



## Kazakh President's Visit to Japan Focuses on Business Ties, Global Security

By Akmaral Berdalina

TOKYO – President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev began an official visit to Japan Nov. 7 seeking to boost the already strong political and economic relations. During the meeting with Emperor of Japan Akihito, the sides discussed bilateral relations.

Nazarbayev underlined close cooperation between the two countries in various fields, highlighted regular participation of the Japanese side in the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held in Astana, as well as noted the close partnership in the field of international security, including the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Nazarbayev underlined Japan's tremendous contribution in resolving global conflicts and facilitating sustainable regional development. He stressed that Kazakhstan will take measures aimed at building a nuclear weapons-free world and solving the issues of energy, food and water security in the framework of its non-permanent mem-



President Nursultan Nazarbayev meets Emperor of Japan Akihito in Tokyo on Nov. 7.

bership on the UN Security Council 2017-2018.

Later, Nazarbayev and Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe discussed a wide range of bilateral cooperation,

including political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian issues.

Nazarbayev noted that Japan was one of the first countries in the world to support Kazakhstan's

independence 25 years ago. Development of friendly partnership relations with Japan was on top of Kazakhstan's agenda.

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## China-Kazakhstan Cooperation: Towards New Horizons

By Li Keqiang

Two years ago I paid a visit to Kazakhstan for the first time. This country impressed me with its magnificent landscapes, abundant resources and hospitable people.

China and Kazakhstan have maintained close cultural and humanitarian ties. Deep friendship between the peoples of our two countries was established from the earliest times during frequent contacts via the ancient Silk Road. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations 24 years ago, our relationship has been developing steadily and considerable results in



multilateral cooperation have been achieved.

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## EBRD Predicts Growth for Kazakhstan Next Year in New Economic Prospects Report

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has released a new report on regional economic prospects for its countries of operation with the promising title "Return to modest growth."

For Kazakhstan, the organisation projects 0.7 percent growth in 2016. Last year's growth rate was 1.2 percent. Average annual inflation for 2016 can be expected to reach 14.8 percent.

"Monetary conditions in Kazakhstan have improved, the exchange rate has stabilised and inflation is on a downward trend, albeit from a high level (inflation decreased from 17.7 percent year-on-year in July 2016 to 16.6 percent in September)," said the report.

According to the EBRD, factors including low oil prices, subdued growth in Russia and economic challenges in China "continue to depress growth, which is exaggerated by the negative impact of re-

gional risks and global and domestic security incidents on consumer, business and investor confidence."

In the nearest future Kazakhstan will continue to rely on state support programmes, state-owned and quasi-state-owned enterprises to drive growth, states the report.

In 2017, the EBRD projects Kazakhstan's growth to reach 2.4 percent, as "the external environment improves, resulting in stronger exports of oil, higher foreign direct investment and increased investment domestically." At the same

time, inflation is expected to decline to 7.5 percent.

Growth in the Central Asian region in 2016 is expected to end up at 2.9 percent, down from 3.6 percent in 2015.

"Growth in Central Asia slowed down further in the first half of 2016, reflecting the region's strong dependence on commodity exports and close economic ties with Russia. Nonperforming loans have been rising in several countries while fiscal pressures have increased," the EBRD found.

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## Kazakhstan among Top Global Improvers in 2017 Doing Business Report

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – Kazakhstan was among the top 10 improvers in this year's World Bank Doing Business report, released Oct. 25. Kazakhstan climbed 16 positions since 2015, reaching 35th place in the ranking of the ease of doing business among 190 countries.

Rounding out the 10 most-improved economies were Brunei Darussalam, Kenya, Belarus, Indonesia, Serbia, Georgia, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain.

"This significant improvement has been ensured by four of 10 indicators; namely, by facilitating the procedures for obtaining permits for construction, ease of registering property, improving the protection of the rights of minority investors and contract enforcement. It is a good achievement for Kazakhstan," Senior Partner at the Centre for Strategic Initiatives Olzhas Khudaibergenov told The Astana Times.

According to the World Bank, better performance in the Doing Business ranking generally implies a lower level of income inequality and reduced poverty.

"Simple rules that are easy to follow are a sign that a government treats its citizens with respect. They yield direct economic benefits – more entrepreneurship; more market opportunities for women;

more adherence to the rule of law," said World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President Paul Romer in a statement recently about the bank's report.

"But we should also remember that being treated with respect is something that people value for its own sake and that a government that fails to treat its citizens this way will lose its ability to lead," he added.

The World Bank ranks economies on 10 parameters. Among the report's categories, Kazakhstan improved its standing in indicators such as dealing with construction permits (leaping from 78th to 22nd place), protecting minority investors (rising 22 places to third) and getting electricity (rising 27 places to 75th). Slight improvements were made in starting a business, trading across borders and resolving insolvency (climbing to 45th, 119th and 37th respectively). At the same time, the economy lost ground in the categories of getting credit and paying taxes and remained unchanged in enforcing contracts.

Dealing with construction permits, the category which showed the most improvement, was facilitated by introducing a single-window system and streamlining procedures. The report covered the city of Almaty but its findings are applied to the entire Kazakh economy.

Kazakhstan enhanced protec-

tions for minority investors by introducing stricter requirements for immediate disclosure of related-party transactions to the public, increasing shareholder's rights and roles in major corporate decisions, clarifying ownership and control structures and requiring more corporate transparency.

The process of getting an electricity connection was simplified by eliminating the need to obtain an official excavation permit and an inspection by the State Energy Supervision Committee. Kazakhstan also shortened the time needed to obtain the technical conditions from the utility company and signing the supply contract.

Starting a business was made simpler by abolishing the requirement to notarise company documents and founders' signatures.

Trading across borders was made easier by eliminating two export documents previously required for customs clearance.

Kazakhstan made resolving insolvency easier by changing voting procedures for organisation plans and providing protections to creditors who vote against such plans. In addition, creditors were granted greater access to information about debtors during insolvency proceedings and allowed to challenge decisions affecting their rights, the report noted.

"More than 40 regulations were adopted in Kazakhstan within the implementation of the five insti-

tutional reforms. New measures aim to reduce the time and the number of procedures and tackle corruption. However, it is not enough just to adopt regulations, it is more challenging to ensure the implementation of these changes," said Chair of the Board of the Almaty Development Centre Zhanna Tulegenova in a Facebook post about the new ranking.

Europe and Central Asia have made much more significant improvements in business regulation than any other region. Kazakhstan, Georgia, Macedonia, Belarus, Armenia and Russia have made the most reforms in Europe and Central Asia, carrying out more than 30 reforms each since 2004. Kazakhstan was listed among seven countries in the region to reform across all Doing Business indicators.

This year, Kazakhstan is ranked between Japan and Romania. The country is ahead of Russia (40), Kyrgyzstan (75), China (78) and Uzbekistan (87).

The World Bank ranked New Zealand as the best economy for ease of doing business, followed by Singapore and Denmark.

This year's Doing Business report includes, for the first time, gender measures in three indicators – starting a business, registering property and enforcing contracts. Europe and Central Asia were the only regions to provide equal opportunities for both women and men to start a business.

## Charity Bazaar to Bring Hope and Magic to Christmas Season

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – This year's Christmas Charity Bazaar in Astana is hoped to be the largest-ever gathering to date, with 53 embassies involved and the snazziest prizes yet for raffle tickets.

However, to the organisers of the Dec. 4 event at the Radisson Hotel, Ambassadors' Spouses Astana (ASA), this is more than just a party – it is a way of making the world a little brighter on the eve of the Christmas season, both for the givers and for those who receive much-needed support from the event.

For Heba Osman, president of the ASA and wife of the Egyptian ambassador to Kazakhstan, this

will be her third Christmas Charity Bazaar. Osman admits the organisational part can be exhausting, but the final result more than makes up for the fatigue.

"Nine years ago, the spouses of ambassadors initiated the idea of organising such an event to get involved in volunteer and charity projects and look for ways to help people in need," she told The Astana Times.

Today, the Christmas Charity Bazaar is one of the most anticipated events of the year in Astana. This year, it is being organised by eight committees and 22 spouses of different foreign ambassadors.

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## Astana Pro Team's Lutsenko Wins Tour of Hainan

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – Kazakh rider Alexey Lutsenko from the Astana Pro Team won the cycling race Tour of Hainan, which was held in the namesake province of China Oct. 22-30.

Lutsenko took the lead in the overall standings after the sixth stage and was able to hold it through the ninth and final stage. Second in the general classification with a delay of 17 seconds was Przemyslaw Niemiec of Lampre-Merida, and third was his teammate Slovenian Matej Mohoric.

Also Lutsenko, who recently won the third consecutive Tour of

Almaty, won in the category Best Asian Rider.

"I can say that without my team, I would not have achieved this victory. The guys worked perfectly the whole race, always rode ahead, catching up detachments, protected our lead, so it is a victory of our team," Lutsenko said after the race.

Along with the victory in the general classification, Astana Pro Team won victories in two stages of the race. Thus, the cycling club finished the season with a good victory in China.

Tour of Hainan has been held since 2006. Kazakh riders Valentin Iglinskiy won in 2010 and 2011 and Dmitry Gruzdev won in 2012.



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# NATION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## OBI's Entrance into Kazakhstan Means Global Revolution in Providing Amenities, says Almaty Official

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's first OBI hypermarket is slated to open in Almaty by late May. The home improvement superstore, to be built on 3.4 hectares at the intersection of Sain and Tole bi streets, will create 400 new jobs.

"OBI's entrance into Kazakhstan means global revolution in amenities provision. We used to find solutions to modernising markets in different ways and working with major global retailers is a number one decision we focused on," said Almaty Deputy Akim (Mayor) Yerlan Aukenov during the Oct. 28 Auezov Invest Forum, reported Kapital.kz.

Founded in Germany in 1970, OBI has become a leading European DIY retailer with 570 hypermarkets in Central and Eastern Europe. The company's annual turnover amounts to about 7 bil-



Photo: kapital.kz

lion euro (US\$7.7 billion). The hypermarket offers construction, renovation and gardening equipment as well as car accessories, bathroom equipment and lights.

Carrefour, which has the second largest trade turnover in the world after Walmart, is already established in the Kazakh market. OBI is among the top retailers for gardening and amenities items.

Aukenov noted Kazakh bazaars

have a very narrow selection and prices are higher than they should be, while OBI offers quality, a broad range of goods and acceptable prices.

"With this approach, we will make the market transparent. This is about the development of an entire city," he added.

All permit procedures between the Akimat (city administration) and Asadel Retail Group, which

owns the hypermarket's franchise, have been concluded and construction was slated to begin Nov. 1, said Asadel Director Nurlan Abdikarimov at the forum, according to Kapital.kz.

"We are already looking at the market and think that perhaps Almaty will have three OBI hypermarkets. We have an offer on where to locate the second store. We will review the offer more closely based on local and commercial terms. Astana will be next and elaborations on locating that facility are also being held already. During the next five years we plan to build six hypermarkets in Kazakhstan, but I think we will not stop there. Perhaps there will be more; it all depends on market conditions," he said, according to the news agency.

Construction of the second OBI in Almaty and those in Astana and Shymkent will begin in 2017; the store in Aktobe is scheduled for

2018 and the one in Karaganda in 2019.

"We are a DIY (Do It Yourself) retailer. Our format is different from that of others and our country does not have one yet, I believe," said Abdikarimov.

OBI was approved in Russia 10 years ago and has been extremely successful, opening 27 hypermarkets with a huge turnover. The local population has been very interested in the format, he added. Similarly, he suggested Kazakhs will find the stores to be an acceptable and convenient way to offer goods that could help improve housing and living conditions.

Manufacturers from Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries will supply most of the merchandise. Household and garden commodities under the hypermarkets' OBI, CMI and Lux store brands will be an important feature, according to Kapital.kz.

### NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan's first National Fathers' Forum was held with the support of the Astana akimat (city administration) and the National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy in the capital Oct. 28, Inform.kz reports. "We are confident that the forum will enhance the status and responsibility of fathers in the upbringing of children and will boost the development and strengthening of family values," said Astana Education Department head Kassymkhan Sengazyev. Members of Parliament, public figures, representatives of international and non-governmental organisations and parent organisations from all regions of the country attended the event.

The first Paradelphic Games in Kazakhstan were held Nov. 1-5 as part of the 20th National Delphic Games in Stepnogorsk. "More than 500 participants – representatives of the Paradelphic and Delphic teams from all over Kazakhstan – defended the honour of their cities. Choreographic art and singing in sign language are included in the programme," said the Kazakh National Delphic Committee press service. The Foundation of the First President of Kazakhstan supported the event and provided a grant for the national competition of social ideas and projects.

A visa-free regime for up to 30 days in Kazakhstan will be introduced for residents in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Union countries, as well as Monaco, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates from Jan. 1, 2017. "We are trying to improve the investment climate. We also pay special attention to the registration of foreign citizens in Kazakhstan. We introduced special measures to alleviate the regime, for foreigners to feel comfortable in Kazakhstan. Of course, there are individual cases that will be taken into account," said Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov at the Oct. 28 briefing for the diplomatic corps, Primeminister.kz reports. The government pays special attention to creating a user-friendly liberal migration regime to attract foreign experts.

Kazakhstan presented the national electronic service portal, mail.kz, with more than 700,000 subscribers Oct. 28, according to Tengrinews.kz. "We are pleased to act as a partner of the national service. Implementation of this project indicates the penetration of global trends in Kazakhstan and our readiness as an information operator ... to provide these services," said Kazakhtelecom Board Chairman Kuanyshbek Yesseyev. The portal includes an email server with the mail.kz domain, a social network, an SIP-gateway for calls between users and a payment gateway.

A contest for start-ups in alternative and renewable energies, the green economy and smart technologies was organised by Kazakhstan's Ministry of Energy with the participation of 100 start-up companies from 37 countries. Thirty start-up companies were selected to showcase their solutions at EXPO 2017 during the Oct. 27 competition in Astana, Primeminister.kz reports. Israeli companies developed the most projects. Kazakhstan's Primus Power Company, which develops high-tech energy accumulating systems, was also named among the winners. Six companies from Kazakhstan, Israel, the U.S. and Russia received financial support from investors, including certificates for business management training for start-up development.

A modern mobile unit of the Centre for AIDS Prevention and Control opened in the capital, according to the Astana akimat (city administration) press service. The vehicle is specially assembled to meet all the requirements of time and safety regulations. Seats in the vehicle are designed ergonomically and with an eye to working with HIV infection. Two specialists can ride in the vehicle and rapid HIV testing can be conducted. The vehicle is equipped with lighting and a germicidal lamp, an internal water supply system for hand washing and an air-conditioning system. The modern mobile unit aims to increase the effectiveness of preventive measures at times of a high risk of HIV infection.

## Kazakhstan Significantly Reduces Prison Population

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – As the result of a campaign to humanise criminal legislation, the number of prisoners in Kazakhstan has fallen by 30 percent in five years, Zakon.kz reports.

"The Ministry of Internal Affairs, headed by Minister Kulmukhanbet Kassymov, recently held a board meeting with the participation of the management staff of the central office and the committee and the regional departments of the penal system," the report said, citing the ministry's press service. The top priority on the agenda was reviewing the activities of the Committee of the Correctional System of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the first nine months of 2016 and priorities for the near future.

The ministry's press service also stated that as a result of "humanisation of criminal legislation



Photo credit: zakon.kz

and the application of punishments by the courts not related to deprivation of liberty, there is ... a sharp reduction of persons held in detention. In 2016, the number decreased by 17 percent, and over the past five years by more than 30 percent."

Today, there are more than 22,500 individuals on parole in Kazakhstan, being closely watched by the Ministry of In-

ternal Affairs. For comparison, in 2015 there were only 12,300 people. Some 30,797 programmes have been developed for parolees, and about 4,000 convicts have been successfully employed; 10,108 have been provided medical aid and 188 have received education. The recurring crime rate by the same convicts fell by 7 percent.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs

has drafted a concept of Public-Private Partnership "Creating a system of electronic surveillance," which will monitor the location and control the activities of the convicts. Now the draft laws "On Probation" and on related amendments and additions to some legislative acts of Kazakhstan are under consideration in Parliament.

There are 104 educational institutions in the penitentiary system in the country, while about 1,200 prisoners received secondary education graduation certificates. About 3,000 people are being trained in various specialties.

The growth in employment of convicts was noted during the meeting as well. The production of apparel products, building materials, metal and wood processing, agricultural, food and animal products have been set up. Five new types of production were set up this year.

Back in 2013, the government

held its first forum in an effort to improve the penitentiary system and reduce the number of inmates. The project was called "Ten steps to reduce the number of inmates." Later, a new forum announced a new project hoping to stimulate employment of inmates in prisons. The third forum, in 2015, tackled perhaps the most complex issue: re-socialisation of convicts.

Earlier this year the government announced a major review of the penitentiary system in the country.

First Vice Rector of the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under the General Prosecutor's Office of Kazakhstan Erkin Ongarbayev highlighted that Kazakhstan raised its overall rating and was ranked 55th in the world, while courts "started using verdicts without imprisonment." He stressed the vital point was "restriction of freedom" as opposed to full deprivation.



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Mobile device versions are available in AppStore and PlayMarket. Also available in Windows and as a web version.

You can run an application webpage by following the link: <http://bit.ly/28PkZza>

# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Olympic champion Alexander Vinokourov took part in a bike ride dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence and the opening of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and the U.S. in New York Oct. 29. Vinokourov expressed gratitude to Kazakh diplomats for their warm welcome and noted their willingness to support sport activities. Consul General of Kazakhstan in New York Raushan Yesbulatova thanked the participants and stressed that such events not only bring together communities, but also promote good health. The Kazakh diaspora, representatives of diplomatic corps, American business communities, the Astana International Finance Centre, American adoptive families of Kazakh children and Kazakh students studying in the U.S. attended the tour.

More than 20 Kazakh companies and 100 representatives of Mongolian small and medium-sized businesses participated in the Kazakh-Mongolian trade mission in Ulaanbaatar, Inform.kz reports. The event was organised by the Kazakh National Agency for Export and Investment and the Chamber of Commerce of Mongolia. "This event is an effective mechanism for promoting cooperation between our countries in the B2B format. Its main goal is to establish contacts between small and medium enterprises of the two countries and find opportunities for Kazakh products to be exported to Mongolia," Kazakh Ambassador to Mongolia Kalybek Koblandin said. Kazakh business people discussed with Mongolian representative bodies the possible expansion of trade-economic and investment cooperation between the two countries.

The Kazakh film "Kunanbai" received the Amir Abdrakov award for national spirit at the third Silver Akbuzat International Festival of National and Ethnic Cinema Oct. 26-28 in Ufa, Kazakh TV reports. The film tells the story of Kunanbai Oskembaituly, parish judge and father of great Kazakh thinker Abai. "When we decided to shoot this film, we aimed to awaken the national consciousness of youth and instil in them a love for their native land. I am pleased that our work is appreciated," director Doskhan Zholzhaksynov said. The film was released last December.

Flights from Astana to Prague, Helsinki, Vienna, Warsaw and Budapest will be launched next year, announced Investment and Development Minister Zhenis Kassymbek at a Nov. 1 government meeting. Currently Astana receives flights from 16 countries and 25 international destinations. Every week, 415 flights depart from the capital's airport. A pilot project to implement the international Open Skies policy to remove restrictions on daily flights to the Astana airport is scheduled as part of EXPO 2017.

Turkish business people presented a new logistics project to reduce the delivery time and costs of goods coming from Turkey to Kazakhstan as part of the international Kazakh-Turkish Forum in the construction industry held in Atyrau Oct. 27, Inform.kz reports. "Efficient logistics will save significant money on the transportation of goods and will not affect the cost of goods. We can increase trade turnover between the two countries significantly," said Turkish Exporters' Assembly Chairman Ahmed Hamdi Gundogan. Goods reaching Atyrau can be carried through Georgia, Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea. They also can be carried through Russia by motor vehicles in two to three days.

The first Fashion Startup was held to support young designers and the development of light industry in Kazakhstan Nov. 2, according to Inform.kz. "We will organise a regional competition to select designers for participation in Rome Fashion Week (RFW) in December. I also have three certificates for Fashion Startup Kazakhstan participants. The European public admires our collection, especially our national design," said RFW representative in Kazakhstan and Central Asia Kanat Sauranbayev. Overall, 25 Kazakh designers will present their collections at RFW.

## Kazakh President, Chinese Premier Discuss Joint Projects in Astana

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang discussed during a Nov. 3 meeting at the Akorda presidential residence bilateral agreements reached during Nazarbayev's September visit to China.

Nazarbayev called China an important strategic partner and said the relationship serves as a model for other nations.

"During your previous visit to Kazakhstan, you offered an economic cooperation programme. In the framework of this programme, a number of agreements have been signed and are currently being implemented. In addition, an agreement was reached on 51 projects totalling more than \$20 billion. Thus, China became the main investor in Kazakhstan," Nazarbayev said.

Li said his visit reflects the strategic nature and friendly character



Li said his visit reflects the strategic nature and friendly character of relations between the two neighbours. "We intend to continue to maintain high-level contacts, which

will promote mutual cooperation," Li said.

Li noted that a plant in Kostanai assembling JAC trucks is an example of the successful implementation of the nations' bilateral agreements.

Nazarbayev noted that he personally tested the first electric car assembled in Kazakhstan and that approved projects would be carried out with quality and innovation.

On the same day, Kazakh Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev and Li discussed cooperating on Kazakhstan's Nurly Zhol economic programme and China's Silk Road Economic Belt initiative during Li's Nov. 3 visit to Astana.

"The Chinese side is ready to work with Kazakhstan on the principles of openness, coordination, cooperation and mutual benefit from the implementation of the plan on pairing the two national economic programmes, Nurly Zhol and the Silk Road Economic

Belt. Also, joint promotion of the construction of the economic corridors New Eurasian Land Bridge and China-Central and West Asia Economic Corridor will bring practical benefits to the two nations," Li said.

The sides focused on energy, agriculture, tourism, communications, transport and logistics and economic cooperation. A teleconference was also held with a plant in Kostanai assembling JAC trucks, where the first joint JAC S5 car was released. Li's visit to Kazakhstan focused particularly on production capacity cooperation, according to globaltimes.cn.

This is the premier's second visit to Kazakhstan in two years, which shows the countries enjoy a high-level relationship and strategic mutual trust, the source reported.

"For 24 years, since the establishment of diplomatic relations, there have been stable development dynamics and great results in multidimensional cooperation. The Sino-Kazakh friendly relations that have deep roots are gaining new momentum and greater vitality," noted Li in his article printed in the Kazakhstanskaya Pravda newspaper Nov. 3.

## Kazakh PM Pays Working Visits to Minsk, Moscow

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Bakytzhan Sagintayev travelled to Minsk, Belarus to attend meetings of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council (EIC), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Council of Heads of Governments, as well as meet with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in Moscow Oct. 26-28, reported the Kazakh Prime Minister's office.

The council discussed the draft Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Customs Code, the draft EAEU budget for 2017, the international activities of the Eurasian Economic Commission, as well as some aspects of the trade policy, including the application of anti-dumping measures.

According to the report, participants of the event went through



a wide range of issues of interaction within the framework of the EAEU and ways to develop integration.

The meeting resulted with the review of a number of multilateral agreements. In particular, an agreement on a free trade zone with Vietnam was signed in 2015 and entered into force earlier in October 2016. About 40 more states have expressed their interest in establishing similar trade regimes.

This year, Kazakhstan holds the EAEU chairmanship and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev outlined its orientation on deepening the economic relations of the EAEU with the third countries and key integration associations.

At the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government, the participants discussed the implementation of treaty provisions on a free trade zone, the agreement on cooperation of CIS member states

in the field of legal education of consumers and the implementation of the joint action of CIS member states to address issues in the financial and economic sphere.

Sagintayev noted that the joint policy adopted in the framework of the CIS devoted to improving the business climate, attract investors, ensure economic growth, strengthen financial markets and mutual trade has proved its effectiveness.

Following the meeting, a number of multilateral instruments have been signed.

Lukashenko and Sagintayev exchanged views on international economic and social agenda issues and the deepening of cooperation within the CIS.

Sagintayev noted that Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the implementation of joint projects and expressed confidence that implementation of the adopted documents will give an additional impetus to the development of bilateral cooperation within the Commonwealth.

Sagintayev also stressed that Kazakhstan reiterates its readiness to cooperate with CIS member states in the implementation of joint projects.

During the earlier Oct. 26 meeting of Sagintayev and Medvedev, the sides discussed cooperation in the industrial, energy, transport, trade and economy spheres.

## Nazarbayev's Visit to Japan Focuses on Business Ties, Global Security

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"We agreed to continue active political dialogue, increase contacts at all levels, ensure security of the region, facilitate trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, as well as collectively work against challenges of the modern world," Nazarbayev said at the meeting of the two delegations.

"Kazakhstan is the largest trade and economic partner of Japan in Central Asia. The volume of mutual trade turnover in 2015 amounted to \$1.5 billion. We have a potential to increase this figure and we will steadily expand the horizons of cooperation in the field of high technologies, agriculture, nuclear power, automotive and the steel industry," Nazarbayev added.

In turn, Abe emphasised that the two countries are closely working as co-chairmen of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

"I have an intention to continue to actively develop relations between Japan and Kazakhstan hand in hand with President Nazarbayev," Abe said.

During the talks, the parties signed documents, including the joint statement "On special strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and Japan in the age of Asia's prosperity," memorandum of understanding between the Kazakh Ministry of Investment and Development and the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. In addition, an agreement on Japan's participation in



President Nazarbayev and Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe agreed to expand political and business cooperation during their meeting on Nov. 7.

EXPO 2017 and a memorandum of cooperation between Astana International Financial Centre and the Japan Securities Dealers Association were signed.

On the first day of the visit, Kazakh and Japanese diplomats also exchanged notes concerning exemption of visa requirements for Kazakh and Japanese holders of diplomatic and service passports that will come into force starting Jan. 1, 2017.

During the meeting of Nazarbayev and Foreign Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida, they discussed bilateral cooperation and international issues.

Nazarbayev noted that ties between Kazakhstan and Japan have grown to a high level of partnership. "Japan and Kazakhstan are leaders in the anti-nuclear movement. I am confident that we will jointly

keep our work on this issue. My upcoming visit to Hiroshima is aimed at showing solidarity with the Japanese people. We are working together on building the world without nuclear weapons in the 21st century," Nazarbayev said.

"We feel sincere respect for your leadership since Kazakhstan has gained independence. The fact that Kazakhstan was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018 indicates your successful leadership," Kishida noted as reported by the Akorda press service.

Later on, the Kazakh delegation headed by the President attended a meeting with members of the Kazakhstan-Japan Friendship Parliamentary League headed by Chairman Takeo Kawamura.

Nazarbayev noted that the Parliamentary League is making cru-

cial contributions to strengthening the strategic partnership between the two nations.

He expressed gratitude for the support given to Kazakhstan and the efforts being made to enhance cooperation, including the issues of nuclear disarmament.

"Next year, we will celebrate 25 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Kazakhstan. In addition, the exhibition EXPO 2017 will take place in Astana. We would like to use these events to strengthen inter-parliamentary exchanges," Kawamura said while thanking Nazarbayev for the fruitful meeting.

During the trip, the Kazakh delegation got acquainted with the Tokyo Rope enterprise and took part in the ceremony of remote launch via teleconference for manufacturing steel products in Kazakhstan.

The plant, located in Kazakhstan's largest city, will produce a variety of metal products, including heavy-duty grids for further production of gabion systems used for the prevention and elimination of emergencies. The projected capacity in the first phase will amount to five thousand tonnes of metal products per year. It is expected that the company's output will not only be utilised in Kazakhstan, but also supplied to the Commonwealth of Independent States and markets further afield.

As part of the visit, Nazarbayev also visited Tokai University, where he met with Kazakh students studying there. Today, Tokai University is

a leading research establishment in Japan. In his address, Nazarbayev drew attention to the partnership relations established between Tokai University and Nazarbayev University.

"Today, Astana has become one of the largest research and education centres in Eurasia. We are attracting young people to study at our university and hope that the Japanese youth will also join it," Nazarbayev said.

Following the event, Nazarbayev was given the Degree of Honorary Doctor of Engineering Science at Tokai University. The institution's President Yamada Kiyoshi emphasised that Nazarbayev has been awarded the diploma and medal of Doctor for his contribution to Kazakhstan's modernisation during the period of its independence, as well as development of scientific and educational services in accordance with international standards.

Addressing the Parliament of Japan on Nov. 8, Nazarbayev pointed to measures taken by Kazakhstan to strengthen international security and stressed the importance of joint efforts to build a world free of the nuclear threat.

"We see an important task in the establishment of a global anti-nuclear movement. That is exactly the goal promoted by The ATOM Project that was proposed by our country. I invite our Japanese friends to support this initiative," he said.

Nazarbayev stressed that currently the risk of use of nuclear weapons globally is higher than ever since the end of the Cold War.

On Nov. 9, the Kazakh leader will visit Hiroshima, where he will pay respects to the victims of the city's atomic bombing by the United States in August 1945.

Malika Orazgaliyeva contributed to this report from Astana.

# ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## Four Billion Tenge to be Provided for New Ventures and Small Business Financing

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Starting in November, the Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund and Almaty akimat (city administration) will launch three regional programmes for the city's small and medium-sized businesses.

The total pool of four billion tenge (US\$12 million) will be allocated for the tourism and food industries and innovation sphere. Almaty Akim (Mayor) Baurzhan Baibek and Damu Fund Board Chairman Kanysh Tuleushin signed the relevant memorandums at the Oct. 21 meeting of the city's business council.

The maximum amount of the loan is 100 million tenge (US\$302,300) and the term is up to seven years with the interest rate at 8.5 percent per annum, reported Kapital.kz.

One billion tenge (US\$3 million) will be apportioned for the Almaty-Onim programme as part of the food industry support, two billion tenge (US\$6 million) for Almaty tourism and one billion



Almaty Akim (Mayor) Baurzhan Baibek (L) and Damu Fund Board Chairman Kanysh Tuleushin sign the memorandums on Oct. 21.

tenge (US\$3 million) for the city's innovation programme. Twenty-five percent of the funds will be provided for start-up projects.

Tuleushin noted the Zhibek Zholy programme for entrepreneurs was put into operation in Almaty last year and four billion tenge (US\$12 million) has been allocated for its implementation.

The average rate on loans for Damu Fund programmes last year was about 15 percent. The rate on

the regional programmes has been reduced to about 8.5 percent due to the partnership with regional authorities.

Tuleushin noted the regional projects take into account the specifics of business in the regions in addition to low interest rates and the availability of funds. For example, the manufacturing industry in the Mangistau region and the youth entrepreneurship in Aktoke region are the priority.

"We conducted an analysis. There are 180,000 small and medium-sized businesses in the city. We did not take into account the quasi-public sector and considered only legal bodies; that is, 97,900 enterprises and 30,000 companies are stable and pay taxes. This is the basis for the growth of Almaty. The trade, service and tourism sectors are the leaders as well as accommodation and catering services, construction, transport, communications, logistics and manufacturing. We pay special attention to tourism, the service sector and the food industry," said Tuleushin.

The programme creates opportunities to initiate projects in the food industry and engage in import substitution, as Almaty is a net importer in the industry with import production in the amount of \$280 million.

One of the new programmes launched by the fund and akimat is aimed at business innovation.

"Almaty is historically strong in innovation, as more than 10 percent of innovative products are manufactured precisely in the city. The Park of Innovative Technologies, a major project of the country, is ac-

tually implemented in the city. Almaty has all the potential to become the Central Asia hub in terms of innovation. Talented young people from Bishkek and Tashkent are also able to come here and implement their projects," said Tuleushin.

Online business, mobile apps and computer and electrical equipment production are also included in the programme.

"Most of the support was aimed at financing existing businesses, preservation of jobs and the expansion of production. But I believe we need to encourage the creation of new enterprises. This is a very important direction," said Baibek.

Tuleushin noted the registration of new companies was reduced in almost all regions.

"We will closely cooperate with the akimat to increase the number of new small and medium-sized businesses as they are the future tax base for the city. Not less than 25 percent of the allocated funds will be directed to the new ventures. The rest of the financing will be granted to the existing enterprises. I believe it will serve as a great incentive for new businesses and enterprises," he said.

### ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

The volume of construction companies' production index reached 2.2 trillion tenge (US\$6.5 billion) in January-June, a 32-percent increase over the same period last year. More than 21,000 buildings were put into operation in the first half of the year, 6 percent more than in the last year. The average productivity of big companies amounted to 7.7 million tenge (US\$22,700), 45 percent more than the January-June figure for last year. Conversely, small businesses reduced their productivity by 23 percent.

Kazakhstan's geographic location in the heart of the Eurasian continent creates great transit potential for the state. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has repeatedly said the transportation system is a powerful driver of economic development and emphasised the need to use the country's beneficial location. He noted freight train speed increased to 1,000 kilometres per day, a hike of 200 kilometres per day from previous figures. Infrastructure and logistics are being established throughout the transit corridor. The cargo is formed in China and trans-shipment is carried out at the Khorgos dry port. The cargo then passes through Russia without stopping towards its final destination in Europe. Nazarbayev noted the investment in Kazakh transport infrastructure will exceed 12 trillion tenge (US\$35.5 billion) by 2020.

Kazakhstan intends to attract foreign investment in the mining field. During the past five years, Kazakh geologists found nearly 500 tonnes of gold reserves, eight million tonnes of copper reserves and almost one million tonnes of zinc. New deposits of oil and natural gas have also been identified. Since 2011, the inflow of investments in subsoil development has reached more than 12 trillion tenge (US\$35.5 billion). Geology and subsoil use committee Chairman Bazarbai Nurabayev said amendments to the mining code are under development. The new code, which should be adopted by Parliament in the next year, will actively use new methods to grant rights to subsoil users and assist the state in attracting new investments.

Kazakhstan, which is aiming to enter the world's top 30 most competitive countries, must develop its own industrial sector to achieve the result, according to Kazakh TV. Joint ventures created with foreign partners allow opening new markets and implementing ambitious projects. Kazakhstan and Russia plan to launch 27 joint projects in various sectors of the economy worth about \$4 billion and a corresponding agreement was signed by the nations' economy ministers. Experts say executing the projects will increase the volume of mutual trade from 5 to 11 percent. Kazakh Minister of National Economy Kuandyk Bishimbayev said the result of the projects will be seen in 2017.

Infrastructure construction works are underway at the Khorgos international border cooperation centre at the Kazakh-Chinese border. The centre has Free Economic Zone status. Since Nov. 1, all Kazakh citizens have had visa-free entry to Khorgos territory. Future plans are intended to make the area the largest Central Asian cargo hub and its capacity will be over 500,000 cargo containers by 2020. Khorgos Gateway CEO Karl Gheysen said the centre doesn't aim to make a profit in the first years of operation.

The international rating agency Fitch Ratings has affirmed the financial strength rating (FSR) of the insurance company Kazakhmys at the level B+.

The rating reflects the strong capitalisation of Kazakhmys and its healthy profitability. During the first nine months of this year, a steady investment income and a positive underwriting result led to an increase in profits of up to 230 million tenge (US\$680,340).

At the same time, the ratings take into account the lower average credit quality of the company's investment portfolio, difficulties adhering to a growth strategy and high dependence on outward reinvestment.

## Aktau and Kuryk Seaports Should Be Provided with Own Vessels

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The Aktau seaport and the new Kuryk ferry port must concentrate 35 percent of all traffic on the Caspian Sea, Minister for Investment and Development Zhenis Kassymbek said during a Nov. 1 government meeting on developing the transport and logistics potential. Power ferry infrastructure in the Caspian Sea will increase to 23 million tonnes, reported Kapital.kz.

"Last year, we completed the construction of three dry cargo terminals in Aktau with the capacity of three million tonnes of cargo. A ferry complex is under construction in the port of Kuryk. In general, as a result of these ports the power of our ferry infrastructure will be increased to 23 million tonnes. In addition, two cargo ships will be launched this year. This is very important, because the

amount of cargo that we form we have to take out by our own vessels and in Aktau there is a growth in trans-shipment of dry cargo. In particular, the volume of trans-shipment of metals increased in the current year by 25 percent and corn almost doubled," he said.

Kassymbek added the Caspian

nations worked tirelessly to build their own port facilities and today Aktau retains the leading position on the waterway. The city is a heavy loading port and occupies a 22-percent share of the total turnover in the Caspian Sea.

The procedure to register documents on the basis of a single win-

dow has radically changed. Paperwork has been reduced two and a-half times to a maximum of up to four hours per vessel. In addition, the average car traffic acceptance process is more than five times faster. Implementing these measures will allow cargo flows to increase through both ports by a total turnover to 35 percent in 2020.

"All the current projects and the measures to be taken in 2020 will increase the length of reconstructed roads up to 7,000 kilometres, which we are planning to maintain due to the fees for usage. The capacity of ports in the Caspian Sea will be increased to 23.5 million tonnes. We are planning to increase container transportation tenfold. Today, about 75,000 people work at the facilities as part of the Nuryly Zhol programme. Next year, this figure will reach 100,000. We will adhere to this tendency," said Kassymbek.

He also responded to a question

from Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev as to why Kazakhstan slipped from 58th place to 63rd place this year in infrastructure quality rankings.

"Last year, despite the fact that there was more investment in the sector, there was a decline in the two indices. These two indicators are the quality of infrastructure of highways and seaports quality. This is a quite subjective result. It comes from a survey. In fact, according to other indicators that we have within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), these indicators increased. I think that next year these figures will change," he said.

Nonetheless, Sagintayev emphasised if these results were revealed after the survey, it is important to appropriately convey the information to the population.

"That means we are not keeping people up to date with the information on the work that we have carried out. They are not well informed. They might not use this infrastructure and think the quality is as poor as they are used to think," he said.

Kassymbek admitted the situation is primarily influenced by the state of the local road network.



## National Bank: Inflation Amounts to 5.6 percent since Beginning of Year

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – National Bank Chairman Daniyar Akishev reported about a 5.6 percent inflation rate since the beginning of the year at the Oct. 25 government meeting on social and economic development for the first nine months of 2016. He also discussed the results of the National Bank's ongoing monetary policy and the situation in the Kazakh financial market.

Inflation was only 0.2 percent in September and the annual rate



Daniyar Akishev

from the beginning of the year reached 5.6 percent, which corresponds to the long-term values in the pre-crisis period, he said.

"The National Bank considers that it is possible to achieve target annual inflation in three to four years," he added.

Akishev noted reducing the annual inflation rate to 8 percent will mean completing the adaptation process of domestic prices to the new parameters of the exchange rate.

"Therefore, the main priority of the National Bank is early stabilisation of the annual inflation rate in the corridor established at around 8 percent. It is impossible to revive investment activity and reduce rates in the national cur-

rency without the stabilisation," he added.

The National Bank's priority is to form interest rates in the market and Oct. 3 it established the base rate of 12.5 percent, he said.

The chairman emphasised the National Bank hasn't intervened in the foreign exchange market and the situation in the domestic foreign exchange market is stable. At the end of September, the tenge exchange rate was 335.46 tenge per dollar, strengthening from the beginning of the year by 1.3 percent. The tenge exchange rate is formed only under the influence

of fundamental factors, which currently have a positive trend. Akishev noted.

He added the policy of a free floating exchange rate allowed starting the process of gradual recovery of the reserves and the National Bank's gold and foreign currency reserves in the end of September reached \$31.4 billion. The National Fund's gold and foreign currency reserves amount to \$64.4 billion. The country's total reserves thus reached \$95.8 billion, which is 67 percent of the GDP.

He also reported about the positive trajectory in restoring confidence in tenge assets and the reduction in the volume of deposits in foreign currencies. This result was achieved due to measures taken by the National Bank to increase the attractiveness of the national currency and the state's dedollarisation policy.

## EBRD Predicts Growth for Kazakhstan...

Continued from Page A1

"The build-up of structural challenges over 2014-16 arising from lower commodity prices, remittances and exports as well as declining local currencies, are increasingly depressing growth, creating fiscal pressures and increasing risks in the region, notwithstanding the fact that the external environment is beginning to normalise."

The region also faces higher ratio of nonperforming loans, increases in fiscal pressures and continued strain on local currencies. The EBRD stressed the growing risk that economic or financial sector challenges can be spread across the region, even if economic links between most of the countries remain limited.

"The spillover risk, combined with the global and regional security incidents observed over

2016, are increasingly negatively affecting consumer, business and investor confidence in the region, including in the largest economy – Kazakhstan. In 2017, growth in the region is projected to increase to 3.9 percent, driven by a positive trend in commodity exporting countries; however, material downside risks to growth will remain," the report predicts.

Currently, the EBRD operates in

37 countries, including six in Central Asia: Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

According to the new report, the outlook for the whole EBRD region has improved at its margin and has revealed a modest recovery of oil prices from the lows seen in the first quarter of 2016, which led to a stronger outlook in Russia and parts of Central Asia and the European Economic Commu-

nity. Other trends include the partial recovery of capital flows into emerging markets in the aftermath of the U.K. Brexit referendum, as well as the fact that "weakness of global trade has persisted and the recovery in advanced economies has remained slow" and "geopolitical risks, both external and domestic, have remained elevated, with the situation in the Middle East and Eastern Ukraine being volatile."

# BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

The Kostanai rolled steel plant intends to export construction bars to Russia. According to company director Sergei Sotnikov, the plant has already exported 15,000 tonnes of products in the last two years. The company will reach its annual full production capacity of 450,000 tonnes in the near future. The physical volume of rolled steel will amount to 180,000 tonnes and 44,000 tonnes of raw materials will also be exported, reported Kazakhstan TV.

Brazil's JBS, a world leader in the production of beef and other meat products, is ready to cooperate with Kazakhstan. Company representatives met at the first Kazakh-Brazilian business forum Nov. 2 in Almaty, according to Kapital.kz. JBS has more than a half-century of history, cooperates with the Brazilian National Development Bank and owns major brands such as Swift and Pilgrim's Pride. The giant in the meat industry, with a turnover reaching about \$40 billion a year, controls a quarter of beef sales throughout the world. The company is ready to start supplying beef, chicken, pork and meat products to Kazakhstan, although the nation is fully provided by its own meat producers. Local production is about 400,000 tonnes and import is only about 15,000 tonnes. KazAgro representative Narmukhan Sarybayev said Kazakhstan is interested in Brazilian investments and can offer state support and the fifth largest pastures in the world. The country can be a great material base for meat production and exporting to nearby markets such as China, which annually purchases up to 2 million tonnes of meat.

Domestic cement producers are actively conquering export markets, according to Finprom.kz, as production covered 94 percent of demand and exports increased almost fourfold. In the first three quarters of the year, 7.1 million tonnes of cement were produced, 1.8 percent more than in the same period last year. Exports increased 3.6 times, reaching 260,700 tonnes. Honorary Builder of Kazakhstan Maral Tompiyev feels Kazakhstan will become a high-quality cement exporter in four years. In 2020, the total capacity of Kazakh enterprises will reach 16.5 million tonnes per year with an expected domestic demand of 14 million tonnes per year, he said.

Tengrinews.kz reports Standard & Poor's international rating agency improved Kazakhtelecom's assessment from stable to positive and confirmed its BB-level credit rating. The company's rating on the national scale was affirmed as kzA+. Agency analysts noted Kazakhtelecom has a very comfortable debt burden indicator, including the conditions of the deal with Tele 2 to establish a joint venture in the mobile segment. The S&P report also highlighted a good level of operating results and profitability and a substantial margin of safety for the company's financial covenants.

The IPOs for Kazakh national companies will be organised in late 2017 based on a decision made Nov. 2 by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, reported Today.kz. The head of state identified the first three companies as Air Astana, Kazatomprom and Kazakhtelecom. The auction for the first company will be held in the end of 2017, while the latter two will be presented in 2018. Four more companies will enter IPOs during 2018-2020. Minister of National Economy Kuan-dyk Bishimbayev said Sept. 19 that the government intends to expand the list of state property objects to be privatised. The comprehensive privatisation plan for 2016-2020 includes 783 state-owned objects, including 65 major companies that are part of national holdings.

## Khorgos Dry Port to Process more than 500,000 Containers by 2020

By Zhaniya Urankayeva

ASTANA – More than 70,000 containers were handled through the Khorgos dry port during its first year of operation and by 2020, the terminal will be able to process more than 500,000 containers. The Khorgos Eastern Gate Special Economic Zone contributes to the development of multimodal logistics and large-scale industrial production and trade, connecting East and West together.

"It's a big investment project and big money was invested here. Of course this project won't be able to pay for itself in the first years, but we are already making a profit. Sometimes we process about 50 rail cars a day, sometimes the number reaches 170 rail cars per day, but an average number is three-six trains a day. We have processed 73,000 containers this year. By 2020, we will be able to process 540,000 containers," said Khorgos Gateway CEO Karl Gheysen.



The dry port receives trains from various Chinese cities and keeps them in its own territory. "The width of Chinese rails differs from that of Kazakhstan ones.

When people ask me how far the Chinese train ride is, I answer them that they stop here. We have special cranes which are almost masterpieces. These large yellow cranes

are used to unload Chinese trains and load Kazakh ones. Kazakh trains go in different directions, to Central Asia, Europe, Iran, Turkey and so on. When people talk about

a new Silk Road and connection of the Western part of China with the Western part of Europe, I say that this is the place where the East meets the West," he said.

Gheysen emphasised 99 percent of the dry port employees are Kazakh citizens, 80 percent of whom are locals. Thanks to the experience and management of DP World, KTZE-Khorgos Gateway is a world-class project providing services which correspond to international standards.

The Khorgos Gateway dry port spans 129.8 hectares and is integrated with logistics and industrial zones. Operating activities at the developing multimodal logistics hub include receiving and dispatching trains, transshipping cargo from Chinese (1,435 mm) rail gauge to broad Kazakhstan (1,520 mm) rails and vice versa, unloading and loading motor trucks and vehicles and forming container trains. The work at the warehouses and container site include loading, sorting, storing and shipping goods; storing dangerous cargoes and those which demand special temperature conditions; scanning, weighing, packing and unpacking goods and customs clearance, insurance and guarantees for all types of risks.

## Chinese Companies Participate in 15 Agricultural Projects

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan Vice Minister of Agriculture Gulmira Issayeva briefed the annual China Overseas Investment Fair (COIFair) in Beijing on 15 major Kazakh-Chinese agricultural projects in eight Kazakhstan regions.

"There are approximately 40 projects with the participation of foreign investors in the field of agriculture," Issayeva said at the plenary session of the fair as reported by Kazinform. "Most investors are from countries such as Russia, Turkey, Germany, Ukraine,

France, South Korea and China. The vast majority of the projects are implemented with the participation of Chinese investors. Currently, Chinese companies operate in the following eight regions of the country: the Almaty region (1 project), the East Kazakhstan region (5 projects), the Karaganda region (2 projects), the Kostanai region (1 project), the Kyzylorda region (2 projects), the North Kazakhstan region (2 projects), the South Kazakhstan region (1 project) and Almaty (1 project)."

She noted the then Prime Minister Karim Massimov oversaw the signing of commercial documents

(contracts, memoranda, agreements on establishment of joint ventures) between representatives of the Kazakh and Chinese businesses for projects in the agro-industrial complex during his visit to China in December 2015.

"One of the projects is in a livestock industry and four others are in crop sector," Issayeva said, highlighting one project of building a tomato plant with a moderate level of activity with the participation of the COFCO Chinese company. She emphasised that the project is included in the list of 51 Kazakh-Chinese investment projects in the agricultural sector.

Issayeva discussed cooperation between Kazakhstan and China in industrialisation and investments, citing the processing of camel and mare's milk, the production of agricultural machinery, irrigation systems, deep processing of wheat and the creation of its organic fibre.

The vice minister said agricultural and food production, which are part of these investment projects, have high export potential, especially in China.

She also spoke about the investment climate in Kazakhstan, state support of agriculture under the Agribusiness 2020 programme, major changes in the financing of

agricultural and industrial companies in 2016-2017 and the attractiveness of the Kazakh trade sector.

China Overseas Development Association (CODA) is the organiser of the fair. This year, forums, seminars, conferences, round tables and many other activities of the fair were attended by around 6,000 participants from 80 countries and regions. The main topic of discussions at the fair was cooperation in the field of production and interaction in the implementation of the "One Belt One Road" initiative.

The main guests of the opening ceremony of the fair were Vice Premier of Chinese State Council Wang Yang and Vice Chairman of Russian Government and Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy in the Far East region Yuri Trutnev. The plenary session was also attended by the Governor of the Irkutsk region of Russia Sergey Levenchenko, as well as other officials.

## Kazkommertsbank Rebrands into QAZKOM

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Kazkommertsbank, one of the largest banks in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, presented its updated retail brand QAZKOM Oct. 21 to mark its 25th anniversary.

"The essence of the changes is not in the changed logo and new writing of the brand name, but rather in qualitative changes happening in the bank as part of a new development strategy. We are targeting large-scale reform of customer service to focus on client needs. The letter Q in the new logo symbolises our willingness to step up to a new level in innovations to provide our customers with greater mobility, speed and ease of banking services," said the bank's chairman of the board and major shareholder Kenes Rakishev, according to the press release.



Kenés Rakishev at the presentation of QAZKOM.

Former spellings of the bank, which were Kazkom in Russian, Kazakh and English, will now be

replaced with the single QAZKOM. The new name based on the Latin alphabet is the most optimal for the

display of all the phonetics of the Kazakh language, including specific sounds, according to the release.

The bank has also upgraded its logo by changing the previous yellow circle, which symbolised the sun, to Q, the first letter of the new name, while the blue square remained the same.

The launch of the new brand was preceded by a large advertising campaign called Smart Nation, based on the modern and historical figures that made a significant impact on the development of Kazakh science, society and culture.

"We have decided to present the re-branding of the bank through the history of a smart nation, represented by its brightest personalities, innovators and pioneers from different eras. We also realised that QAZKOM – as we know it – could not be as such without the intellec-

tual contributions of its employees and demanding clients and without the support of the Kazakh nation, which unifies more than a hundred ethnic groups living in our country," said the bank's first deputy CEO Abai Iskandirov.

In addition to the new brand, Kazkommertsbank has introduced a new branch format, a key feature of which is the expanded self-service zone. Such format will be one of the technological and service standards of the new QAZKOM brand. The first office with the updated brand was opened in Almaty the same day as the presentation.

The bank noted it will be replacing all existing offices with new ones, which in addition to the traditional banking kiosks and ATMs will have video banking cabins and automatic cashier desks. A new format branch was opened in Astana Oct. 26.

## KMG Int'l Upgrades its European Gas Stations

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – KMG International has changed the concept of its gas stations, making them less expensive to build and maintain and offering customers more service options. The company has already built 160 such modern, modular gas stations in Europe.

"A client is your first source of income. In the long run, he is who pays the company. We understand the needs of our clients and therefore are offering new products and new services," Senior Vice President of KMG International Azamat Zhangulov said about company's new retail policy, Kapital.kz reports.

Since 2012, the European subsidiary of KazMunayGas has been focusing on oil refining and sales. A key component of this was the

\$480 million project to modernise the company's Petromidia refinery, which made it possible to produce high quality fuel corresponding to the Euro-5 standard and thus compete in the European market.

Currently, KMG International produces more than 5 million

tonnes of oil products per year at its plant in Romania. Two million tonnes are sold in the retail markets of Europe and the Black Sea region and the rest is sold wholesale or held in reserve.

Today, the company is building a new concept of gas stations

using innovative technology that helps reduce capital expenses and operating costs. The company has already converted 160 stations, making them not just places for fuelling vehicles: now, the stations provide a wide range of services, including car washing and performance checks, and contain shopping marts and food courts.

"Such facilities and resources allow us to continue developing our retail business, to invest in this sector and get a good return," Zhangulov said.

In 2015, the company concluded a record number of sales in Romania, Moldova, Georgia and Bulgaria: 2.64 million tonnes. In the first half of this year, sales amounted to 1.27 million tonnes, which is 13 percent more than in the same period in 2015.

The Petromidia refinery is the best of the 14 refineries in Central and Eastern Europe and is in eight place for operational efficiency of the global refinery list.

The KMG International retail chain operates in Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Georgia under the Rompetrol brand. According to market research, the popularity of the brand increased by more than 20 percent over the last year. The company's rebranding programme has been completed in Romania and is underway in Moldova, Georgia and Bulgaria.

KMG International is very interested in the Turkish market because the country consumes large quantities of imported diesel fuel. Annually, Turkey imports several million tonnes of the fuel from abroad.



Photo credit: kapital.kz

# EDITORIAL & OPINION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## Business Friendly Policies Continue to Attract Foreign Investment

When there is so much gloom and uncertainty in the world, it is not hard to understand why good news rarely gets the attention it deserves. It is a fact of life – and of the media – that bad news is what usually gets headlines.

And there is no shortage of bad news about the global economy. The movement in growth forecasts is invariably down, not up. Political shocks and risks continue to threaten hopes of a strong global recovery.

Weak growth has, of course, a major impact on commodity demand and prices. Oil and gas producers – both countries and companies – are having to adjust to falling revenues. This has led to investment decisions made in times when demand was greater and prices higher being revisited across the world.

As an open economy and an oil producer, Kazakhstan can't be immune to these global forces. Their impact has been greater here thanks to our close trading relationships with Europe and Russia, which each have their own economic struggles.

But thanks to the wise policy of saving oil revenues in the good times, the country has provided itself with a financial buffer to ease these difficulties. The government can also take satisfaction from seeing the storm approaching and taking decisive steps to help the country weather its impact.

As we have outlined before, a programme of reforms to ensure both that the country lives within its means and supports economic activity through targeted investment was put in place. The government also kept its eye on the long-term, accelerating the modernisation of Kazakhstan's critical infrastructure and industries so the country can come through this difficult time better prepared for the opportunities ahead.

While other countries have flirted with protectionist measures and imposed new barriers, Kazakhstan, whose dramatically increased gross domestic product and living standards since independence stand as an example of the benefits of an open approach, has not shifted course. New measures to enhance further Kazakhstan's investment climate, including fresh tax incentives and stronger legal protections, have been introduced. Our country may be the favoured destination for foreign investment in the region, but there needs to be no complacency.

It is encouraging to see that the latest figures show that these efforts are paying off with a major increase of foreign direct

investment into the country in the first half of 2016. At a time when global investment continues to be subdued, Kazakhstan's \$9 billion in FDI is 26 percent higher than for the same period last year.

These decisions by hard-headed businesses are a powerful vote of confidence in Kazakhstan and its future. They show that the country's stability and location as a bridge between East and West is increasingly attractive for outside investors. New and updated transport connections within our country, for example, which link in with the wider improvements through the likes of One Belt One Road initiative, are proving a new incentive for investors.

But with media attention understandably taken by the problems caused by the slump in oil prices, the long-term attractiveness of Kazakhstan's rich reserves can be overlooked. This is not a mistake that oil companies, who have survived many price cycles in the past, are making.

The decision this summer by the Chevron-led international consortium to go ahead with the \$37 billion expansion of the

Tengiz oil field showed that the gloom about the prospects for the industry is overblown. It is a huge long-term investment and the strongest possible sign of faith both in the recovery of the market and in Kazakhstan's direction.

Now, this investment is coupled with the news that oil production restarted at the Kashagan field in mid-October. Commercial output levels are expected to be reached within the next few weeks, with production predicted to be running as high as 4 million tonnes by the end of next year. As oil prices recover and production continues to increase, Kashagan will prove an increasingly significant contributor to the country.

In the meantime, the coming year will see new developments that will help further boost investment and growth. Kazakhstan's comprehensive privatisation programme will provide a launch pad for the

Astana International Financial Centre. EXPO 2017 will also draw international focus to Kazakhstan and bring a welcome increase in visitors.

In the longer term, an improvement in relations with Russia will make membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and access to its 180 million consumers very attractive. The immediate prospects for the global economy may be uncertain, but Kazakhstan, by continuing to send a strong message that it is open for business, is proving a remarkably resilient destination for foreign investment.

**While other countries have flirted with protectionist measures and imposed new barriers, Kazakhstan, whose dramatically increased gross domestic product and living standards since independence stand as an example of the benefits of an open approach, has not shifted course. New measures to enhance further Kazakhstan's investment climate, including fresh tax incentives and stronger legal protections, have been introduced.**

## Nurtas Adambayev: I Would Take a Knife to School

By Anel Utegenova

"Taraz," a new film from young producer Nurtas Adambayev released Oct. 13, has already made a claim across Kazakhstan. The title is the name of Adambayev's native city in South Kazakhstan, known in the 1990s for high crime rates.

The first viewers are comparing the author of the hilarious comedy "Kelinka Sabina" ("Sabina the Daughter-in-law") with Quentin Tarantino, who produces bloody criminal dramas. Baiterek.com talked with Adambayev about the movie, his attitude towards modern Kazakh cinema and how he uses the proceeds from his films.

**When do you consider your films to be successful, considering your latest release "Taraz" received two nominations in Los Angeles – "Best drama feature" and "Best cinematography?" Is Kazakh audience your main critic?**

I had always been saying that we produce films for viewers, not for critics and various international festivals. However, such awards as two nominations at the American festival surely are bound to make me happy and sooth my ego. There is nothing to hide and again, this is not the priority.

The important thing is the sympathy of the audience. I often hear stories about movies that won plenty of awards abroad, but Kazakh and foreign viewers could not watch or did not want to watch

them. We really appreciate the fact that families and couples watch our films, while movie halls are usually overcrowded during the shows.

**Your films always achieve high box office results – is the secret the special intuition you have for the demands of the motion picture industry?**

The answer is that I represent my people and I always think about films that are dear to my own heart. I do not act like I have become a director, so I will produce films understandable only for me. To the contrary, a beacon for me is mass interest, and, frankly, this brings me joy.

**To what extent have you managed to escape the typecasting of "Kelinka Sabina" in "Taraz?"**

No doubt I managed to. However, I did not have that special aim. I just wanted to film a criminal drama and play a role in it. Let's say, I just pulled rank.

**Is it hard to combine the roles of actor, director and producer?**

Of course, it is hard. You try to strain every sinew on camera, in line with that you monitor the text and performance of other actors in the film set... Often, while watching the playback I immediately catch all the mistakes which I have to correct and then I recast everything. Of course, it is much easier to orchestrate a filming while sitting in front of the screen. But I cannot do things like that!

Full engagement into a project brings me pleasure. Therefore, I am going to do so in the same vein until I can't.

**"Taraz" is not the genre where Kazakh viewers are used to seeing you. How difficult is it to switch from comedy to drama?**

It is fascinating. It was interesting for me to try myself in a new genre. Frankly, at the movie set I often caught myself thinking that this is the first time I was filming. But I coped with it and, I am afraid, after this experience I will stop with comedies and will produce only serious and harsh films. In "Taraz" we tried to base the atmosphere on the turbulent post-Soviet 1990s, when the situation around was full of crime and law enforcement agencies were everywhere, particularly in schools. I personally remember those days, when along with geometry and biology books I would take a knife to school for self-defence purposes.

**Could you describe the filming process?**

Fortune favoured us everywhere, even with weather. It started to get foggy or rainy when we needed it for the film. I really appreciated our team's effort, particularly the actors for their patience and self-possession. A lot of scenes were morally hard and related to violence. And, by the way, if there were beatings on camera, they were real; the same with suffocations. Sometimes they had to repeat these nightmares for ten

takes and no one complained as far as everyone realised that this was for common cause.

**What was the budget for "Taraz?"**

We have spent around \$400,000, which is twice as expensive as "Kelinka Sabina" was. At a certain point, I thought of giving everything up and freezing the project. But every time I saw the fiery eyes of every member of the team I went on. I am happy that I did not give up and finalised the project.

**You are from the city of Taraz. Did you take real life events from the city's history as the basis for the film?**

The film is not based on any true story, but it was made in a fashion that people would feel modern reality. These kinds of things could happen any time and with every citizen of our country. But truly, we chose the city exactly due to the fact that I was born there. While avoiding derogation from other cities of Kazakhstan, I would highlight that I am happy with this fact. The film is brutal due to the choice of location and the title of the film sounds cool – "Taraz." Petropavlovsk, probably, would not sound like that (smiles). If only to shoot a romantic comedy about it and discover the fact the most beautiful ladies live there, while "Taraz" is a social drama about the livelihood of common people who were confused in circumstances. We love shooting films about ourselves, as it was the case with the

## China-Kazakhstan Cooperation: Towards New Horizons

Continued from Page A1

Chinese-Kazakh friendly relations, rooted in the distant past, are gaining new momentum and greater vitality.

Political cooperation is the cornerstone of Chinese-Kazakh friendship. The two sides maintain close ties at the highest level, provide committed support in matters related to the mutual key interests, while treating each other as sincere, friendly and reliable partners. China will continue to firmly support Kazakhstan in the protection of sovereignty, ensuring stability and economic development.

We will also maintain close ties on issues of regional and international agenda and closely cooperate in multilateral formats, such as the UN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), in line with advocating common interests of both states and developing countries.

Trade and economic partnership is a driving force of the Chinese-Kazakh relations. Kazakhstan is the second largest trade partner and the main receiver of Chinese investments in Eurasia, while for Kazakhstan, China is the second largest trade partner and an important export market. China-Kazakh trade and economic cooperation has huge and untapped potential. In this regard, both countries should create a more favourable and free environment for trade and investments, strengthen cooperation in customs matters, in the field of inspections and quarantine, certification and accreditation, as well as actively develop trans-boundary electronic trade, optimize trade structures and facilitate stabilization and growth of trade turnover.

Cooperation on production capacity is one of the most exciting and important aspects of growth in trade and economic cooperation between our countries. As a result of common efforts, the framework intergovernmental agreement on strengthening cooperation in the field of industrialization and investments was signed, interagency working mechanism was formed and the Cooperation Fund on Production Capacities was established. In addition, the two sides are establishing

an integrated partnership model that includes investments, production, sales and service.

The Chinese side is ready to work with Kazakhstan on the principles of openness, agreement, cooperation and mutual benefit in order to implement the Cooperation Plan on aligning the construction of the Economic Belt of the Silk Road with the Nuryly Zhol New Economic Policy, as well as jointly promote the construction of the economic corridor of the New Trans-Eurasian Continental Bridge and the economic corridor China – Central Asia – Western Europe, in order to bring practical benefits to the people of our respective countries.

Cultural and humanitarian exchanges tie together the Chinese-Kazakh friendship. In recent years it has grown substantially – expanding cooperation in the fields of tourism, education, science and technology, culture, healthcare, sports, as well as youth development. Taskyn, the Chinese singer of Kazakh origin, has a lot of fans in Kazakhstan, who are passionately rooting for him on the Internet during singing contests. Kazakh folk song "Dudarai" has been performed during the Voice of China competition. On an annual basis, citizens from our nations make approximately 500,000 trips between our countries.

China will continue to allocate governmental scholarships and the SCO scholarships to Kazakh students. Brotherly relations between the two countries have been established between provinces, oblasts and cities, which has further enhanced interregional cooperation. China is preparing to participate in the Expo 2017 – Future Energy International Specialised Exhibition in Astana which will provide new opportunities for bilateral exchanges and cooperation in the fields of science, technology, exhibitions and tourism.

China and Kazakhstan are friendly neighbours and close partners. We are ready to make joint effort with our Kazakh friends to develop the Chinese-Kazakh relations to a new level.

**The author is Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.**

THE ASTANA TIMES

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# OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## Abe-Nazarbayev Summits Help Expand Cooperation

By Erlan Baudarbek-Kozhatayev

On Nov. 6 – 9, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is paying an official visit to Japan. The event is very significant, since it is taking place on the eve of two important dates – the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries.

As during previous visits to Japan, the programme of the visit will start, as is traditional, with a meeting with Japan's Emperor Akhito, with whom Nazarbayev has developed a warm friendship over the years.

Having announced the upcoming visit of the President of Kazakhstan, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga noted that "Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Japan is important for the further strengthening of cooperative ties between the two countries." At the same time, he stressed that "Kazakhstan is a regional leader with a vast territory and economic power. Kazakhstan plays an important role in the international community and starting from the next year it will be the first Central Asian state to be a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council."

This time in Tokyo, Nazarbayev and Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe will hold talks for the seventh time, which is unprecedented in the history of bilateral relations, and which clearly demonstrates the high level of Kazakh-Japanese cooperation. This year alone, the two leaders have met twice on the sidelines of major international forums in Washington and Hangzhou, China.

In such meetings the leaders of Kazakhstan and Japan have an opportunity to discuss topical issues of bilateral cooperation, to adjust previous high-level arrangements as well as to coordinate positions on the most serious challenges of modernity.

In general, looking back at the 25-year history of relations with Japan, it should be noted that our head of state has personally paid



great attention to the development of Kazakh-Japanese cooperation from the very first days of independence, and in particular to its economic component. I clearly remember the arrival in Kazakhstan of the first trade and economic mission headed by Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mitsubishi Corporation Sinroku Morohashi in June 1993, which included the heads of 40 major Japanese multinational companies. At that time the Japanese businessmen were impressed by the political charisma and purposefulness of our President, who made them feel confident in the socio-economic reforms of the young independent state. Later, I was also lucky to interpret for the head of state at the meeting of the captains of Japanese business in the course of his official visits to Japan in 1994 and 1999. The representatives of political and business circles of Japan were always struck by the vision and power of persuasion of the President. Due to his personal efforts, within the first years of independence, through Official Development Assistance (ODA), Japanese companies implemented in Kazakhstan projects totaling \$1.145 billion. The government of Japan granted financial aid in the amount of approximately \$65.4 million, as well as technical support amounting to \$67.8 million.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance for the economy of Kazakhstan of such projects as the construction of Astana interna-

tional airport and a network of railways and roads; the modernisation of energy facilities; the building of equipment for medical, educational, cultural and sport institutions; as well as the advanced training of multi-skilled Kazakh personnel at the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Japan Petroleum Cooperation Centre and others.

Today, the cooperation between the two countries is focused on the conjugation of two economies, two new economic policies – Nuryly Zhol and Abenomics – through the effective use of the economic benefits of Kazakhstan and Japan. These policies pay great attention to the widespread introduction of Japanese technology and know-how.

Kazakhstan and Japan have signed important documents such as a convention on the avoidance of double taxation, an agreement for cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, an agreement on mutual protection and encouragement of investments and more. These measures, together with the policy pursued by our government on improving the investment climate in the country and the entry of Kazakhstan into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), have helped frame Kazakhstan as a reliable business partner and an attractive target for investment in the eyes of Japanese investors.

Against this background, annual bilateral trade figures are within \$1.5 to \$2 billion. Last year, despite the slowdown of global economy, trade turnover between our countries amounted to \$1.5 billion (exports of \$858.6 million and imports of \$584.7 million). From January to July 2016, the amount reached \$741 million (exports of \$351.1 million, imports of \$390.5 million).

Currently, there are 74 branches and representative offices of companies with Japanese involvement in Kazakhstan in areas such as oil, gas, petrochemistry, metallurgy, finance, mining, cars wholesale, telecommunications, equipment wholesale, timber stockpiling, lo-

gistics, medicine, agriculture and more.

A landmark agreement was signed between the government of Kazakhstan and the Toyota Motors Company in February 2013 on the start of production of Toyota Fortuner SUVs at Saryarka Avtoprom in Kostanai. A Tokyo Rope factory will launch very soon in Almaty. Tokyo Rope is the leader in manufacturing high-tech steel wire cables, cables for bridges and engineering products.

The flow of Japanese investments into the Kazakh economy over the last 10 years comprised around \$5 billion. However, the figures do not reflect the existing potential for cooperation. Recently, the interest of Japanese companies in operating in Kazakh free economic zones has increased in line with their interest in using the transit potential of Kazakhstan for transporting cargo, including through the use of our terminals in foreign markets.

Promising cooperation vectors include collaboration between the Astana International Finan-

cial Centre and the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the Japanese Financial Service Agency, the Japanese Securities Dealers Association and other financial establishments; the development and introduction of Japanese smart technologies in the environmental domain; security; transport; communication; and city planning.

The business communities of both parties are expected to participate in the sixth meeting of the Joint Commission of Government and Private Sectors of Japan and Kazakhstan on Economic Cooperation in November in Tokyo. There, it is planned that bilateral commercial documents to the tune of \$1 billion in the fields of transport, oil, chemistry, finances, mineral resources, nuclear energy, tourism, information technology and other high technologies will be signed.

In 2016, Japanese economic organisations and companies demonstrated their readiness to take the most active participation in the work of EXPO 2017, to be held next year in Astana. Japan's pavilion, with the motto "Mixed technologies – expertise and challenges" is the largest one and consists of three zones. The first zone will demonstrate Japanese technologies on solving energy issues. In the second zone, visitors will witness technological capacities of future energy. In the third zone, the showcase, visitors will see cutting-edge technologies.

Another important direction of bilateral relations is close partner-

ship in the field of nuclear nonproliferation. Japan has supported the initiatives of the Kazakh President in this regard from the very first days of independence. It is worth mentioning that Japan acted as a co-author of the UNGA Resolution on the Semipalatinsk region, and initiated the Tokyo International Conference on problems of Semipalatinsk in 1999.

In 2009, Japan also appeared as the only developed country to become the co-author of the UNGA Resolution that declared Aug. 29 the International Day against Nuclear Tests. Japanese government and social delegations also visited Astana and Semei to participate in memorial events dedicated to this date. In 2013, honorary guests at the presentation of Nazarbayev's initiative, The ATOM Project, in Tokyo and throughout Japan were the wife of the Japanese prime minister, Akie Abe, and the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It is no surprise that in February 2015 during the meeting of Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) Kazakhstan and Japan were elected as co-chairmen of Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT for 2015–2017, which took place in September 2015 in New York within the UNGA.

In October 2015 and April 2016, Nazarbayev and Abe published two important political statements in support of the Treaty. Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO Lassina Zerbo said, "I appreciate the powerful leadership of leaders of both countries with regards to CNTBT and abolition of nuclear tests."

Considering the similar history of the Kazakh and Japanese people and their common aims to build a nuclear weapons free world, Nazarbayev is to visit Hiroshima during his current trip to pay tribute to the memory of the victims of the nuclear bombings in 1945.

The visit will be rich with events of a political and economic nature and will be aimed at attracting Japanese investments and advanced technologies Kazakhstan needs to implement the modernisation plans of the national economy and to join the OECD and the top 30 leading economies of the world. The visit will also facilitate further strengthening of friendship between the leaders of both countries, an important precondition to bring strategic cooperation to the whole new level.

The author is Kazakhstan's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Japan.

## President Nazarbayev's Visit to Seoul to Strengthen Kazakhstan-Korea Ties, Ambassador Says

By Zhaina Yerbolat

Ahead of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's state visit to Seoul on Nov. 9-11, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea Dulat Bakishev answered The Astana Times' questions on the development of cooperation between the two Asian nations.

**The visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of Korea will take place shortly. What are the expectations in this regard?**

Kazakhstan and South Korea are strategic partners. It has been almost 25 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and South Korea. During this period, the countries achieved a high level of economic growth and there is no doubt about perspectives of their further favourable development.

Over the past period, relations between our countries made considerable progress. In early 1990s, we barely knew each other, in the middle 1990s we had actively been filling our contractual and legal basis with qualitative and perspective bilateral documents; in the first decade of this century we have achieved the level of strategic partnership and now our countries are enhancing it.

Astana and Seoul are cooperating successfully in the international arena, and mutually supporting international initiatives and actively participating in solving global issues.

Speaking about the development of our trade-economic bonds, we can highlight several stages.

At the very beginning, it pre-



Dulat Bakishev

dominantly was an exchange of light industry commodities. Then Kazakhstan started to import Korean electronic goods and cars. Afterwards, Korea started targeted investments into service, finances, construction, factories, infrastructure and development of natural resources.

Currently, mutually beneficial and fruitful economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and South Korea has become a common phenomenon. Every Kazakh citizen uses goods of Korean origin on an everyday basis, starting from cosmetics, household chemistry, mobile phones and cars.

Kazakhstan is a strategic partner of South Korea in such an important region as Central Asia. There are various reasons for that. It includes geopolitical position of Kazakhstan, its firm political and economic system, rich mineral resources, Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) perspectives and others. Another considerable factor, defining increased interest of the Republic of Korea is the significant and influential repre-

sentation of Korean diaspora in Kazakhstan.

Relations between Kazakhstan and South Korea are developing successfully in all vectors. High-level meetings confirm the friendship and stability of our relations. Agreements between leaders of our countries are the evidences of the high dynamics of cooperation and its impressive results. We anchor our great hopes on the visit of President Nazarbayev to Korea both in term of economy and politics.

We are willing to continue to strengthen investment cooperation with the Republic of Korea.

The world community is standing in the verge of the fourth industrial revolution, and Korea as a country of advanced technologies, is among the most perspective cooperation partners. That is why we expect achievements from the upcoming bilateral meeting of the presidents in mutually beneficial high-tech projects while applying

**BAKISHEV: "Today, more than 400 joint Kazakh-Korean enterprises are operating on the territory of Kazakhstan, and I think this figure will be constantly growing, especially considering new opportunities for business opening up in the light of the Eurasian Economic Union."**

know-how. As a result, we would lead our economic relations to the whole new level.

**What are the perspectives for business cooperation between the**

**two countries? What kind of practical support is provided by the governments of Kazakhstan and South Korea to develop business relations?**

Kazakhstan and Korea have all necessary prerequisites for development of joint projects. There is contractual and legal basis; both countries provide splendid opportunities for investments in terms of taxation and other obligatory licensing procedures.

It is worth mentioning that Kazakhstan creates various favourable conditions for businesses and foreign investors. They include easing of tax legislation, optimisation of licensing procedures; also specialised programmes on certain branches were adopted as well.

South Korea also does everything needed for the convenience of entrepreneurship, including foreign business. Governmental programmes aimed at promotion of "Global Advanced Korea" are comprehensively facilitating it.

Currently, Kazakhstan and Korea are already implementing a number of large projects. Big Korean business, which has entered the Kazakh market, became an umbrella for Korean small and

medium enterprises to enter the Kazakh market.

Today, more than 400 joint Kazakh-Korean enterprises are operating on the territory of Kazakhstan, and I think this figure will be constantly growing, especially considering new opportunities for business opening up in the light of the Eurasian Economic Union.

The economic integration always played a positive role in the development of entrepreneurship, while Korea is pretty active and experienced in integration associations, and this is the reason why Koreans clearly recognise and value benefits in entering such a huge EAEU market with a population of practically 180 million people.

As you are aware, new the EAEU Customs Code is to be signed in December. With adoption of this document, in my opinion, bilateral economic relations must accelerate significantly since the Customs Union will provide considerable easing to do foreign trade.

I am confident that the perspective private sector of both countries, along with joint projects on the territories of Kazakhstan and Korea, will actively expand to the third market. At the modern stage, all necessary opportunities are in place.

**It is clear that trade and economic relations are important. However, how do you assess cooperation in other fields?**

Certainly, the economic aspect is important for us. However we also pay enormous attention to cooperation in other fields, including culture, education or healthcare.

Our cultural and humanitarian relations have positive dynamics. Kazakhstan and Korea, thanks

to such factors as a long history of exchange, cultural similarity, have a firm basis to enhance partnership and exchange. The fact that the government of Kazakhstan takes care and pays attention to the Korean diaspora contributes significantly to the strengthening of understanding and friendly relations between our countries. The large Korean diaspora in Kazakhstan with active support of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan serves as a solid bridge between our countries. Korean theatre and the Association of Koreans are operating in Kazakhstan.

Next year, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea. In this regard, a number of relevant events are planned to be undertaken.

**What would you wish for the peoples of both countries?**

I would like to highlight that particularly through cultural ties, communication of people and mutual learning of traditions and customs ensure truly close cooperation of states. Higher officials, government structures, diplomats, state agencies put maximum efforts to bring our countries closer, however, without the support of populations and common citizens, these efforts aimed at ensuring a worthy life and the prosperity of our people, can diminish.

In the globalising world, it is crucial to move forward hand in hand with friends, reliable partners, one of which for Kazakhstan is South Korea.

I would like to wish the people of our countries prosperity and infinite energy in the matter of strengthening friendship.

# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Open Trade Houses in Moscow

Staff Report

ASTANA – Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan opened trade houses, and Voronezh Oblast opened a trade and exhibition hall, Oct. 28 in Moscow, the Eurasian Business Council (EABC) announced. The new trade missions are expected to in-

crease turnover among Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states by at least 30 percent.

As a result, the EABC expo project aimed at providing a permanent global trade and exhibition area was officially launched in the Russian capital. In the future, the centre will present producers from all 85 regions of Russia and shopping malls from countries

included in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and Arab states.

The project primarily intends to create online and offline platforms for trade in Eurasian space, renew and establish the commodity distribution system and cooperative

ties with the aim of import substitution, support agricultural producers and facilitate trade flows independent of political and economic situations in the world.

More than 400 exhibits from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Voronezh Oblast are located in pavilions colourfully decorated with national and regional ornaments. The Armeni-

an trading house will offer different types of cheeses, cured meats and sausages, canned goods, traditional Armenian jam, fruits and vegetables and alcoholic beverages.

Kazakhstan will present rice, pasta, fresh and preserved meat, horse meat, vegetables and spirits. Belarusian producers will deliver dairy products, cheese, po-

tatoes, bread, pasta, mineral water and meat products.

Kyrgyzstan plans to increase exports of seasonal vegetables and fruits, canned food, dried fruits, nuts, oil and unique ecologically-pure juices. Voronezh manufacturers will supply markets in Moscow and other regions with mineral water, biscuits and various grain products and vegetables.

EABC was established to facilitate the process of economic integration among EAEU, SCO, BRICS and ASEAN member countries. The organisation promotes EAEU domestic producers and manufacturers, creates a system of cooperation among EAEU entrepreneurs.

## Connecting Eurasian Economic Union and Silk Road Economic Belt: Regional Challenges and Prospects

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – Leading Chinese experts shared their nation's vision and attitude towards developing and implementing the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) project at an Oct. 31 international scientific conference. Bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and China were discussed during the event organised by the Library of the First President with the support of the China Studies Centre and Institute of Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, which falls under the auspices of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

"Increasingly, relations between Kazakhstan and China are becoming more important. Nonetheless, there are both advancing projects and unresolved issues. The project is primarily focused on trade. Similar to Dubai and Singapore, Kazakhstan is playing the role of



Sun Li, deputy director of the Chinese Institute of Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies.

a transit hub, given its geographic location," said Yerzhat Iskalyiev, trustee board member of the Silkway International Institute of Logistics and Business.

He also drew attention to the need to ensure establishing and maintaining an adequate quality of service, including timing control and organising customs posts and logistics competence.

The conference included discussions about regional cooperation in Eurasia and developing economic integration within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Speakers also focused on the significance of the SREB and integrating Kazakhstan's Nuryly Zhol economic policy and China's initiative, also known as One Belt, One Road.

During his official visit to Kazakhstan in 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the initiative of jointly establishing the SREB and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road to link the world's second largest economy with Europe through Central Asia. The initiative aims at rapid development of Central Asian countries by building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient Silk Road routes.

Conference speaker Sun Li, deputy director of the Chinese Institute of Russian, East Euro-

pean and Central Asian Studies, addressed the preferred directions to link the SREB and EAEU in the Central Asian region. He focused particularly on broad prospects in the energy field.

"The SREB initiative provides a good basis for energy cooperation between China and Central Asia. This sector is identified as one of the most promising areas for cooperation," said Sun.

The principles of political cooperation in the process of connecting the EAEU and SREB were highlighted by CASS Department of Russian Policy and Society head Pang Dapeng.

"It is necessary to adhere to the principles of mutual respect and equality. China is ready to strengthen these principles of political cooperation with all countries of the region. Thus, we will be able to make a positive contribution to the sustainable economic growth in the region," he said.

More than a year has passed since Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a joint statement May 8, 2015 which implied linking the EAEU and SREB. The SREB initiative suggests stimulating investment activities in transport and logistics in Eurasia, which would serve as a basis for facilitating far-reaching cooperation and development in the region. The other EAEU states agreed to back the agreement and expressed their readiness to cooperate with China. According to the conference speakers, however, the deal has been quite slow to show results.

"Russia's uncompleted section of the Western Europe-Western China highway suspends goods transportations from Kazakhstan. The country has just started the construction," said Iskalyiev.

"Kazakhstan has almost completed the Western Europe-Western China project on its territory. This issue was considered during

Vladimir Putin's visit to Kazakhstan. Russia is just starting this project under public-private partnership. This causes serious problems for Kazakhstan in cargo transportation. I think Russia will resolve this problem because China has already built great roads," he added.

Iskalyiev reiterated the Western Europe-Western China International Transit Corridor is one of the largest projects between Kazakhstan and Russia. The volume of freight traffic is expected to increase 2.5 times, reaching 33 million tonnes per year.

As noted by the conference speakers, Chinese State Council Premier Li Keqiang will be visiting Kazakhstan this month. Li attaches great importance to relations with Kazakhstan. He and Kazakh Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev as well as other officials will discuss further work to expand cooperation in various fields between the countries.

## UN Secretary-General's Envoy Values Astana Regional Hub's Work

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana Alikhan Baimenov recently met with Jorge Chediek, Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation to discuss cooperating in the field of public ser-

vice, according to the press service of the Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana.

During the meeting, Baimenov talked about the importance of interregional trilateral cooperation in the South-South in civil service. He also announced the expansion of geography of the organisation to 36 member countries, including states of Organi-

sation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Baimenov also talked about new research, publications and initiatives of the hub.

"In the matters of state administration there is no single recipe for all countries. However, after

getting to know the achievements and challenges, exchanging experience on the hub platform, countries find successful solutions that suit their context. This is also the target of the research and seminars of the hub, which has become a recognised international centre for the development of partnerships to achieve sustainable development goals," said Baimenov.

Chediek noted the exceptional performance of the hub in the promotion of regional and inter-regional cooperation. According to him, the activity of the hub is considered by the United Nations as a contribution of Kazakhstan in the development of international partnerships to achieve sustainable development goals.

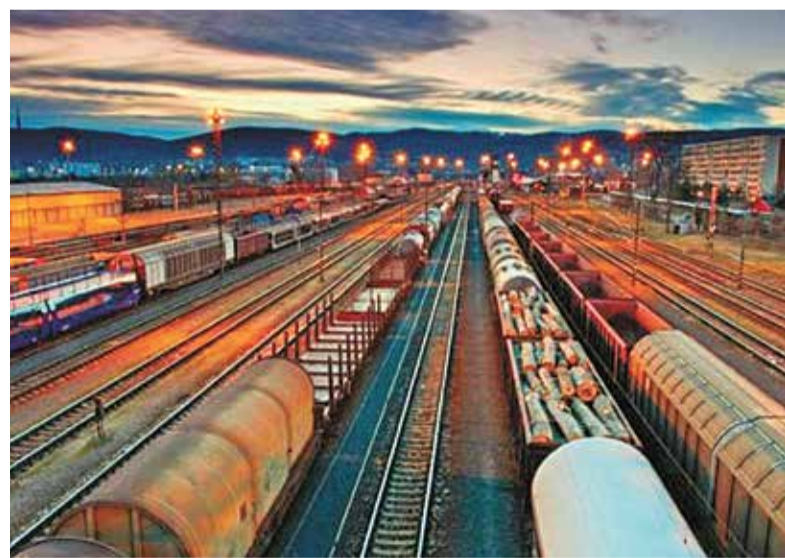
The sides also discussed im-

plementing joint initiatives to improve civil service.

Earlier, the United Nations said the creation of a hub in Astana and its success were possible due to Kazakhstan's readiness to share its experience in the implementation of reforms, including the strengthening of meritocracy in the civil service.

In 2014, the hub was marked by a special UN award for its contribution to the development of cooperation in the world in the South-South format.

## Up to 800,000 Containers to Be Shipped from China to Europe through Kazakhstan by 2020



By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – Kazakhstan is working to increase the volume of container shipments along the Western Europe – Western China route and through the country's territory. Up to 800,000 containers are to pass through Kazakhstan in 2020, Kazakhstan's Minister of Investment and Development Zhenis Kassymbek announced at a Nov. 1 government meeting.

Kazakhstan's Ministry of National Economy has signed a co-

operation plan with the Nuryly Zhol new economic policy and China's Silk Road Economic Belt programme to increase shipments.

"All our projects, plans in logistics and the transport field fully correlate and correspond with the Silk Road Economic Belt programme and create favourable conditions on developing transcontinental international corridors. We try to ensure synergy in implementing basic development programmes. This will give an extra impulse for the Silk Road revival," Kassymbek said, adding

that globally main transit cargo flows are switching to containerisation.

"Kazakhstan conducts significant work in this case. Over nine months of this year, 66,000 containers were transported along the China – Europe route. It is twice as many as four for the same period of last year. We plan for this index to reach 800,000 containers in a 20-pound equivalent in 2020. Second lanes on the 11-kilometre long Almaty-Shu site are currently under construction," the minister noted.

Kassymbek mentioned that the ferry terminal currently building in the Kuryk settlement will be contributing to developing container shipments.

"Transit is an important segment of railway shipment. The share of bulk cargoes amounts to 77 percent in overall transit volume, 66 percent out of it accounted for north south service, meaning Russia – central Asia and 13 percent for China – Central Asia service. This way, regional transit holds a significant part in the overall volume of transit traffic," he said, adding that Kazakhstan will focus on transit containerisation. "We see prospects in increasing transit traffic from East to West primarily," he concluded.

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# Nation&Capital

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## Ice Skating Season Opens in Astana and Almaty

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's sharply-defined continental climate provides a marvellous opportunity to enjoy every season's diversity. Winter activities are specifically exciting because of snowy weather, frosty air and fabulous sunshine. Great downhill rides, powder snow adventures and long-distance skating are the ideal setting for a family leisure scenario.

Almaty has a worldwide reputation as the top destination for skiing, but its mild climate also allows indulging in figure skating at Medeu Skating Rink. Although the capital's conditions seem to be unusually harsh and unpredictable, fresh air and mostly sunny days afford fine discoveries and a cheerful mood throughout the season.

**Almaty**

A new winter season opened Oct. 22 at Medeu, the high-mountain rink. The event, which celebrated the 100 days before the start of Universiade 2017, included official and musical parts with DJs and live performances.

Medeu is open every day except Monday with two sessions: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and 6 p.m.-11 p.m.

The ticket price is 1,800 tenge (US\$5) for adults, 800 tenge (US\$2) for young people aged 13-



Sportsmen carry the flags of Kazakhstan and Universiade 2017 at the opening ceremony at the Medeu ice rink on Oct. 22.

23 and 400 tenge (US\$1) for children aged 7-12. Entrance is free for children up to 7, people with physical challenges and retired persons. Skates can be rented for 1,000 tenge (US\$3) for two hours.

The skating rink will be one of the Universiade locations hosting the world student winter sports and is scheduled to be closed for public

skating during the event. Open access for those who want to skate at night is under consideration.

"We are looking for an opportunity to give access to people. The rink will be open for the audience during the games. We are now discussing the possibility of night sessions for visitors and then prepare the ice for the athletes. We invited

the professional team from Astana that conducts such activities at the Alau rink," said Medeu General Director Yerzhan Yerkinbayev.

A ski instructors' school and children's entertainment area were opened this year. There are also 15 cafes and food courts, VIP rooms and a dressing room.

Continued on Page B8

## Kazakh TV: New Format, New Goals, New Beginnings

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Kazakh TV, Kazakhstan's major English-language channel, underwent a complete makeover on the eve of its Oct. 25 birthday and is now ready to broadcast in the new format. Channel Director Andrey Tarakov spoke to The Astana Times about some of the changes the network has introduced.

"From now on, the news on our channel will be made in the context of global trends and developments, i.e. the information about international forums that are held in our country or abroad with the participation of our representatives, of course. These will also include world premieres of our culture, art and staging world premieres in Kazakhstan. Fortunately, we have a lot of platforms such as the Astana Opera, for instance, hosting world-scale productions. All this will be in our news," he said.

The channel's goal is to be known abroad.

"We strive to ensure that people overseas know about our channel and learn more about Kazakhstan through our channel. A lot of work has been done in this direction already. We broadcast in Europe via satellite platforms like HotBird 13B, in Asia via AsiaSat 5, in North America via Galaxy 19 – a total of more than 118 countries. We have signed contracts with the operators of the largest cable networks, pay TV and Internet units. More than 300 million people can watch the channel in different hotel chains and in cable packages. A lot of work has been accomplished, but still a lot needs to be done," said Tarakov.

Prior to the rebranding of Kazakh TV, the channel was successfully merged with another channel which is part of the Khabar Agency broadcast family, he noted.

"As part of the Khabar Agency transformation it was decided to merge two channels: Kazakh TV and Bilim zhane Madeniet.

Continued on Page B2

## Astana Named One of World's Smart21 Communities

Staff Report

ASTANA – The Kazakh capital has entered the world's top 21 intelligent communities according to the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF), the akimat (city administration) press service reported.

The Smart21 Communities of 2017 is comprised of seven cities and counties in Canada, five cities and counties in Taiwan, four cities in Australia and one city each in New Zealand, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The select group of communities, which emerged from a list of nearly 400, will now compete for a place in the Intelligent Community Top 7, to be announced in



Taipei, Taiwan in February. One of the seven will then be named Intelligent Community of the Year at the Intelligent Community summit and awards dinner June 8 in New York, according to the ICF report. This year's list of smart cities

was chosen by a group of analysts led by Norman Jacknis, the former head of Cisco, the world's largest IT company.

ICF co-founder John Jung noted the list included communities using digital tools to build the local

economy and society in an age of digital inequality.

"We find that it is the ones who collaborate with national or state governments, fly under the radar and are 'no name' communities to most of the world that are most innovative and aggressive," he said.

"They are not afraid of new ideas and use strategies proven by intelligent communities around the world. They are places that the rest of the world can learn from and offer hope to people who are fighting hard to launch a new future and create early stage investment opportunities to the outside world," he added.

ICF previously named the capital among the world's top 21 smart cities at the ICF Smart21 symposium in Ohio, USA in 2014.

## Rich, Natural Kazakh Honey Valued among Consumers

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Honey extraction in Kazakhstan takes place mainly in Altai region, and South Altai has a good quality harvest. Its compound has a wide array of microelements and vitamins and is more saturated and rich than that taken from Russia and the Baltic States flats.

"Honey production develops mostly in East Kazakhstan. Not many are involved in honey production on an industrial scale, but rather more owners do it as a private business. They extract honey from small bee yards, about 100-200 beehives, or some have smaller amounts like 50 beehives," said

self-employed entrepreneur Aleksander Medvedev in an interview with The Astana Times.

A resident of Karaganda, Medvedev has been involved with beekeepers and bee yards throughout his life and sells honey. He noted Katon Karagai, Zyryanovsk, Rider, all located in East Kazakhstan, and a few other regions in the country have good honey, flowering and rich harvests.

Medvedev feels mixed hybrid honey is the healthiest, as bee gardens are placed in areas with sunflower, linden or buckwheat fields and bees collect nectars from the flowers. Mixed herb honey is highly valued and considered the best because of its natural qualities.

Continued on Page B4

## Eight Year Old Becomes World Chess Champion in Under-8 Category

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Eight-year-old Aisha Zakirova has become the world chess champion in the under-8 category based on the results of the World Cadets Chess Championship that ended recently in Batumi, Georgia, reported the press service of the Academic Shakhmardan Yessenov Science and Education Foundation.

"We are happy. I was coaching Aisha for about a year. My father is her official coach now. We were starting from basics, learning to deliver checkmate [game position in chess]," said Kausar Bauyrzhan, according to Forbes Kazakhstan.

Aisha, who lives in Almaty, has been seriously involved in chess since she was six. She studies at the Almaty International Professional Chess School and was coached for the past few years by Shakei and Kausar Bauyrzhan.

"She was quite afraid of tournaments at that time, even cried sometimes. But we worked this



Photo: Kazakhstan Chess Federation

through and today she goes to a battle with confidence and is a confident chess player now... We wanted and we knew she would become the world champion. This girl is very talented and we have many more goals ahead of us," added Bauyrzhan.

More than 700 young chess players from 66 countries participated in the championship. Among other Kazakh participants, Meruert Kamalidenova ranked fifth in the girl's under-12 category and Ansat Aldiyar placed in the boy's under-8 category.

"Becoming the world champion is not just recognition of your own merits, your coaches and parents, of course, but is also a great honour and responsibility before our own nation," said Kazakh Chess Federation President Galimzhan Yessenov, wrote Forbes.kz.

Aisha's father, amateur chess player Tleubek Zakirov, said he also began learning to play at age six. His family lived in Ayagoz, a small town in Eastern Kazakhstan, and did not have access to a chess group.

"Aisha got luckier and working hard had a result after all," he said.

She had her first serious tournament at the Asia Championship in South Korea, although at that time she did not have enough experience with competitions.

"Now a win in Batumi at the world championship straightaway. We do not make our daughter play chess and always tell that the choice is hers. If she wants to do something else, it is okay," said her father.

### THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

**GORKY DRAMA THEATRE**

November 12 at 6 p.m. Romeo and Juliette

**BARYS ARENA**

November 13 at 5 p.m. Barys vs. Avtomobilist

November 23 at 7:30 p.m. Barys vs. Red Star

**ASTANA OPERA**

November 15 at 7 p.m. Swan Lake

November 18 at 7 p.m. Madame Butterfly

November 20 at 12 p.m. Animals' Carnival

**CONGRESS HALL**

November 18 at 7 p.m. Masterpieces of Classical Music

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## Public Administration Academy Focuses on Practical Learning

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Forming a professional and autonomous state apparatus was identified as the first reform of the 100 Concrete Steps Programme initiated by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2015. Fulfilling the reform will mean a shift to the career model of public service. The goal is to hire the most intelligent, talented and skilled workers for the state apparatus.

The Astana Times interviewed Professor Fatima Zhakypova, rector of the Public Administration Academy under the President of Kazakhstan, to learn about the modernisation of the academy's training programmes, new graduate programmes and international cooperation.

As Kazakhstan continues to develop, both the public and private sectors are in need of skilled, visionary managers who can lead teams facing the challenges of a fast-changing world. "We held a comprehensive revision of training programmes which resulted in a new list of five master's and four doctoral programmes, including in state policy, public administration, state management and others. The programmes are based on the experience of Nazarbayev University and the world's leading public administration schools," Zhakypova said.

The core of the new programmes is professional training of civil



Professor Fatima Zhakypova, rector of the Public Administration Academy under the President of Kazakhstan.

workers based on practice-oriented study. The list of subjects and their content comply with international practice and reflect the current and future needs of both the public administration system and civil service.

"We also started work on the development of our own case base in collaboration with both Kazakh and foreign experts-practitioners. Training in the new programmes started this September," she added.

According to Zhakypova, they

are doing colossal work to modernise the system of retraining and advanced training of civil servants. The legislative consolidation of regular training is one of the important factors of the professional development of civil servants.

"Now, training is necessary at least once in a three-year period. This regulation will enhance the role of vocational training in the transition to a career model of public service. New approaches to retraining and advanced training

of civil servants were developed to improve their training system with an emphasis on practice oriented learning," she said.

The existing retraining and professional development programmes were analysed and new themes of the programmes were set in accordance with the implementation of the first institutional reform, forming a professional state apparatus. This reform centres on management issues including leadership and integration, strategic human resource management, applied aspects of management, development of business communications and compliance with civil service ethics, among others.

Short- and medium-term programmes will be introduced. Short term training supports professional and personal growth in developing competencies for staff members' current positions; medium-term training will help improve existing competencies for promotion.

"Case solution assignments and project work combined with analytical and practical orientation teaching methods are a priority in order to reduce the gap between the required and actual competencies of civil workers at a certain position. We do our best to help ensure that the training is fully perceived as an element of human resource personnel of a public body and the civil service as a whole. A new model of vocational training is designed to comply with the new model of public service and

correspond with the lifelong learning principle," she said.

The institute is now moving away from scientific work in its classical presentation and is focusing on applied research. Thematic clusters in priority areas of public administration and civil service have been identified.

"Six research clusters have been developed to be integrated into the existing subjects of the studies," Zhakypova said. "These clusters are devoted to the study of public administration, public service, community and political processes, anti-corruption policies and training for the civil service. The existing research capacity will be reinforced not only by the professors, but mainly through the involvement of graduate and doc-

have great goals for our partnership with Singapore in terms of building the capacity of Kazakh civil workers and creating one of the most effective models of training for public administration," she said.

A group of experts from Singapore held a two-week seminar for 200 civil workers on leadership, human resource management and economic development in October.

The academy also closely cooperates with the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. Over the past 10 years, its students have done internships at the Institute of Diplomacy and have won Hanns Seidel Foundation Scholarships.

"I would like to appeal to young people who are in search of work and those who are involved in public service. A Kazakh proverb

**ZHAKYPOVA: "Six research clusters have been developed to be integrated into the existing subjects of the studies. These clusters are devoted to the study of public administration, public service, community and political processes, anti-corruption policies and training for the civil service."**

toral students. In addition to applied skills, the civil workers will be able to acquire research and analysis skills."

The academy has a wide geography of international partners. This September, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Civil Service College of Singapore.

"The Singaporean public service model is recognised as one of the best in the world due to its wide emphasis on human resources. We

says that there is no life without knowledge and there is no knowledge without learning. Today, civil workers have lots of opportunities to gain knowledge. The content of education is improved, as is our information and resource base. We strive to bring out talented people and create conditions through the transfer of knowledge and the development of competencies to realise their potential, both for their professional advancement and for the benefit of society," she said

## National Research Centre's Young Doctors Advancing Surgery in Kazakhstan

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Timur Lesbekov, head of Cardiac Surgery Department No.1 of the National Research Cardiac Surgery Centre (NRCSC) and one of Kazakhstan's many young medical leaders, discussed his professional growth and drive for success in a recent interview with Kazakhstanskaya Pravda.

The average age of the staff at the NRCSC is 35. However, in a rapidly developing field like cardio surgery, "young" does not mean "green." The NRCSC physicians have practiced their specialties at leading world clinics, work hand-in-hand with well-known colleagues and are actively learning and applying modern technologies. Five years ago, Kazakhstan had never performed a heart transplant; now about 40 such surgeries have been conducted and the implantation of artificial hearts has become routine.

"The fact that we are working in this atmosphere is a great success," Lesbekov said. And working in Kazakhstan has allowed him to advance professionally as fast as he can master new skills, with no barriers. In the U.S., he points



out, he wouldn't be allowed to do the surgeries he's doing now until he was at least 48, because the process of advancement is much slower.

"My professional growth comes at a time when a large volume of complex surgeries are carried out because cardio surgery is still in its initial stages. Our advantage is also the fact that the government financially supports our service: the clinic holds from 1,500 to 1,700 surgical procedures per year," Lesbekov said.

Lesbekov followed his parents into medicine: his father is also a

cardiologist. Lesbekov graduated from St. Petersburg State Medical University and worked at the Clinic for Cardiovascular Surgery of the St. Petersburg Medical Academy of Postgraduate Studies.

After graduate school, Lesbekov returned to Kazakhstan to be closer to his parents. He got in contact with Kazakhstan's famous surgeon, Yuri Pya, who was working at that time at the National Scientific Medical Centre. Later, he met with NRCSC Director Abai Baigenzhin. The National Research Medical Centre was just beginning to draw specialists in

its mission to vault Kazakh medicine forward, and the first cardiac surgeries were beginning to be done there. Lesbekov had found his professional home. Now, five years have passed since the opening of NRCSC and Lesbekov himself performs 300 surgeries per year – as many as his first clinic in St. Petersburg carries out per year.

"There are two or three surgeries per day in the department, and sometimes there could be four per season; when, for example, after the autumn harvesting campaign and other important affairs, people finally remember to deal with their health," the doctor noted.

Lesbekov's department specialises in extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), used for treating patients with very severe heart and respiratory failure. The technology, new to Kazakhstan and the whole post-Soviet space, reduces mortality significantly.

ECMO connects patients to a machine that helps the heart pump and functions as artificial lungs, the doctor explains. Using the technology, the department has brought mortality down to 1.5 to 1.6 percent per year, close to European statistics, he said. The NRCSC doctors who use it have under-

gone training in the U.S., France and the U.K.

The technology has saved dozens of lives, Lesbekov said, including pregnant women and other patients brought by air to the centre. Now, Lesbekov and his team aim to distribute ECMO across regions and to develop it to such an extent that the technique could become a routine procedure. A large programme has been created to coordinate this development.

The second technology actively used in the department is transcatheter valve implantation, which allows some heart treatments to be conducted without stopping the heart or opening the chest. The heart is reached instead through the large femoral blood vessels.

Lesbekov is also actively involved in the heart transplant programme, including complex operations that can last more than 24 hours and involve shift changes and many personnel. Such complex operations are now routine and the staff have perfected all stages of the process.

The number of medical centres and personnel who call these life-saving procedures routine is growing across the country. According to the doctor, the regions today conduct successful concur-

rent, multivalve surgeries. The Regional Cardiac Surgery Centre in Pavlodar alone performs more than 1,000 operations per year and the Ust-Kamenogorsk Regional Hospital performs about 200 procedures on the heart.

With so many surgeries under his belt, Lesbekov now leaves the operating room calmer, he says. "Recently I flew to Karaganda to save a woman – her aorta was torn two weeks after childbirth. That is a case I will remember. Also, there was a girl with congenital heart disorder, who was not allowed any operations, but she was operated nevertheless. She was not allowed to become pregnant, but she became pregnant, she was not allowed to give birth, but she gave birth." He cites surgeon and writer Yuri Volokh, who said "for a surgeon bread is not tasty, because every dead patient takes a piece of his heart away, but every saved patient recovers it."

The team of NRCSC is expanding its young, qualified staff. In 2017, Astana will host the Congress of the World Society of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgeons, which the centre calls evidence of the success of the NRCSC and cardiac surgery in Kazakhstan as a whole.

## Kazakh TV: New Format, New Goals, New Beginnings

Continued from Page B1

These channels have a common ground out in the audience and the broadcast content, i.e. they focus on the culture, traditions, history and tourism in the country. The channel's mission will not change – it will remain as a guide to the original world of Kazakhstan. The merger created a new universal channel which will be interesting for both the foreign and Kazakh audience; foreign viewers can get information, for example, about tourism in the country and local people can watch programmes on current events or the cultural life in Kazakhstan. We have tried to create the most versatile content that



will be interesting to all," he said. Kazakh TV occupies a "hard

to define" place among satellite channels, he added.

"This is a niche channel which occupies an important place among the country's channels between culture channels, travel channels and educational channels. It's a kind of symbiosis, specialising in history, culture and nature," he said.

"Back in the 2000s, Kazakh TV was known as Caspionet. At that time, it was a major breakthrough. Creating such a channel spoke about the status of any state; not every country could afford a satellite channel back then," said Tarakov.

At the time, the concept of satellite broadcasting and satellite television had yet to emerge.

"Depending on the demand of

such channels, their signal was picked up by television and radio and news agencies, not just the residents of certain countries. Then, the market was clearly structured and that's when niche channels appeared for every taste – nature and animals, history, culture and others," he said.

Caspionet initially served as a news channel with content updated hourly. It focused mainly on Kazakh ethnic groups, as mass migration followed the collapse of the superpower, and Caspionet became the connecting thread to their homeland.

"The second powerful stage began four years ago – rebranding. The channel became more of

an image channel to promote Kazakhstan's investment opportunities, culture and tourism. The entire content was reoriented in this light. Then it became Kazakh TV," said Tarakov.

All content is produced locally and Kazakh TV continues to develop local content.

"We want our foreign viewers to learn more about the country and as for our compatriots abroad – we want them to rediscover Kazakhstan thanks to our channel," he said. "We are planning to continue creating high-quality content in the information and cognitive format. We have a plan which our viewers will find out very soon."

# CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## Astana Opera to Stage 'Notre-Dame de Paris' in St. Petersburg



Kazakh National Academy of Choreography, People's Artist of Russia Altyнай Assylmuratova. Jarre's "Notre-Dame de Paris" is characterised by a passionate and emotional dance style contrasting with costumes inspired by minimalist style by one of the most influential fashion designers Yves Saint Laurent and scenery imbued with the spirit of the Middle Ages by the outstanding set designer René Alliot. The 1965 version is still considered provocative and innovative. The grand premiere based on the novel by Victor Hugo was held at the Astana Opera June 24-25. Absolute accuracy, musicality, excellent technique, depth of feeling

tions Bakhtiyar Adamzhan and Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan Rustem Seitbekov. The part of Esmeralda will be danced by laureate of international competitions enchanting Aigerim Beketayeva and Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan brilliant Madina Basybayeva. Phoebus will be depicted by Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan Zhandos Aubakirov and international competitions laureate Arman Urazov. International competitions winners Gaziz Ryskulov and Serik Nakyspekov will perform the part of Claude Frolo. The first international tour of the Astana Opera also took place at the Mariinsky Theatre with a performance of Verdi's "Atilla" in 2014. The Astana Opera troupe's visit to St. Petersburg also included the "Birzhan and Sara" opera by Kazakh composer Mukan Tulebayev and a rich programme of ballet troupe. The Astana Opera Symphony Orchestra performance

**Jarre's "Notre-Dame de Paris" is characterised by a passionate and emotional dance style contrasting with costumes inspired by minimalist style by one of the most influential fashion designers Yves Saint Laurent and scenery imbued with the spirit of the Middle Ages by the outstanding set designer René Alliot.**

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – Astana Opera Ballet Troupe is set to perform at St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre Feb. 1-2, 2017. Kazakhstan's artists will bring Maurice Jarre's ballet "Notre-Dame de Paris" choreo-

graphed by Roland Petit, according to the theatre's release. "We hope that the St. Petersburg Mariinsky Theatre audience will like 'Notre-Dame de Paris' ballet. The grateful public of the cultural capital of Russia is well versed in the art. I hope they will be enthusiastic about

watching and appraising not only the creative work of the brilliant troupe of their native Mariinsky Theatre, but also talented ballet dancers from abroad. This performance can be a challenge for our troupe and we will try to perform with honour and dignity. We need to show a great performance

of a young Astana theatre that is developing, striving to reach new levels of skills and working diligently to accomplish higher goals. I'm anticipating this event with a deep and thrilling sense of responsibility," says Artistic Director of Astana Opera Ballet company and Rector of the

and true sincerity of young ballet dancers brought remarkable success to the ballet company. The role of the corps de ballet is no less important here than the parts of the main characters. Quasimodo's part will be performed by Grand Prix winner of numerous international competi-

was initiated by Mariinsky Theatre artistic director Valery Gergiev Feb. 15 this year. The theatre's management expressed gratitude to maestro Gergiev who is also Principal Guest Conductor of the Astana Opera Theatre for the support of talented team.

## Astana Opera, Teatro di San Carlo Artists Perform at Theatre's Grand Gala Ballet

By Kamila Zhumbabayeva

ASTANA – A Grand Gala Ballet featuring Astana Opera artists and renowned artists from Teatro di San Carlo opera house in Naples, Italy was held Oct. 29 at the capital's opera theatre, according to the press service of Astana Opera.

Astana Opera Symphony Orchestra accompanied the concert with conductor Arman Urazgaliyev. Six soloists represented

D'Antonio and Salvatore Manzo performed classical and modern choreography," the theatre's press release states. For the first time, Astana's audience saw "Black Stone," "ASSURD," "Cantata," "TangleOnPoint" and others. "Anna Chiara Amirante and Alessandro Staiano performed a modern piece by talented Italian choreographer Gianluca Schiavoni – 'Black Stone'. Sensuality of bodies combined with physical strength make a true gem of

agement of Teatro di San Carlo noted, according to astanaopera.kz. "We are happy to see our friends from Teatro di San Carlo. They have already performed with the entire corps de ballet, the Giselle ballet on our stage before. It is very important for us, artists, sharing experiences, receiving positive emotions, because we then pass it on to our grateful audience," Kazakhstan's Honoured Worker Tair Gatauov said. The capital's residents and guests also saw performances of Astana Opera artists. Recent winners of International Ballet Competition Bakhtiyar Adamzhan and Serik Nakyspekov perform modern pieces from their competition at the Gala, the report says.

New soloist of "Astana Opera" ballet Olzhas Tarlanov debuted as Prince Siegfried. Along with leading soloist Aigerim Beketayeva, he performed Pas de Deux dance duet of Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" ballet. Leading soloists, Kazakhstan's Honoured Worker Madina Basybayeva and Anel Rustemova presented their art to an audience. While the nation's honoured

workers Gaukhar Usina and Zhandos Aubakirov presented

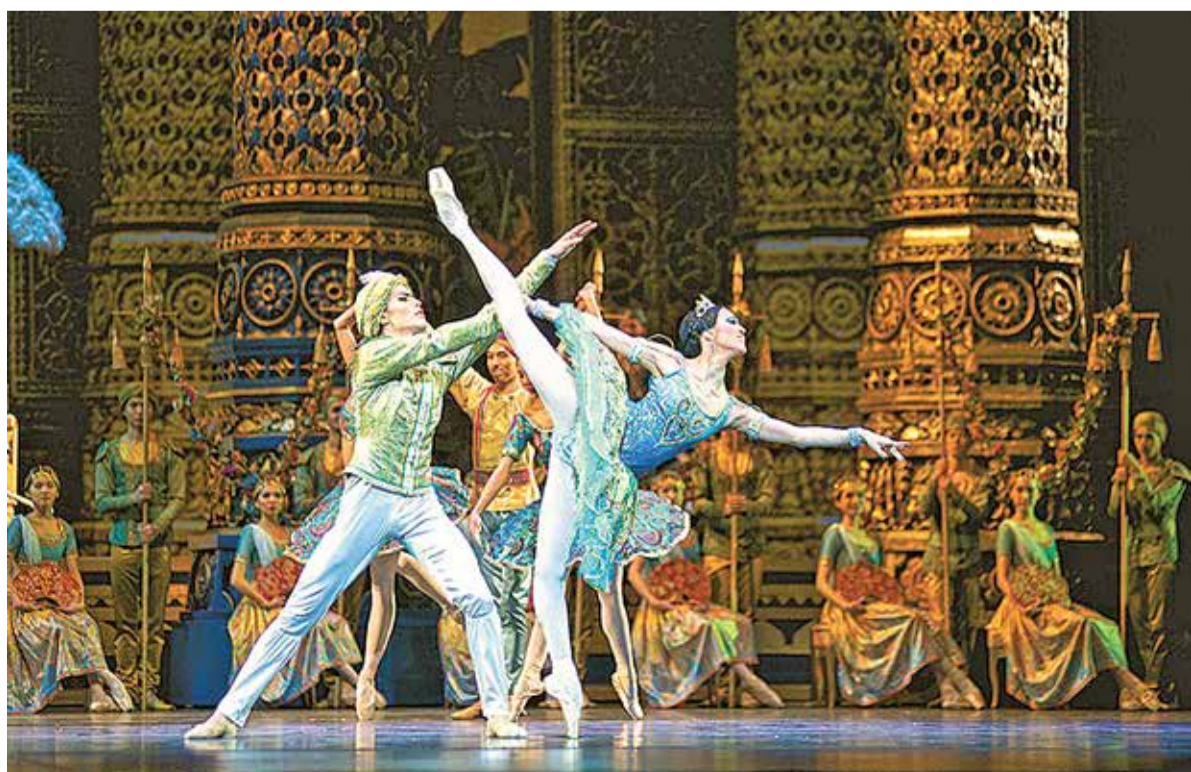
something rarely performed at Astana Opera, duet from Frédéric

Chopin's "Ghost Ball" ballet, choreography by Dmitry Bryantsev. People's Artist of Russia Altyнай Assylmuratova is an Artistic Director of Astana Opera ballet. The Gala Ballet was held as part of Italian Culture Days in Kazakhstan with support from an Italian Embassy.

**GATAUOV: "We are happy to see our friends from Teatro di San Carlo. They have already performed with the entire corps de ballet, the Giselle ballet on our stage before."**

Teatro di San Carlo; two of them, Antonella Albano and Maurizio Licitra, are guest stars from the Milanese Teatro alla Scala. "Striking ballet pairs from the Neapolitan Teatro di San Carlo – Anna Chiara Amirante and Alessandro Staiano, Claudia

this fragment. Another interesting performance "Carmina Burana" performed by Claudia D'Antonio and Salvatore Manzo is a stunning burst of energy. Their movements are incredibly ductile. Here, a particular emphasis is given to facial and body expressions," the man-



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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## 40 Electric Car Stations, Sports Facilities to Be Built in Almaty

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – The Akimat (city administration) of Almaty and several businesses, including a group of car companies named Allur Auto, have agreed to build 40 electric car stations, Kapital.kz reports.

“The number of cars increased 10 times in 25 years in Almaty. Right now, there are 570,000 cars in the city and 270,000 in the nearby region. Meaning, overall 840,000 cars go in and out of Almaty every day. The state invested about 500 billion tenge (US\$1.5 billion) into transport infrastructure over the past 10 years. All essential infrastructure in the city has been



established, but we already see the need to switch to another, European paradigm, when cars are being displaced out of city centres,” Akim (Mayor) Bauyrzhan Baibek said, according to local news outlets.

The Allur Auto company provided Almaty’s administration with several electric cars for testing. The city’s mayor tested one of them, the Chinese JAC brand.

The project’s organisers believe that electric car stations might stimulate citizens to switch their vehicles to electric cars and use green technology. Baibek recommended all citizens purchase electric cars.

“I think it is convenient and prospective. A car should not be

a luxury but means of transportation. Infrastructure is a basis for business. The more electric charging stations, the more citizens will like it. ... Buy electric cars if you want to pay less,” the akim noted, according to Tengrinews.kz.

Agreements have also been reached with the city to build this year a 1,800-square-metre ice arena in Almaty. The facility for hockey and games figure skating will be located at the intersection of Raiymbek Batyr and Saken Seifulin streets. The akimat will cooperate with Maslo-Del company on this project.

Eight tennis courts (four indoor and four outdoor) will be built in the city’s Mamyrl micro district. The location of choice was ex-

plained by the akimat to develop infrastructure not in the centre or upper sides of Almaty alone, according to Baibek. Tennis courts will be built in cooperation with Kazakhstan’s Tennis Federation, Kapital.kz reports.

In cooperation with Global Building Contract company, the akimat will also build an education centre to coach and improve skills of utility company employees. A pumping station in Medeu region will also be renovated as part of this cooperation, which, according to the company’s representative, will allow residents of more than 1,000 apartments to receive heating on a stable basis, news agencies state.

## Advanced Forensic Technologies to be Introduced Nationally

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Twenty-six employees of the Kazakh Ministry of Justice Forensic Science Centre completed scientific training at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in 2014-2016 as part of the Bolashak International Scholarship Programme.

Interns at one of the leading British academic institutions shared their tips and plans to practice their knowledge in molecular genetics, psychology and philology, video-phonography, trace examination, ballistics, merchandising, construction research and computer

technology, handwriting, signature, document and drug research tools.

According to a Tengrinews.kz report, DNA forensic expert Dauren Duberbayev expects to implement innovative technologies in the field of forensic molecular-genetic examination.

“Education at the London School of Economics and Political Science helped me increase my scientific knowledge and practical experience on innovative methods and technologies used in the U.K. and Europe in the field of forensic molecular genetics. Expert forensic science in the country should

meet the international trends and be at the same level with the expert forensic systems of other developing and developed countries,” he said.

Durbayev also plans to conduct a comparative analysis between the British and Kazakh forensic systems and find some useful points in the British judicial system to use that nation’s experience to improve the Kazakh system.

Aigul Zhumanbayeva, the ministry’s forensic centre expert who also participated in an internship at the LSE, recommends future students attend public lectures with

the participation of well-known politicians, scientists and journalists from different countries who have hands-on experience.

“There is a large and modern library with many educational places for individual or collective training at the university. I believe that for people of my profession, it can be particularly attractive to visit the gemmological laboratory to learn about the latest research methods of gemstones,” she said.

Forensic expert and forensic centre deputy head Inkar Tazhigulova also noted the significance and importance of public lectures.

“The first thing I would like to

opened the new theoretical and practical problems for my research topic,” she said.

The Ministry of Justice is one of the leaders among government bodies in the number of workers with foreign educations. Thirty-nine employees who earned degrees abroad through the Bolashak Scholarship Programme at the world’s top universities, including Columbia University, Duke University, LSE and University College London, are currently working in the ministry’s departments. Minister of Justice Marat Beketbayev himself is a graduate of LSE and a Bolashak alumni.

## Diabetic Foot Syndrome May Soon be Cured without Amputation at Unified Centre for Diabetes

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Patients with diabetic foot syndrome may soon be able to have their condition cured and avoid amputation at the Asfendiyarov Kazakh National Medical University Centre of Diabetes in Almaty.

People with diabetes often have a number of complications in their lower limbs that lead to gangrene and doctors have to amputate an affected limb to save the person’s life.

According to preliminary estimations, doctors in Kazakhstan

perform as many as 3,000 surgeries per year to amputate different parts of legs, reported Tengrinews. By utilising the university’s scientific potential, however, doctors hope to develop new treatment methods and conduct complex surgeries that will allow saving a leg and avoiding amputation.

“We offer to conduct an auto venous shunting of injured vessels of a lower limb with the patient’s own veins. This method came from Japan, from Prof. Tadahiho Sasajima, the leading vascular surgeon of the world. We transferred this technology to Kazakhstan. We want to

implement the principle of public service centres, meaning diabetic patients will be referred to the centre for diabetes with any problems and apart from the disease itself, we will resolve complications that go with it. In the case of diabetic foot syndrome, we offer surgical treatment to restore blood flow and thereby save a lower limb,” the university’s clinic of internal diseases head Zhanai Akanov said in an interview with The Astana Times.

An endocrinologist (thyroid specialist) will work side by side with surgeons, constantly monitoring

blood sugar levels and normalising them when necessary to help treat a complication and save a limb, he added.

Although this type of surgery has been available for a while, “the method lies in a more complete restoring of blood flow and exists within Kazakhstan’s highly specialised medical aid list,” he said.

The surgery will cost about 600,000 tenge (about US\$1,805). Kazakh residents can use the services of the centre of diabetes within the guaranteed free medical care programme, stated Tengrinews.kz.

An operating room is almost ready and obtaining licenses for anesthesia and surgical activity are currently being arranged, said Akanov. Approximately 100 patients will receive the surgery each year.

Patients seeking the surgery will need to be referred to the university’s centre for diabetes. He believes a diabetic service needs to be established in Kazakhstan in the future.

“There are about 300,000 people who have diabetes in the country for now. Each of them has a potential risk of developing problems

of diabetic gangrene. Therefore, the Kazakh Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development is considering creating a diabetic service,” he added.

Akanov noted complications leading to blindness and kidney problems might also occur in those suffering diabetes. Unique equipment that allows making a diagnosis and keeping a patient aware of his or her eye condition will be purchased.

“Early diagnosis is important. In such cases, correct treatment will allow avoiding surgical interventions,” he said.

## Medical Tourism School to Open in Almaty

By Zhazira Dyusseimbekova

ASTANA – A medical tourism school will be launched in Almaty. The centre will serve as a training facility for tourist company employees.

Kazakhstan Tourist Association head Rashida Shaikenova noted the medical tour organisation requires a very large contribution from tourist companies and managers who work with medical services’ consumers, according to an Oct. 26 report by Tengrinews.

“It requires communication skills, knowledge of medicine of countries which they work with and attention to the future tourist/traveller who goes to get medical services. Training seminars will be conducted within the school and leading experts in the field of transplantation, oncology and cosmetology will be invited. This service [cosmetology] is becoming more and more popular. There will be a systematic approach to very simple things, such as how to improve tourist service quality not only by a tourist company, but also by the clinic as well. We will explore new technologies, techniques and new

growth points for the provision of medical services. We should offer our country as one of the directions in the field of medical tourism today. We have to work very closely with the doctors, so we can receive quality service,” she said.

The tourist association regularly conducts research on the needs of Kazakh citizens, she added. Beach tourism, which formerly led in list, has been replaced with medical tourism.

“In 2014, we saw for the first time that the demand for medical tourism came in first place. The Kazakh society is beginning to understand the need to take care of its health,” said Shaikenova.

A significant number of countries have an agreement with Kazakhstan on visa-free entry, which increases the nation’s possibilities of receiving tourists.

“Dental services are in demand. We have a unique opportunity to receive services for cardiovascular problems through our clinics in Astana. There is good feedback about the level of our oncologists and transplantation is also in demand,” she stated.

As a result, there is a demand for personnel able to work with medi-

cal tourists, noted Oksana Svetenko, director of one of country’s tourist companies. The future medical tourism school claims to help solve the issue.

“Each medical tourist should be attached to a manager who will be responsible for him for the whole period of stay. The manager should explain the procedures carried out in hospitals and provide a package of documents translated into the native language of the tourist after the end of his stay here,” she said, adding one of the nation’s problems of inbound medical tourism is the lack of English-speaking staff at health centres and absence of an English version of their websites.

Promoting health services needs to focus not on the clinic or the country, but on specific doctors.

“I never recommend a country or a particular clinic. I will look for a doctor who can be the most helpful. The importance of preventive medicine today is very high. In the pursuit for earnings, we forget about our health. When it gets late, we begin to do something. I urge everyone to go through an annual check, to monitor health,” said Svetenko, according to Tengrinews.

## Rich, Natural Kazakh Honey Valued among Consumers



Continued from Page B1

“Only Bashkir honey can compete with ones in Kazakhstan. Those who indulge and consume Kazakhstan’s honey (Altai region honey) do not consume Issyk-Kul or Tien Shan honey,” he said.

Medvedev has shipped honey to Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, where honey made in Kazakhstan has received an excellent response from consumers.

“Czechs, Germans and Bulgarians very much liked the honey I shipped,” he said.

In a 100-gram serving, honey provides 304 calories with an insignificant essential nutrient content. Composed of 17 percent of water and 82 percent carbohydrates, honey has a low fat content, dietary fiber and protein.

Honey is the main ingredient in mead alcoholic beverage, also known as “honey wine” or “honey beer,” and is also used as an adjunct in some beers. Medvedev notes honey can be a natural energy drink, too.

Some evidence suggests that honey may be effective in treating

diseases and medical conditions such as wounds and burns. Many people believe it is possibly the most effective remedy for children’s chronic and acute coughs and many Kazakh families serve hot milk or tea with honey when someone catches a cold.

Honey may also be useful for controlling the side effects of radiation therapy or chemotherapy. People who have a weakened immune system should not eat honey, however, because of the risk of developing a bacterial or fungal infection.

# SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## Family Hospitality Tradition Keeps Kazakhstan Strong

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Social isolation and the phenomenon of “living on your own” probably sound quite bizarre to most Kazakhs. The country’s nomadic background and adherence to a traditional lifestyle contribute to its historic preservation. Traditions are important, as they serve as the basis of a nation’s unity and harmony.

Kazakh people are known to be hospitable. It is a sign of generosity to meet guests with warmth and attentiveness and the Kazakh saying “Konak keldi – irisyñ ala keldi” (“The guest comes and brings happiness to the home”) proves the idea.

### History of the tradition

From ancient times, the most delicious meal in every family is kept for guests. An unexpected guest is named kudaiy konak (“a guest sent by God”).

Guests were welcomed by a sumptuous dastarkhan (table setting) with bausak (puffy fried



bread), sweets and beshbarmak (the national meal of boiled horse meat with pastry noodles and potatoes).

People played musical instru-

ments, performed songs, participated in aitys (song contest) and organised games among young people. A host tried his best to please his guests. If someone came

with children, the youngsters were given sweets or presents, for it was believed if a child left upset, he or she would take the happiness from the home. A few presents or sweets were also available for the adult guests.

### Modern guest reception traditions

As the main national tradition, hospitality eventually transformed into a trait displayed by every Kazakh, according to visitkazakhstan.kz.

Food abundance and diversity are essential for the host to demonstrate his generosity. The menu generally consists of three parts – cold cuts and dishes made from horse meat including kazy, karta, zhaya or beshbarmak; dishes from the Russian or Uzbek cuisines like manty (a dough pocket filled with meat) or plov (rice with meat) and a tea-drinking ceremony with a variety of fruits, cakes, candy, cookies, raisins, dried apricots, nuts, homemade jam and bausak.

The oldest guest is asked to give a blessing at the end of the feast.

Aiman Zholamanova, 50, loyally follows all the principles and rules of established Kazakh values regarding communication within the family. She feels the tradition of hospitality is the most reliable way to preserve and strengthen family ties.

As an independent freelancer, she has enough time to prepare for guests.

“My family has a tradition to invite guests during national holidays, birthday parties and weddings. We even have a certain ritual when my husband is responsible for creating the guest list and making invitations. My daughters go shopping and make salads and chocolate cakes. It is really important to have home-made cakes, pies and other bakery products. You should amaze your guests with your dastarkhan,” Zholamanova told The Astana Times.

Beshbarmak, or the “five-finger dish”, is the most prestigious part of the meal. The dish has a certain symbolism characterised by ritual distribution of various parts of the cooked meat.

“As for making beshbarmak, my

mother taught me how to make it and it is really the best and delicious meal for a large group of guests. I never experiment with the main dish,” she said.

Zholamanova noted the idea is not just to invite people, but to share some joyous moments in life with friends and relatives.

“The most valuable thing in preparation for the guests is to do it all by hand. Of course you can buy or order food, but since I have free time I like to cook myself. Hand-made meals are a sign of respect for your guests,” she said.

Kazakh culture also has a tradition of inviting newlyweds after their marriage for a housewarming party.

“If you’re moving to a new location, then you invite your neighbours to get acquainted and show your house. In response, they invite you to visit as a sign of respect and solidarity. You can only visit your close relatives without an invitation to celebrate Women’s Day, Nauryz or New Year. Recently, our nephew had a baby girl and after 40 days, according to tradition, we invited them to us,” she said.

## Nurly Zher Programme to Increase Housing Construction

By Staff Report

ASTANA – The Nurly Zher land and housing development programme will be launched in 2017. One and half million Kazakh residents will be able to get their own housing until 2031 and the mortgage interest rate will be lowered down to 10 percent as part of this initiative. Zher means land in Kazakh.

“In line with the concept, the primary goal of the Nurly Zher Programme is the transition from direct housing construction financing to the mortgage lending development and stimulation of private constructors,” said Chairman of Construction and Housing and Communal Services Committee of the National Economy Ministry Markhabat Zhaimbetov.

According to the programme, 664,000 sites of land on 10 acres are expected to provide for the individual housing construction.

Thirty five thousand apartments for rent and 280,000 apartments will be provided through the Kazakhstan Mortgage Company and Kazakhstan House Construction Savings Bank, and 521,000 apartments will be constructed by

private companies for mortgage loans.

As of Sept.1, about 2.3 million people are in need of housing including 400,000 people on a waiting list, 700,000 depositors of House Construction Savings Bank and 1.2 million people are on a waiting list to receive 10 acres of land.

“The state will allocate land as part of the Nurly Zher Programme. Land will be given to people who really need it. This programme should work transparently,” said Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) Deputy Azat Peruashev.

The price on credit housing in the regions is 140,000 tenge (US\$414) per square metre in Astana and 180,000 tenge (US\$533) per square metre in Almaty. Commercial property costs are 280,000 tenge (US\$829) in Almaty and Astana and 240,000 tenge (US\$710) in the regions.

The number of House Construction Savings Bank depositors increased from 430,000 to 709,000 compared to 2014. The payment for 316,000 depositors was provided to maintain liquidity accumulation at the Construction Savings Bank system.

## National Medical Holding Chief Says Mandatory Health Insurance Needed

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

ASTANA – The head of the clinic of National Medical Holding Viktor Madjuga recently explained the reasons for the introduction of mandatory social health insurance.

He called that measure a new system of social protection, stressing that it is practiced all over the world.

“The need for the introduction

of compulsory health insurance is determined by many aspects. There are global challenges for the health care system not only here, but throughout the world. It is the growth of non-communicable diseases, health system costs, new technologies, the price of drugs and the cost of treatment. All these affect the increase in the cost of medical services,” said Madjuga.

In addition, according to him,

due to the increase in life expectancy in the country, it is necessary “to plan an increase in the expenses for the protection of the health of citizens.”

Madjuga also talked about statistics related to state health care costs.

“Unfortunately, in our country, unlike the developed countries, health care costs account for only 3.5 percent of GDP. For comparison, the same costs in Russia are 5

percent and in developed countries are 8 to 12 percent,” he said.

The obligatory payments to the fund of social health insurance will start next year.

At the moment 15 categories of citizens are exempted from the payments. Twelve of them are socially vulnerable and the rest are military personnel, employees of special government and law enforcement agencies.

Socially vulnerable groups are children, mothers with many children, veterans of World War II, the disabled, unemployed, students, women on maternity leave, pensioners and sentenced prisoners and those in detention centres.

## Kazakh Air Force Transports Injured Student Back to Kazakhstan

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

ASTANA – Combat aircraft of Kazakhstan’s Air Forces delivered Kazakhstan student Akzharkyn Makhambetova with an injured spine bone from St. Petersburg.

“The heads of the Ministry of Defence directed the transportation of personnel of the Navy crew of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan and two citizens of Kazakhstan from St. Petersburg to Astana,” reported the Crew Commander of C-295 military transport aircraft Major Azamat Moldakhmetov.

The student was injured while studying in Russia, according to the press service of Ministry of Defence.

Kazakhstan military personnel



were on a business trip in St. Petersburg, receiving a new Alatau mine-sweeping ship for the Kazakh Navy. They were asked by a compatriot family to deliver the student of the St. Petersburg Polytechnic University to Kazakhstan.

Makhambetova fell and suffered a serious spinal injury. After a surgical operation, there was a need to carry her to Kazakhstan for further treatment. After the operation she had to be fixed in a horizontal position.

The officials at the Ministry of Defence learned about the situation and decided to support the family and help. Soldiers, who were returning from St. Petersburg to Aktau, took Makhambetova and her mother with them on the board of the military transport aircraft C-295. Makhambetova was accompanied by a military medic and was delivered to Astana for further treatment.

The mother of the injured student sincerely thanked the military personnel, saying that her family felt this protection and she knew that she can rely on the military in any situation. She thanked all military personnel, including sailors, pilots, doctors, who were able to respond immediately and help.

# TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## EXPO 2017 Begins Transfer of Pavilions to Participants

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – Individuals connected with EXPO 2017 unveiled the designs of the Kazakh, German and Chinese pavilions as the buildings were transferred to the participating countries on Oct. 31.

Chairman of Astana EXPO 2017 national company Akhmetzhan Yessimov noted construction of the main pavilion, informally known as the “Ball” or “Sphere,” will be finished by the New Year’s. Work on the interior will then begin.

“The ‘ball’ is the main pavilion. It will be completed by the end of this year, but there is a lot of work on the content filling, which will take place until May of next year. There will be eight floors and each will disclose certain themes of the exhibition: space, solar, wind, water and so on. The same can be said of the thematic pavilions; they are completed and now the work on the content will begin. The most important thing is the construction of all the facilities will be completed for the New Year, in addition to



Chairman of Astana EXPO 2017 Akhmetzhan Yessimov (C) presents certificates to representatives of China, France, Germany, Hungary and Turkey at the Oct. 31 ceremony.

the Congress Hall and the hotel. They will be needed only during

the exhibition, so all works are on schedule. In addition, public areas

will be completed in the spring,” he said at the ceremony.

The details of the German pavilion, called Energy Turnaround, were explained by German Ambassador in Kazakhstan Rolf Mafael. Astana Akim (mayor) Asset Issekeshev was present for the event.

“It means a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy and energy-effective management. The national pavilion will be in four stages. First, visitors are offered to feel the new world of the future of energy. In the second, the audience will be presented with a new energy map of the world and the layout of the wind park in Yereimentau. In the next room, visitors can get acquainted with the ‘smart’ city, like in a computer – the prospect of increasing or decreasing from a global to a local perspective. In the last room, we will feel what the energy turnaround is. All visitors at the beginning will get a small drive stick and with it they will be able to activate all the exhibits – to be able to touch and study them. At the end, they will accumulate energy and see what they can do with this energy. This is a great laser show,” he said.

China is second in the world in renewable energy sources (RES), noted Chinese EXPO 2017 Commissioner Wang Tszinchzen.

“We want to take this opportunity to show our achievements in the field of renewable energy. We are also going to present a number of events on the topic of technology, for example in the field of tourism, as well as take part in the forums on the subject of technology. China’s largest technology company will present their achievements. We will hold a few forums on this subject and we are prepared in this regard to support the Kazakh company. We are ready to assist not only in the energy sector, but also in the agro-industrial complex and other areas. We invite all of the business community to our pavilions to discuss ways of cooperation,” he said.

The completion of five key exhibition objects was also announced – International Pavilion, EXPO Town with 1,374 rooms, EXPO office building, Department of the Interior and Energy Research Centre.

## 6,000 Kilometres of Highways Reconstructed, New Air Routes to Open for EXPO 2017

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Vice Minister of the Ministry for Investments and Development Berik Kamaliyev recently updated the press on road construction and negotiations with foreign airlines to launch new routes during EXPO 2017.

“We will continue to work on our projects in Centre-South, Centre-East, Beineu-Aktau, Aktobe, Atyrau-Astrakhan, Almaty-Ust-Kamenogorsk, Astana-

Petropavlovsk-Russian border, Uralsk-Kamenka, Uzynagash-Otar, Zhetybai-Zhanaozen. In general, it is planned to reconstruct about 6,000 kilometres of roads,” said Kamaliyev, the press officer of the ministry reports.

In the regions, 756 kilometres of asphalt and cement concrete pavement were laid. Approximately 3 million tonnes of road metal, 250,000 tonnes of cement and 125,000 tonnes of road bitumen made in Kazakhstan were used for the construction. Nearly

75,000 people and more than 30 contractors, including 20 domestic companies, were involved in the construction.

As a result, 75 percent of all planned construction works were finished within the first nine months of this year. The government plans to open the Western Europe – Western China transit corridor as well as Astana-Temirtau, Almaty-Kapshagai-Taldykorgan, Beineu-Shetpe and Kokshetau-Petropavlovsk routes by the end of the year.

In addition, the ministry introduced a new mechanism for subsidising passenger transportation for socially significant routes. A corresponding law was signed by President Nursultan Nazarbayev on April 9. The new mechanism aims to ensure the transparency of the subsidising in railway passenger transportation. At the same time, it provides long-term financing for passenger transportation companies for 15-20 years. The last fact will allow the companies to purchase passenger cars using borrowed funds, which will empower new technologies and provide increased passenger traffic quality.

Also, the ministry is working on increasing domestic and international motor transportation and achieved good results. This year, transport fleet will be increased by 10 percent and the share of Kazakh carriers in the international market will reach 43 percent.

The vice-minister said government negotiates with several foreign airlines to launch new routes for the period of EXPO

2017. He noted that this initiative supports the expo by Open Sky system.

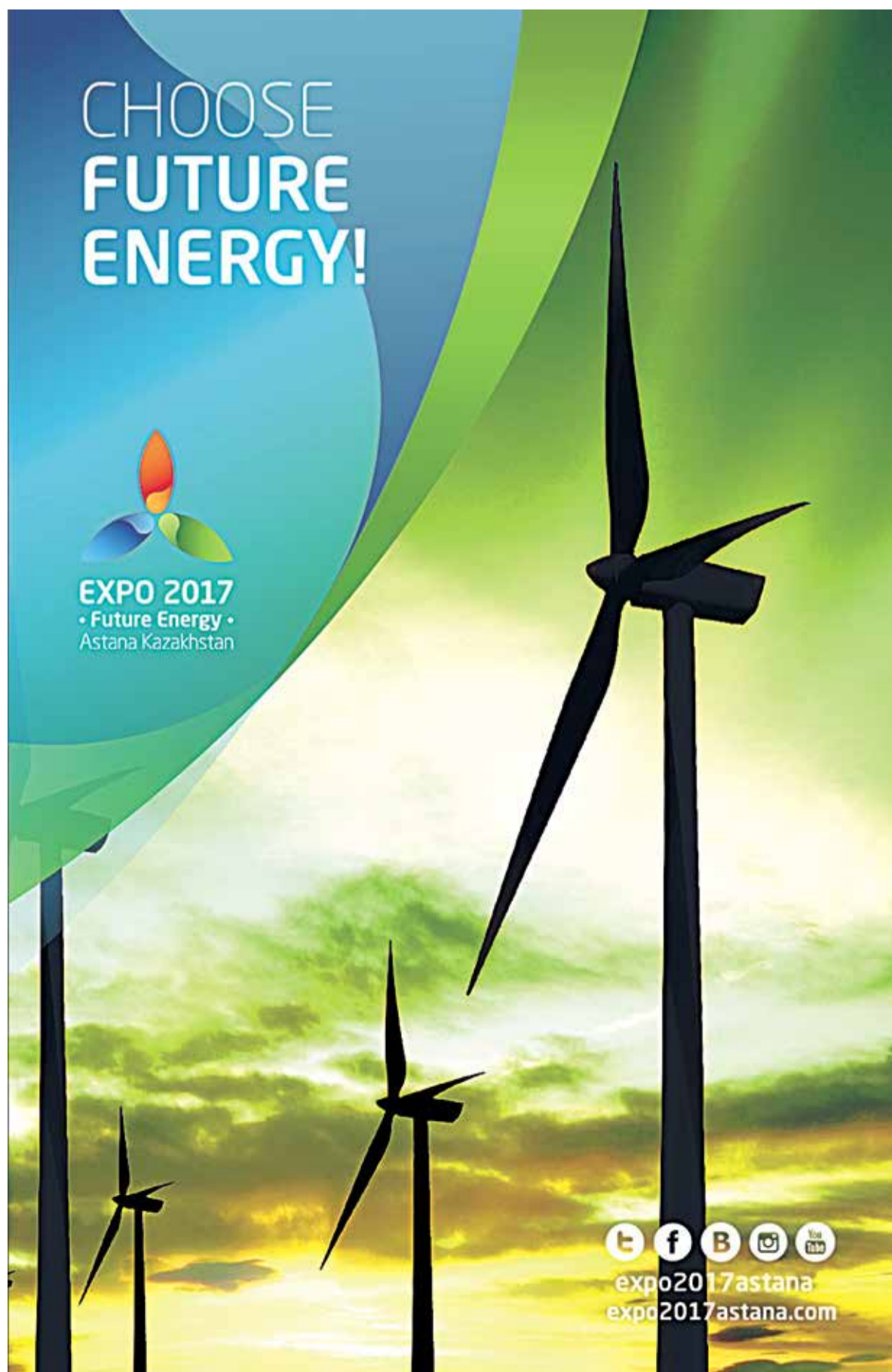
He emphasised that the ministry negotiated and signed agreements with a Finnish airline and

recently held talks with a Polish airline.

As of today, there are agreements with Hungarian, Austrian, Czech and Chinese airlines.



Photo credit: kapitula.kz



## American Diplomats Visit EXPO 2017 Site

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – On Oct. 25, an official U.S. delegation led by Thomas Shannon, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, visited the EXPO site and met with Chairman of Astana EXPO 2017 National Company Akhmetzhan Yessimov, reported the press office of the Astana EXPO 2017 national company.

“This is my first official meeting, and I think it is a clear message of our intentions. We are going to prepare for the exhibition. I was able to have a look at the pavilion that is designed for the American section. This is a beautiful building and the pavilion,” Shannon was reported to have said.

He also highlighted that EXPO 2017 is considered an important element of the relationship between the countries. This is an opportunity to introduce Kazakhstan as a new global player, including in the energy sector, according to him.

Yessimov outlined the importance of the U.S. participation in the exhibition. “This year, I visited America twice. I know well about the great job of the United States in the field of renewable energy. It is the leading country in the development of new tech-



Chairman of Astana EXPO 2017 Akhmetzhan Yessimov (L) welcomes Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon on Oct. 25.

nologies and cutting-edge scientific research,” emphasised the chairman.

At the end of the meeting, Shannon assured that the United States will try to resolve quickly all procedural questions related to the participation of the country in EXPO 2017.

The exhibition will be held in Astana June 10 to Sep. 10, 2017. More than 2 million visitors totaling five million visits are expected. To date, 105 countries have officially confirmed their participation in the exhibition and 101 countries have appointed their commissioners.

## SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

## Kanat Islam Gets Latest Boxing Victory

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – The last weekend of October was highlighted by the victory of Kazakh boxer Kanat Islam over Ghana's Patrick Allotey. Islam improved to 22-0 and acquired the WBA Federation and WBO Inter-Continental super welterweight titles by a 12-round unanimous decision on Oct. 29 in Almaty.

"Thank you all very much. I fought a lot, but this victory is special for me. Major events are still to come. You will witness more spectacular fights with my participation. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the President of Kazakhstan and Almaty mayor. I also want to thank Bauyrzhan Ospanov who is a patron of the event and citizens of Kazakhstan for the support. Thanks to my opponent, it was an interesting fight," said Islam, as reported by Bnews.kz.

Akim (Mayor) of Almaty Bauyrzhan Baibek also congratulated the boxer on a brilliant victory.

Islam took advantage from the first minutes of the first round and boxers traded shots in the subsequent rounds.

Allotey was forced to retreat constantly and instinctively threw jabs.

The pace dropped a little in the fifth round but Kanat was still ahead on points. Allotey countered opponent's moves.

In the eighth three-minutes, Islam took a little pause, but in the next round he turned the screws pushing Allotey back onto the ropes. Despite many missed punches, Allotey withstood a furious challenge from his Kazakh opponent.

As a result, the judges gave the 32-year-old Islam the victory by a 12-round unanimous decision by the scores of 116-112, 116-112 and 117-111.

Now, Islam has a record of 22-0 with 18 knockouts.

Allotey has a record of 34-3 with 28 knockouts.

This was Islam's first fight in Kazakhstan. Born and raised in China, the 2008 Olympic Bronze winner had fought in Latin America and in Florida where he currently resides. Kanat started fighting professionally in 2012.

Almaty boxing night also featured fighting by six Kazakh boxers. Zhuman Zhumabekov debuted on pro-ring with the first-round victory. Aidar Sharibayev gained the fourth victory. Ali Akhmedov knocked out his opponent in the first round, as heavyweight Ruslan Myrsatayev scored a knockout in the first minute of the fight. Zhankosh Turarov gained the 20th victory and Zhanibek Alimkhanuly knocked out Milton Nunez, former opponent of Golovkin, in the first round.

## New Ski Prospects Hopeful in Wake of Universiade

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's final skier roster for Universiade 2017 is to be determined in Almaty Dec. 22-26 at the Alatau ski-biathlon complex. Qualifying rounds will also be held for the World Juniors, Asian Winter Games and World Championships in Finland. But what are the nation's chances of earning top medals?

The Universiade, to be held in Almaty next February, is hoped to be the next break for Kazakhstan's winter sports and the country's image. With fresh names on the prospects' list, Kazakh Ski Racing Federation Secretary General Andrey Nevzorov is optimistic about winning back some attention for his country at the home event.

"The preparations for the upcoming Universiade are in full swing and we are betting on our young prospects. We have been working on 'rejuvenating' our roster in recent years. We are trying to recruit young talents from the 'unders' tournaments, juniors and those who had just come out from juniors," he said in an interview with The Astana Times.

"Among top prospects under 23 years old we have Sergey and Alexander Malyshev and Olzhas Klimin from the Akmola region. We are betting on these athletes not only during the Universiade, but also for the future in general. We can't 100 percent give forecasts about these young athletes with fresh blood,



Andrey Nevzorov

but we will do our best to make sure they are ready for the Universiade and are at their best shape to get the highest results and hope for the best," he added.

As for the women's team, unfortunately there is a problem, but one of a universal nature in skiing.

"It is quite obvious that there is a shortage of women in our sports and that's quite natural. They have a different lifestyle and they often face a tough choice: family or sports. Just as an example there are about 80 men in reserve, whereas on the women's bench we can hardly find 20," said Nevzorov.

Despite the national and global economic challenges the federation is facing, the team is preparing for the Universiade on time and is not missing out on events.

"Taking into consideration the current global economic situation and the country's recent expenditures, including for the past summer Olympics, our budgets have been cut. Nonetheless, our federation, jointly with the Ministry of Culture and Sport, is doing everything to make sure we are

on schedule. Also the Ministry of Education and Science helped us financially with the preparations in Bulgaria. Currently the national team is on 'first snow' in Voukatti, Finland where they're qualifying and preparing for the first starts prior to the World Cup. After two qualification rounds in Finland, the formed roster will take part in the World Cup starting Nov. 26 in Ruka, Finland, then move to Lillehammer, Norway, Davos, Switzerland and La Clusaz, France," he said.

Kazakhstan isn't considered a winter sports powerhouse, although the northern parts of the country get real Siberian winters. The perception is due to the country's focus on summer events.

"Our efforts are demonstrated mostly in the summer events like wrestling, boxing and weightlifting, although skiing has also been Kazakhstan's strong suite, take for instance Ivan Garanin, Vladimir Sakhnov and Vladimir Smirnov and others among veterans; as for the most recent ones, they are Alexey Poltoranin and Nikolai Chebotko," the federation head said.

"In sports there are no guarantees and we hope that everything will be according to the schedule without failures. These games are not only about the image of the country; they're also about popularising sports and a healthy lifestyle in general. So people wouldn't just watch it on television, but would engage and start doing it themselves – stay healthy and fit," said Nevzorov.

## FC Astana Wins Title Again

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – Oct. 29 saw the finish of the 25th season of the Kazakhstan Football Championship's Premier League. For the third time in a row, FC Astana, a participant of the UEFA Champions League last season and the Europa League this year, won the tournament.

On Oct. 26, FC Astana tied 0:0 with Okzhetpes Kokshetau and with one game to spare claimed the title. As in the league's previous edition, Kairat Almaty won silver medals.

"My players are heroes to me. I congratulate the club and the fans with this victory. I think that a lot of work has been done. Now we will throw all our efforts into [playing decently in] the Europa League that would help us im-

an incredible result for us," commented FC Astana's Head Coach Stanimir Stoilov.

Kairat are runners-up for the second year in a row. Almaty's favourite club defeated FC Astana twice in face-to-face competition and did not lose a home game throughout the season. Nevertheless, as opposed to their main rivals, Kairat lacked stability, which resulted in it losing many unnecessary points in away matches and missing once again in the race for the title.

"I think that we lost our chances to claim the title long ago. Already in summer it was clear that it would be very difficult for us to win. In general, we showed good football, we scored a lot. But in some matches our defence display was not the way that is expected from champions," commented

third place and thus the right to join Kairat in representing the country in the Europa League qualification next year. The privilege went to Irtysh Pavlodar. In the last match, they hosted FC Astana, who arrived as new champions and fielded a number of players from the reserve squad. The match ended in a goalless draw, which was enough for Irtysh to secure the bronze medals and avoid being overtaken in the table by their nearest rivals – Ordabasy Shymkent who ultimately came in fourth.

"Today, was a very important game for us. I congratulate the guys with a [decent] way they played throughout the season. I congratulate the club and especially the fans that, regardless of any issues, provided so much support to the team. We had serious problems this season, and still we won bronze. Based on the quality of football that our team displayed, our third place was well-deserved," said Irtysh's manager Dimitar Dimitrov.

In the last round's other matches, Kairat crushed Okzhetpes Kokshetau 5:0, which ended up fifth while Ordabasy Shymkent won 2:1 against Aktobe, who finished sixth.

In the bottom half of the table, Zhetysay Taldyqorghan finished last, 12th, and are therefore relegated to the First Division. Kaisar Kyzylorda, winners of the season in the first division, will replace them, returning after a one-year break. FC Taraz were the penultimate in the top-flight and will now engage in a play-off game with FC Altai from Semei, the northeastern town that is known to be the birthplace of Kazakhstan football in 1913.

With 22 goals on his account, Kairat's Ivorian striker Gerard Gohou won the race for the Premier League's best scorer.



prove our position in the UEFA ranking. This is important, because next year we will play again in the Champions League qualification and would prefer to be seeded in the draw. In two and a half years, we have played 32 matches in the European competition, this is

Kairat's midfielder Andrey Arshavin, known internationally for his past performances in FC Arsenal and the national team of Russia.

The final round of the championship left only one question unanswered. That was who would win

## FC Astana Ties 1:1 at Home with Olympiacos in Europa League

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – Ahead of a Nov. 3 match, FC Astana faced a number of challenges with its line-up. Injured were such players from the main squad as Askhat Tagybergen, Agim Ibraimi, Marin Anicic and Tanat Nussabayev. The Colombian midfielder Roger Cañas was suspended as he was sent off in the previous Europa League game in Piraeus. The Greek team also had its problems but still fielded a quality line-up, which included Argentinian Esteban Cambiasso, well known to fans worldwide from his stint in FC Internazionale Milano.

The match began with Astana's active attacks. Very soon those attacks bore fruit. Patrick Twumasi successfully broke through on the flank, entered the penalty area and crossed on to Djordje Despotovic who sent the ball into an empty net and thus brought the Kazakh team an early lead – 1:0. Within a few minutes, FC Astana had another good opportunity to score but this time Dmitri Shomko's cross from

the wing ended with nothing as Junior Kabananga and Serikzhan Muzhikov failed to reach the ball as it crossed the penalty box.

The Greek team had to go forward so the game turned pacier and more entertaining. Finally, one of the guests' attacks resulted in an accurate header from Sebá right into the opponents' net, making the score 1:1. Up till the break, Olympiacos continued to pressure but the hosts managed to improve in defence.

Early in the second half, Twumasi was active again. Twice he made good crosses forward but in both moments his teammates could not use their chances. Moments later, Twumasi fouled on Cambiasso and was shown a yellow card. He would thus miss FC Astana's next match in the League, at home with APOEL Nov. 24, which in many respects would be decisive for the team's chances to progress into the playoffs round in spring.

In final minutes of the match, Olympiacos virtually locked the hosts in their penalty area. In the most dangerous moment only the

bar saved FC Astana from a loss after André Martins' strike. The Kazakh team should have felt lucky preserving the 1:1 result in the end.

"Tonight was an interesting game, a real football battle. Both teams wanted to win. We had good moments in the first half and we could have scored in the second. In the ending part, the opponent was stronger. Both a win and a loss were probabilities for us [but it finished with a draw]," said FC Astana's Manager Stanimir Stoilov.

"I think we deserved to win. When the opponents scored first and took the lead, we pulled together, levelled and tried our best to win. Both teams earned a point tonight. But we wanted more and we had all the chances to secure a win. However, we must give credit to our opponents, they did not let us do that. Astana showed they are a strong team, which is difficult to beat on its pitch," said Olympiacos's Strategic Adviser Christian Karembeu, best known as a Real Madrid player in the past and a world champion with France from 1998.

## Krav Maga Teaches People to Defend Themselves on Street

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Krav Maga, the Israeli self-defence system developed for the nation's defence forces, has already found some popularity around the world. Almaty citizens have an opportunity to master the same self-defence skills and techniques adopted by Mossad and Shin Bet.

Although not considered a sport, Krav Maga consists of a wide combination of skills sourced from aikido, judo, boxing and wrestling. It focuses on real-world situations and is known for its brutal counter-attacks.

Krav Maga, translated in Hebrew as "contact combat," has no rules or differences between training for men and women. Because there is no mercy during the attack, responsiveness is aimed at neutralising the threat and rescuing as quickly and safely as possible and is designed for



Photo: vaspovnik.kz

use in situations of potential danger to life.

"Krav Maga is about survival. If you leave home and you need to reach your workplace safely, you need to know the basics. When you are attacked on the street, no one will ask you what belt or dan (rank) you have. People are attacked unexpectedly. No one will warn you, so you have to be ready

for anything. You have to use knowledge on the level of your instincts. Krav Maga is based on human instincts which are brought to perfection in order to self-defend," said Kazakhstan Krav Maga Federation President and instructor Igor Kudashkin in an interview with The Astana Times.

Founded in 2011, federation members met with Israeli special-

ists and representatives of different military divisions to exchange experience and adapt Krav Maga for Kazakhstan. Kudashkin noted each nation has its own features which should be considered. For example, carrying a weapon is permitted in the United States, while it is forbidden in Kazakhstan.

"People get beaten on the streets. Even if a person had an experience in any other sport, it is kind of hard to adapt it to street conditions. Krav Maga has no rules; it is not a sport. Our main goal is to survive no matter what," he added.

Psychological preparation is the first consideration, as there are many specific exercises to simulate the conditions of the maximum level of aggression.

"For example, in the process of training we can suddenly attack our student by a group in the most unexpected places, such as changing rooms or a corridor. Even when working with women and girls, we are applying the methodology of ac-

tion in the most hostile environments, but the students know that it is necessary to adequately respond to the danger, because there will be no concessions on the streets," said Kudashkin.

The basic course lasts about 1.5-2 months and classes are available for adults and children.

The techniques can also be mastered at Krav Maga Institute Almaty, a division of the international federation. Adam Shopa, a native of Poland, is an instructor, director and one of the institute's founders who has been living in Kazakhstan for six years.

"People don't understand that the situation in the gym and the situation outside are totally different. People think that if they are engaged in boxing or wrestling, they will be able to defend themselves. That is not usually correct, because they use sport methods, not self-defence ones. Krav Maga is based on everyday moves; the method is made to defend in the scared condition or stress," he said.

The institute offers group training for children, adults, men and women as well as individual training. Twenty percent of the current visitors are women.

Shopa thinks Krav Maga is underestimated in the country. He noted it is difficult to convince people what works in the boxing ring does not work on the streets.

"I would say it is not popular in Kazakhstan at all. I can say that it is in demand in the United States, Europe and other regions. In Kazakhstan, boxing and wrestling are way more popular," he said.

He added due to the economic difficulties in recent years, the number of people engaged in Krav Maga decreased.

"But I think people should pay more attention to self-defence, because people lose jobs; some of them are desperate and looking for other ways to earn money," he added.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016

# Astana Resident Donates Her House as Animal Shelter

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – City resident Baktygul Zhumabekova has donated her house to create a shelter for homeless animals. The mansion, in Chubary micro district, is now home to more than 280 pets, according to Tengrinews.

Zhumabekova has loved animals all her life and opening such a shelter was a dream which has now come true.

“Some people somehow do not realise and do not even think that animals can be hurt, too. Sometimes people bring cats or dogs here and I say to them that they need to go to a hospital. And people wonder ‘But it is a cat, it should be cured?’ I believe that there is a need to clarify to people that they are living beings and that God created them not to suffer like this. After all, that way he examines us, humans, how reasonable we are,” she said.

In many instances, the animals were hurt by people.

“We have a lot [of pets] with broken jaws. Often, people hit a cat or kick it. They do it uncon-



Baktygul Zhumabekova.

sciously, but the animal’s spine is broken,” said Zhumabekova.

She is also bothered by the pain the animals suffer after they are hit by a car.

“I have neighbours and whenever our cat goes in their garden, they immediately call animal control service. I say ‘Do you understand they will be killed there? Sorry, she jumped into you tomatoes.’ They say ‘Then why is there a service of animal control if not to kill them?’ But there are some neighbours who, on the contrary, say they realised that they [animals] are living beings because of our shelter. We need to show love to animals by our example and words like ‘People, don’t kill’ or ‘People, you are cruel’ are useless; they cause even more anger,” she added.

The house’s main inhabitants are cats and dogs, but also there is a little fox. Some cats move around freely, while those which have not yet been vaccinated stay in special cells.

While the house looks big, it is impossible to give every pet a new place to live. Some days, 30-40 people ask the owner to take care

of their pets. The shelter can take just two-three, however, and only those in the most serious condition, said Zhumabekova.

She hopes eventually the nation will build a shelter where all animals could live and she and other volunteers are ready to look after them.

“If there was a shelter at the state level, we would put all the efforts in to help. Now there are a lot of us who give their houses for shelters,” she added.

Care, veterinary services and food require a lot of money. Volunteers cover part of the expenses and caretakers such as Meruyert Sartayeva play a huge role in the shelter’s work. She loves animals and comes every day because she enjoys it.

Zhumabekova lives in Kosshi village, which is very close to the capital. She bought the house for US\$204,000 two years ago and initially planned to turn it into a shelter. Zhumabekova worked as a teacher, then at the archive, but now she is a businesswoman and her work is not related to animals at all, according to Tengrinews.

# Charity Bazaar to Bring Hope and Magic to Christmas Season

Continued from Page A1

This year, according to Osman, 53 embassies have signed up to take part in the charity event, offering their valuables as raffle prizes.

“During [the bazaar] we will have a Grand Raffle Lottery,” Osman said. “The embassies assisted us in getting, so far, 12 grand prizes, through providing airline tickets and travel packages to 12 different exciting destinations, such as Paris, Egypt, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, Macedonia

and tickets from KLM to Amsterdam. And we are expecting more to come.”

The bazaar also offers Astana residents a chance to find souvenirs or special goods from all over the world. This year, The ATOM Project has also volunteered to commission from its famous Honorary Ambassador Karipbek Kuyukov a painting that will be sold at the bazaar with the proceeds to be also directed to charity.

“All embassies during this event promote their countries by selling their best authentic national prod-

ucts and special items that they bring especially from their countries for this event, so people in Kazakhstan can always find their perfect Christmas gifts or souvenirs from their favourite country at very reasonable prices. It is a special event where the people of Kazakhstan immerse themselves in the atmosphere of all cultures, see national costumes, taste delicious national food and buy souvenirs as though they visited 53 countries in one day. And at the same time, they’re doing good deeds, as all the proceeds go to charity,” said Osman.

All funds raised at the event go to support charitable projects in Kazakhstan, according to chair of the Charity Committee, spouse of Belarusian ambassador in Kazakhstan Yulia Nickassova. Last year the raised funds totalled 27,171,461 tenge (US\$80,481), while the ASA carried out 46 charitable projects in different parts of the country. The funds were sent to children’s homes, sanatoriums and special correctional boarding school for children with disabilities, and were spent on clothes, medicine, medical equipment, therapies, food and more.

Each year, the ASA receives numerous applications from organisations and individuals requesting help, but the assistance the ASA can offer depends on how much money they raise. Turning down requests is the hardest part of the job, Nickassova said.

“It’s hard to say no to people; it puts a sort of guilt on us when we do,” she explained. “What saves us is the fact that it’s not an individual decision, it’s a decision based on the opinions of eight people – the members of the committee. So this responsibility is split up between us. Some projects start lengthy debates, sometimes we completely go different ways in our opinions. It’s a really good thing that the committee is comprised of the spouses of different ambassadors of different countries, cultures, faiths, life experiences and languages – that helps us make the best decision.”

“When we go through the letters we receive our, eyes often water, as we would like to be able to help all

those who write to us. But unfortunately, we have to decide who will get the help right away and who will get it later. And this is the most challenging part about this job,” said Lyudmila Vassilenko, volunteer and member of the Charity Committee, hardly holding her tears back.

“One of my responsibilities, as a member of the Charity Committee, is to review the applications and decide where to direct funds,” she explained.

Vassilenko got involved in the organisation just recently, but says she felt she belonged to the cause from day one.

“Our family used to be regulars at the bazaar but I was always wondering how it was organised. Last summer, Heba offered a chance to become a member of the Charity Committee. Back then I thought it was impossible, as I was employed. I left my job and showed up at the first meeting and met with Yulia Nickassova and decided to become a volunteer. I always wanted to be involved in charity and I feel that I belong here. This is my first step in this walk of life. This is a serious process – it’s not that simple,” Vassilenko noted.

“Each time the bazaar is finished, I say I will never do it again. But when September comes, we find the strength to start everything anew. I keep asking myself why? For me, first of all, it’s important to be part of this because it means goodwill and benevolence. It also helps us learn a lot about Kazakhstan – not superficially, but from inside. And most importantly, what we do here comes back later. When

we visit the organisations and people we have helped, we receive lots of joy and good and we leave those places understanding that we have contributed something important and something very good. I also think we are doing this for our children. I believe what comes around goes around – if it doesn’t come around to us, it will to our children,” Nickassova said with tears in her eyes.

All three say organising the bazaar is time-consuming and not everyone wants to be involved, but almost all help out one way or another.

“It is a lot of work. But when you turn back and see the result, see how many people support your event, see the smiles on people’s faces and all those who are volunteering, all the difficulties are gone,” said Osman. “All embassies help out. For instance, the spouse of the ambassador of Spain is not on our committee, but she alone has sold about 500 raffle tickets. That’s the kind of help that we need, too.”

The ASA is also organising an event called Basket Celebration, where each embassy prepares nice gifts and products from their country in a basket and donates them to the Charity Bazaar to be used as raffle prizes.

Bazaar visitors may also take part in the tombola lottery.

“It is an instant lottery and here I shall extend appreciation to Megumi, spouse of the ambassador of Japan, and Hitomi, spouse of the UN ambassador, for their outstanding assistance in preparing the tombola lottery,” Osman noted.

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# Ice Skating Season Opens in Astana and Almaty

Continued from Page B1

An environmentally friendly shuttle bus will operate between Medeu Skating Rink and Shymbulak Ski Resort. The 18-seat vehicle has a high cross, all-wheel drive system. The cost is 200 tenge (US\$1.60) one way.

Address: 465 Gornaya Street  
Contact number: 8 (727) 232 68 48

## MEGA Ice

MEGA, Almaty’s largest shopping centre, has a skating rink. The cost is 1,000 tenge (US\$3) with skate rent for half an hour and 1,500 tenge (US\$4) for an hour. Visitors should check the skating schedule, as numerous trainings are also conducted. The centre organises various promotional campaigns and provides many other services including ice skating and hockey classes, skate sharpening and skating with a personal instructor.

Address: 247A Rozybakiyev Street  
Contact number: 8 (727) 232 26 70

## Ramstor Mall indoor ice rink

The rink is open noon-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, and noon-10 p.m. weekends. The cost is 600 tenge (US\$1.80) an hour and the same price is for skate rental.

Address: 226 Furmanov Street  
Contact number: 8 775 439 98 43

If the winter is snowy, there are also outdoor ice rinks near Almaty’s parks and large shopping centres.

## Astana

### Alau Ice Palace

The world-class ice arena with high quality equipment and unique architecture opened its skating

season in October. The facility has a 400-metre ice track and stands with 7,462 seats, two hockey courts, a jury room, press conference rooms and eight locker rooms for athletes.

Alau is open 7 p.m.-10 p.m. weekdays except Monday and 9 a.m.-11 p.m. weekends. The cost is 500 tenge (US\$1.50) for a daytime session and 1,500 tenge (US\$4) at night. Free admission is provided for children under seven and people with special needs and discounts are offered for pupils and students. Skate rental is 1,000 tenge (US\$3) for adults and 500 tenge (US\$1.50) for children with a 5,000 tenge (US\$15) deposit.

Address: 47 Kabanbai Batyr Avenue  
Contact number: 8 (7172) 70 67 22

## Ice Club

The family entertainment centre includes an ice skating rink, bowl-



Medeu Ice Rink.

ing, billiard club and fast food restaurant.

Two-hour skating sessions are 1,000 tenge (US\$3) for adults and 500 tenge (US\$1.50) for children. Ice Club

is open 6 p.m.-11 p.m. weekdays and noon-11 p.m. Sunday and Saturday.

Address: 24 Petrov Street  
Contact number: 8 (7172) 34 14 09, 8 (702) 128 9555

A number of outdoor skating rinks in the city will open in December. The largest open air rink is located near the Kazakhstan Sports Centre on the Akbulak River.