l Experts Gather in Astana to Help Design Capital's Public Transportation System

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The world's leading experts in the development of public transport systems gathered in Astana Sept. 25-26 to help design the capital's transportation systems for decades to come.

The event, called Trends in the Development of the Transport Complex of Astana, is being organised by Astana LRT and the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) and will include experts from France, Spain, Russia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and the UK.

The conference will examine a broad spectrum of transportation issues, including the use of "smart technology" to overcome transportation challenges.

Among the projects to be discussed is Astana's Taxi Capital programme, which is similar to taxi programmes in London, Barcelona and New York. All of the taxis would have a uniform design and be driven only by vetted, qualified drivers. Customer payments would be made via the internet and all cars would be tracked and monitored.

Management of the Parking Space of Astana project will

also be examined. The project uses technology to allocate the disbursement of vehicles to prevent a disproportionate accumulation of cars in certain areas of the city.

One of the city's most ambitious projects that will be discussed during the conference is a light rail tram (LRT), which will connect key points of Astana and make traveling around the city quicker and more convenient. Projects involving school buses, intelligent traffic lights and traffic control will also be discussed.

The UITP was established in 1885 when representatives of 63 tram companies gathered in Brussels. The organisation has since helped cities and countries run bus lines, subway and commuter trains and other transportation systems.

It also promotes public transportation and helps design mobility systems in ways that protect the environment. UITP has almost 1,500 members in 96 countries, including London and New York City. The company also works with the World Bank, European Union and United Nations entities.



Photo credit: tengernews.kz

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