



## Nazarbayev, Jeenbekov enhance cooperation, ink border demarcation treaty in Astana

By Aigerim Seisembayeva

ASTANA – The new Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov arrived Dec. 25 in Astana for a two-day official visit to meet Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and other top officials for talks aimed at re-launching bilateral relations.

Having discussed the state and prospects of cooperation, the two heads of state signed a number of bilateral documents, including the treaty on the demarcation of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz state border and a joint statement while heads of the border agencies of the two countries signed an agreement regulating the border regime.

In remarks shared by the Akorda presidential office, Nazarbayev thanked his Kyrgyz counterpart for accepting his invitation and noted that the visit, the first for the new Kyrgyz President, is taking place on the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

He also highlighted the historically friendly nature of Kazakh-Kyrgyz relations.

“Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are fraternal and allied countries. We have established a constructive and trustful dialogue in all spheres,” Nazarbayev told his guest.

He also dwelled upon the economic relations of the two states.

“I believe there are no issues that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan could not resolve. Over 10 months, our trade turnover grew 13 percent. Kazakhstan is one of Kyrgyzstan’s main partners and investors that has invested about \$650 million in the Kyrgyz economy. There are several hundred joint ventures. More than 700 enterprises with Kyrgyz participation are operating in Kazakhstan,” said the Kazakh leader.

He also spoke about his recent



meeting with Jeenbekov within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union.

“Not much time has passed since our meeting in Minsk. Our governments have carried out a very great and productive work and have removed the issues that worried both you and us. That is why today we can talk about what can be done in the future,” Nazarbayev said.

Jeenbekov thanked Nazarbayev for the opportunity to pay an official visit to Kazakhstan and for congratulating him on winning the Kyrgyz elections.

“My first visit to Kazakhstan is taking place in the year of a double anniversary – the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our countries and the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Eternal Friendship. Our countries have one history, one language, one faith and one culture,” said the Kyrgyz President.

He also stressed that a number of urgent issues were discussed with the Kazakh leader in a more private meeting that they had prior to a larger meeting of the two delegations.

“We will make every effort to continue strengthening our friendly, fraternal relations. After we signed the roadmap, our departments and ministries began to work more fruitfully,” said Jeenbekov referring to the document signed earlier in December in Astana outlining measures the two governments will be taking jointly to resolve issues relating to customs and border administration as well as phytosanitary and sanitary controls of food products in Kyrgyzstan.

After the signing ceremony, the heads of state expressed their confidence that the negotiations held and the documents signed would contribute to the further strengthening of bilateral relations.

“A solid contractual base of more

than 150 documents has been created between the two states. Today, the most important bilateral agreements have been signed aimed at the further deepening of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz cooperation. Those include the treaty on the demarcation of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz state border and the agreement on the state border regime. We also adopted a joint statement,” Nazarbayev told journalists during a joint press conference by the heads of state.

Jeenbekov called the signed documents historical: “I am convinced this will contribute to the border between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan becoming the gateway of trust, good-neighbourliness and mutually beneficial cooperation. At the same time, we must strive for the border between us to be only a formality and for our peoples to be able to cross it without hindrance, as they did before. We are truly fraternal peoples. There are no closer people than the Kyrgyz and the Kazakhs,” he stated.

## President congratulates nation, awards outstanding citizens on Independence Day

By Aigerim Seisembayeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev presented awards to outstanding citizens and praised the nation’s accomplishments during the ceremony marking Kazakhstan’s Independence Day, the Akorda press service reported.

“This day always brings feelings that do not abide the time – a special combination of pride, joy and excitement,” he said on Dec. 15.

Nazarbayev said that Kazakhstan over the years since independence has achieved rapid growth and created a solid platform for sustainable development in the future.

“An entrepreneurial class has been created. More than 1.2 million Kazakhs have their own businesses, which provide a quarter of the total national income,” said the head of state.

He noted that the Nurlu Zhol infrastructure development programme has become an effective anti-crisis solution that is providing a reserve for the future.

“When severe winds blew, we built not fences, but mills. In seven years, 24 new manufacturing sectors appeared. The effect of the programme of industrial-innovative development is measured not by facilities [launched], but by whole branches [created],” said Nazarbayev.

The head of state specifically focused on the success of economic reforms, which became the basis for strengthening the social function of the state.

“For the first time in history, the population of our country exceeded 18 million, birth rate increased 1.5 times. Kazakhstan this year reached fourth place in the world in terms of primary education coverage. Life expectancy increased by 4.5 years and amounted to 72.5 years. Private housing has become a reality for more than 1.1 million families,” said the President.

He particularly spoke about Kazakhstan’s international achievements.

“Our capital hosted the EXPO international exhibition. This year alone, Kazakhstan hosted the World University Games, the historic SCO [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation] summit, the first OIC [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation] summit on science and technology and the intra-Syrian peace talks. Beginning January 2018, our country will assume the presidency at the UN Security Council,” he stated.

Nazarbayev also noted the recent meeting with the participants of the 100 New Faces project and stressed that the main value of independence is people.

“These people have chosen a motto – not to demand from the state, but to offer their ideas, creative energy and hard work. This is the living manifesto of our success! This is the generation of Independence,” Nazarbayev said.

He defined the transition from quantitative growth to qualitative changes as an important condition for joining the world’s top 30 most developed countries.

“Having strengthened Kazakhstan as an established state, we proceeded to comprehensive modernisation, to the creation of a new quality of Kazakhstan’s Independence. In order to achieve this, we launched the political, economic and spiritual modernisation,” said the President referring to the three-pronged reform package he had initiated earlier this year.

Nazarbayev focused specifically on the implementation of the Rukhani Janghyru programme to modernise the national identity.

“This year we celebrated Alashorda’s 100th anniversary. That movement made a decision on the transition of the Kazakh alphabet to Latin script. The transition to the Latin alphabet has its own deep historical logic. This is not only the fulfilment of the dreams of our ancestors, but also the way into the future for generations to come,” said the head of state.

“I want to thank all Kazakhs for your trust that has given me the strength to carry out all the transformations, for your sincere participation and selfless efforts,” Nazarbayev stated.

During the awarding ceremony, President Nazarbayev stressed the role and efforts of every Kazakh citizen in the country’s achievements and praised the award-winning citizens.

“Today we mark with awards and prizes the merits of those of our fellow citizens who contributed to the development of our homeland,” he said.

Nazarbayev received congratulatory telegrams on Independence Day from the heads of state of Austria, Canada, Cuba, Germany, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Singapore and other nations as well as UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

## President’s new book presented in advance of Independence Day

By Aigerim Seisembayeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s book “The Era of Independence” was presented in the capital Dec. 15 on the eve of the country’s Independence Day.

The work outlines the sovereign state’s development stages and the challenges the young nation faced on its path to success. The publication reflects Kazakhstan’s newest history in a journalistic genre and

reflects the author’s views on its present and future.

Nur Otan Party First Deputy Chair Mukhtar Kul-Mukhammed opened the ceremony by noting the book could be called the encyclopaedia of Kazakhstan’s independence.

“It covers all the aspects of our life, from political and economic spheres to spiritual modernisation. All the milestones of the three modernisation stages with opinions and an in-depth analysis of the head and founder of our state

are presented in this book,” he said.

“The Era of Independence” is not just a timeline of events. The book explains the logic and mechanisms behind decisions; for instance, how the President defines domestic and foreign policy and the way Kazakhstan builds relations with the world’s leading powers. It embraces the essence of Kazakhstan’s development model, its evolution and strength. The author outlines the three waves of the nation’s modernisation, noting

the first and second phases helped solve the tasks of building a market economy in the post-Soviet era, while the third is aimed at helping Kazakhstan join the top 30 most developed countries, he explained.

“It is not just a book. It is the view of President Nursultan Nazarbayev on the history of our country and its future. It presents an impressive analysis of the events that occurred over 26 years – not only facts, but also interpretations and emphases. The book contains the valuable experience of public management and strategic planning in practice and in this respect, it is a kind of a national platform for optimism and confidence in the future,” said Yerzhan Babakumarov, Deputy Head of the Kazakh Prime Minister’s Office.

Continued on Page A2

## Latest Astana Process Syria talks result in documents on confidence-building measures

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The Dec. 22 8th rounds of Astana Process talks in the Kazakh capital to help de-escalate the conflict in Syria resulted in the adoption of a number of documents in the area of confidence building, as well as saw the reaffirmation of commitment of their participants to seek full elimination of terrorism and strengthen the political process in that country.

According to the joint communiqué by guarantor states Iran, Russia and Turkey, the sides will continue to try to strengthen the ceasefire regime and the functioning of the four de-escalation areas adopted during earlier Astana Process talks, said Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov who read out the communiqué, adding he hopes the talks move the Geneva peace talks

toward the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2254.

The communiqué also noted that the sides plan to maintain regular contact in the lead up to the Jan. 29-30 Syrian national dialogue congress in Sochi and that the guarantor states will hold a Jan. 19-20 preparatory meeting.

Also during the latest talks, the sides adopted the “Regulation on the Working Group on the release of detainees/abductees and handover of the bodies as well as the identification of missing persons” and the “Joint statement on humanitarian mine action in Syria including the UNESCO list of cultural heritage sites.”

“Today Syria is going through a number of significant developments that offer us new opportunities to pave the way to a peaceful and lasting political settlement of this crisis,” Abdrakhmanov said. “This round of talks is convened at the

end of the year and offers a timely opportunity to take a stop of the progress made and to identify the tasks that remain ahead.”

He added that the humanitarian situation in Syria has improved as a result of the de-escalation, though much remains to be done “such as the problem of exchange of detainees, which in our view, represent major obstacles in building confidence between Syrians.”

“In this regard, we urge the guarantors and Syrian parties to overcome their differences through dialogue and achieve the final agreement in this humanitarian issue,” Abdrakhmanov said.

Below is the full text of the joint communiqué.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey as guarantors of the observance of the ceasefire regime in the Syrian Arab Republic:

- reaffirming their strong and continued commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic;

- welcoming progress in the implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of the de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic of 4 May 2017;

- Welcome the achievements made in the fight against terrorism in Syria, particularly the defeat of ISIL and imminent liberation of all the Syrian territory from ISIL;

- Reaffirm their determination to continue cooperation in order to ultimately eliminate DAESH/ISIL, Nusra Front and other terrorist entities as designated by the UN Security Council and to prevent the relocation of international terrorists to other countries and regions;

Continued on Page A3

## GDP grows 3.9 percent in 11 months

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan’s gross domestic product (GDP) increase is expected to be 4 percent by the end of 2017 due to stable economic growth rates, said Minister of National Economy Timur Suleimenov at a Dec. 12 governmental meeting.

The economy grew by 3.9 percent from January-November against the backdrop of accelerated investment activity, inflationary process stabilisation and an improved economic environment.

The growth rate of investments in fixed assets totalled 5.7 percent and increased 2.8 times compared to 2016. The annual inflation rate has remained in the target corridor of 6-8 percent since the beginning of this year, including 7.3 percent in November.

Positive dynamics are observed in all sectors as a result of economic diversification programmes, agribusiness activities development, entrepreneurship, infrastructure and employment.

The industry, transport and communication services demonstrate the greatest growth. Due to double-digit growth in oil and natural gas production, the mining industry recorded an increase of 9.6 percent.

“Pharmaceutical products, furniture manufacturing, light and metallurgical industries, refined products, food and beverages and machinery became the drivers of growth in the manufacturing industry. The growth in agriculture accelerated from 1.9 percent up to 2.3 percent for 11 months,” said Suleimenov.

Continued on Page A4

### INSIDE

**NATION**  
President meets with nation’s new Supreme Mufti **A2**  
PM urges improved services **A2**

**ECONOMY&BUSINESS**  
KABC, AIFC to cooperate on green finance, blockchain technology and crowdfunding **A4**  
PM stresses commitment to attracting foreign investment **A5**

**EDITORIAL**  
Challenging year should strengthen resolve to do better in 2018 **A6**

**OPINIONS**  
SHPEKBAYEV: Contemporary model of state, independent from corruption: initiatives and achievements of Kazakhstan **A7**  
SABIROV: Cybercrimes divide the world into two **A7**

**NATION&CAPITAL**  
Paralympic athlete aims to change perception of people with limited abilities **B1**  
Altai Alps ski resort welcomes visitors to enjoy winter activities, improve skills **B6**

# NATION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## President meets with nation's new Supreme Mufti

By Frol Leandroer

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev recently congratulated Serikbay kazhy Oraz on his election as the nation's Supreme Mufti, the highest official of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan.

"I invited you on the eve of Independence Day in order to congratulate you on your election to such a high post. Thanks to our independence, we were given the opportunity to revive our traditions and profess the religion of our ancestors. The state has done everything to provide every citizen with freedom of religion," he said.

Nazarbayev noted the Supreme Mufti's special role in regulating relations with the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Civil Society.

"Kazakhstan is a secular state. The Ministry was not created for the purpose of any restriction of religion. The Ministry is called



upon to ensure order in the religious sphere so that believers do not violate each other's rights," he added.

The head of state spoke about the need for joint work to explain and communicate the main provisions of the upcoming draft law on religious activities to the public. The two men have also talked about religious education issues.

The President recalled the April

meeting with representatives of the SAMK, where they discussed the need to modernise the country's consciousness and preserve its historical and spiritual wealth.

"Patriotism, love of the motherland and stability within the country and in the region is the guarantee of our future. For this, we must work together," said the President.

Nazarbayev underlined the traditional character of the Hanafi

madhhab (school) for Kazakh Muslims and noted the need to clarify the foundations of this particular Islamic movement.

"We have young people among believers; there are those going to mosques in the fashion trend, there are believers that are cropping pants and growing beards. There is a need to correctly explain the foundations of Islam to all of them," he said.

The head of state also stressed the need for individual explanatory work with followers of radical religious movements.

"We need to attract qualified imams who know the Qu'ran and hadith (collection of traditional sayings) to explain the provisions of the traditional Hanafi madhhab and its difference from destructive currents," he noted.

The President emphasised the importance of not only developing social support sponsorship for those in need, but also scientific research, conferences and advocacy.

Oraz thanked Nazarbayev for his reception.

"The Spiritual Administration of Muslims faces a big task to revive the historically-established traditional religious school," he said.

"In your article 'Course towards the Future,' you talked about the need to follow new trends and changes in the surrounding world. Today, our imams study new literature and apply this knowledge in conducting sermons and services," he added.

The Supreme Mufti noted the appointment, an unexpected decision for him, carries great responsibility. He plans to achieve all the tasks for the next five years.

"We also intend to do a thorough job of explaining the meanings of the Qu'ran and religion in general. There is a need to prevent the influence of radical currents in the state. The immunity of our society in this sense is very strong and we have enough knowledge about the Muslim world," he said.

### NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

President Nursultan Nazarbayev took part in Lord Harry Kenneth Woolf's oath-taking ceremony to become court chairman of the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) Dec. 7. In his address to the chairman and judges, Nazarbayev noted that it is important to increase the world community's trust in the centre's activities. The AIFC Court is to start work in January 2018.

A migration service centre for foreign citizens will be opened in the capital, Government for Citizens State Corporation head Abilaikhan Ospanov announced Dec. 20. "The pilot project providing services for foreign citizens on a single window principle is being launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs," he said. Special centres providing services for obtaining driving licenses will also be opened in Kokshetau and Semei this year and in Uralsk and Atyrau in the first quarter of 2019. Car registration procedures will also be transferred to electronic format.

A waste-processing plant and waste-sorting facilities will be constructed as part of the public-private partnership in Karaganda, Temirtau and Zhezkazgan. "A two-container waste collection system has been gradually introduced in Karaganda and Temirtau since 2014. More than 1,000 containers were installed. Eighty percent of urban and 54 percent of the rural population now have their municipal solid waste removal services covered. The total volume of waste recycling amounted to 9 percent of the total amount of accumulated waste, with a planned figure of 3 percent for this year," said Karaganda region Natural Resources and Environmental Regulation Department head Ruslan Tulebayev. Harmful substance emissions decreased by 12.6 percent compared to 2012. Emissions amounted to 593,000 tonnes in 2016. As a result, large enterprises have been enacting environmental protection projects. Last year, more than 21 billion tenge (US\$63 million) was allocated to environmental protection.

The first natural gas filling compressor station was opened in Aktobe. Gas at a cost of 60 tenge per litre (US\$0.17) will be an alternative to liquefied gas, petrol and diesel fuel. "The project to convert cars to natural gas is implemented as part of the agreement signed between the region and the KazTransGas company in 2015. Environmental friendliness and economy are the main advantages of methane. It is two- or three-fold cheaper than fuel. Methane does not freeze until minus 80 degrees in winter. Liquefied gas is less environmentally friendly and more explosive," said KazTransGas General Director Arman Kassenov. The station can serve up to 400 vehicles per day. The company plans to open six automobile gas filling compressor stations until 2022 in the Aktyubinsk region.

Five hundred and fifty youth-social projects were awarded grants in the amount of up to 1 million tenge (US\$3,000) as part of the Zhas Project programme launched in the Almaty, Karaganda, Pavlodar and South Kazakhstan regions. The project unites 8,500 youngsters and aims to involve vulnerable groups in socially useful activities through the development of skills necessary for integration into society and productive employment. "This is a good opportunity to create a social business. For example, we have five or six projects aimed at creating sewing workshops. Young people invested in sewing training and purchased equipment," said Pavlodar region project coordinator Dinara Aitzhanova. As a result, about 2,000 people started businesses in a five-month period. In the pilot regions, 79 sports facilities and 94 leisure centres, including theatres, vocal and dance centres, were opened.

## PM urges improved services

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – State bodies should change their approach servicing the public, Kazakh Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev said Dec. 20 during a weekly government meeting.

"Eighty-five percent of state services are transferred to the State Corporation 'Government for Citizens' – we have already reached a high mark. But there is a lot of work on the quality of services that has to be done. The question is not how many services we provide, but how we do it. When the people feel that they receive low-quality service, they still go for a paper certificate. That means the state bodies should change their approach," Sagintayev said.

There are 746 public services listed on the Register of Public Services, according to primeminister.kz. Approximately 450 can be serviced online, 621 provided through the State Corporation "Government for Citizens" and 191 are local executive services.

Minister of Information and Communications Dauren Abayev said the ministry is constantly seeking to improve the services.

"The Ministry of Information and Communications is considering the possibility of interaction in the 'Paper Free' format – the exclusion of paperwork, the transition to the 'one application' principle," he said.

According to Abayev, his ministry is developing a transfer of some information systems, such as the eGov electronic government website, mobile applications mGov, IIS PSC, SDB the Real Estate Register and the AIS State Land Cadastre to the trust management of the State Corporation "Government for Citizens."

"Currently, work has been carried out to identify the so-called 'hidden' services, some functions of government agencies that are defined as 'public services' but not included in the Register of Public Services, for their further inclusion in the register," Minister of National Economy Timur Suleimenov said.

According to the minister, 58 new services have already been included in the register. The ministry has reviewed additionally 200 functions of state bodies, of which 50 new services will be included in the register as well.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Information and Communications and state bodies involved in the work create an action plan to transfer public services to non-alternative services.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of National Economy was instructed to develop a Roadmap to identify "hidden" services and responsible officials within a month.

The prime minister also said it is important for the government to focus on protecting the personal data of citizens.

## Heads of law enforcement bodies reshuffled

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced a major reshuffle Dec. 11 in the nation's law enforcement structure, reported akorda.kz.

Nazarbayev proposed appointing former Supreme Court Chairperson Kairat Mami to the Senate as Constitutional Council chair to replace Igor Rogov, who reached retirement age.

"Igor Rogov reached the retirement age. In accordance with the law, he is dismissed from his post. I want to thank him for his fruitful and good work. Kairat Mami is appointed as chairperson of the Constitutional Council," he said.

Former Prosecutor General Zhakiip Asanov was suggested as the candidate for Supreme Court chair.

"This choice is not accidental. We are entering the next stage of

modernisation of the judicial and law enforcement system, connected with the adoption of a new law. Therefore, the new head of the judicial authority will have to ensure its effective and rapid implementation. As a result, Kazakhstan's justice should become more progressive and fair. I believe that the candidature of Asanov fully meets the high requirements," said the head of state as he presented Asanov to the members of the Senate.

The President noted Asanov's personal qualities and professional skills and expressed gratitude to Mami for his contribution in developing the country's judicial system.

"The only thing I can promise is openness and transparency, as it was before, maybe more. The President controls this and we will be open. Especially in the framework of the President's address, all our activities should become very transparent," said Asanov.

Nazarbayev also appointed former Civil Affairs and Anti-Corruption Agency Chairperson Kairat Kozhamzharov as the new Prosecutor General.

"He worked in the Agency for Civil Service and Anti-Corruption for many years. He has managerial experience and experience in the prosecutor's office. In connection with his transition to the post of Prosecutor General, Alik Shpekbayev is appointed chairperson of the Agency for Civil Service and Anti-Corruption Affairs," he said.

Prior to the appointment, Shpekbayev served as the agency's deputy chair. He is a member of Kazakhstan's Human Rights Commission and president of the country's Rock Climbing Federation.

The President once again focused on implementing qualitative and timely reforms in the country's judicial and law enforcement system, noted the website.

## President's new book...

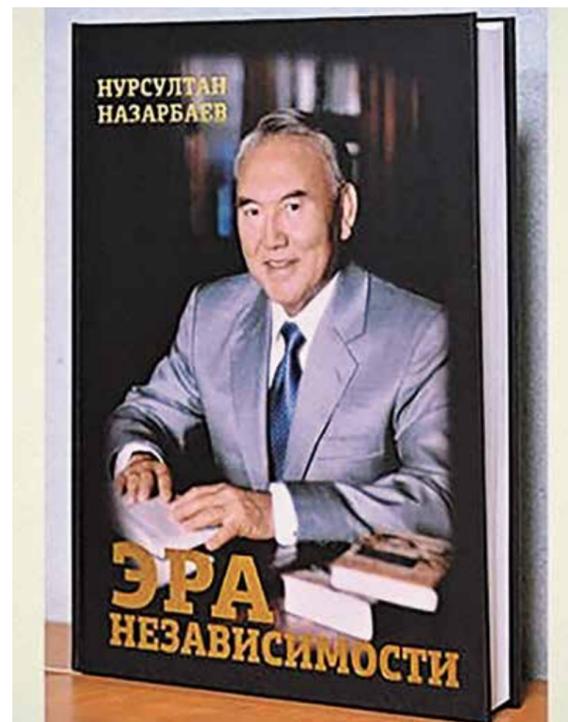
Continued from Page A1

The work outlines Kazakhstan's 33 main achievements since 1991, including building a unique model of interethnic and interfaith accord, closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, creating a market economy, launching its own currency, building a new capital, chairing the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and hosting EXPO 2017.

The narrative is divided into four parts – "Birth of the state", "Great overcoming", "On a steep rise" and "The established state" – with the last stage covering the events from 2010 to the present. The book also reflects Kazakhstan's aspiration to pursue a multi-vector policy, participate in all global initiatives and set world trends.

Kazakh Parliament Senate (upper chamber) Deputy and former Minister of Education and Science Bakhytzhon Zhumagulov dwelled on the book's focus on improving the country's human capital.

"It provides for substantial improvement in education, science, healthcare, culture, sports and quality of life. Over the years of independence, a new system of science and education has been created and its material base has been substantially expanded, especially in preschool and secondary education. All of this is described in detail in the book. Thanks to the unique Bolashak Programme, more than 12,000 talented young people have been educated in the world's best universities. A network of intellectual schools, vocational lyceums and world-class universities has been created and is developing in the country. As a result, today we have an educational and scientific system that meets the global standards," he said.



Sanat Kushkumbayev, deputy director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, shared his opinion of the new work.

"As the President wrote in his book, a country's foreign policy is a reflection of the domestic one. It is no coincidence that all three stages of modernisation are synchronised with our country's foreign policy achievements," he said.

"This book will help you see how issues occurred and how they were solved through hard work and experience," added Egemen Kazakhstan

newspaper board chair Darkhan Kydyrali.

The work also contains interesting personal assessments of modern world leaders such as Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, Vladimir Putin, Margaret Thatcher and Jiang Zemin and reveals details of the settlement of the Russian-Turkish conflict and situation around the Syria talks. Experts have already called the publication an important document of the era that will always be in demand not only in Kazakhstan, but also abroad.

## MFA launches app to assist citizens

By Aigerim Seisembayeva

ASTANA – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched Dec. 14 a new mobile app that will help Kazakh citizens find resources, understand local cultures and travel more safely abroad. The application, SmartTravelKZ, contains information about countries, regional peculiarities, standards of behaviour in different countries, recommendations on actions in hazardous situations, warnings about emergencies and other necessary information for Kazakh citizens abroad. The application also offers information about sanitary-epidemiological and criminal conditions in various countries.

"Information on the visa regime and the order of stay in a foreign country, as well as general information on visa-free countries for Kazakh citizens can be of particular interest. Also, the mobile application can provide data on items prohibited for import and export, rules of duty-free import and export and veterinary and phytosanitary control in certain countries," said the Director of the Department of Consular Service of the Foreign Ministry Ardak Madiyev during the app's presentation.

He also noted that SmartTravelKZ users will not only be able to receive up-to-date information about the situation in a foreign country, but can also directly contact a Kazakh consular for advice.

"For the users' convenience, the

mobile application contains advice on insurances, medical services, emergency actions, useful phone numbers, contact details of Kazakh transport offices, as well as advisory information about medical institutions and lawyers. Application users will be able to contact the consul of Kazakhstan in a particular country and receive consular assistance on emergency issues online," said Madiyev.

He added that in the face of increasing threats to global security, natural disasters and the growing number of trips of Kazakh citizens abroad, the issue of modernising measures of consular support is becoming especially important.

"We have studied the positive experience of developed countries, and generally, it was the foreign minister's idea. We started working on the project since February this year," Madiyev explained.

He also stated that Kazakhstan currently has 90 consular offices in 67 countries. All of them have been notified about the launch of the SmartTravelKZ mobile application and are ready to continue providing support for Kazakh citizens. In the countries where there are no consular offices, according to Madiyev, there are 103 honorary consuls who have also been alerted to the launch of the application.

The application is available for Android users and will be available in the near future for iOS. SmartTravelKZ can be downloaded from the official Kazakh MFA website as well. The app is also able to work in offline mode.

# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan presented the nation's investment projects during the Dec. 14 Kazakh-Qatari business forum in Doha. The Kazakh delegation, including representatives of the country's Ministry for Investments and Development, Atamaken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs and Foreign Trade Chamber, briefed Qatar's business community on the nation's export potential, an important area of cooperation given 90 percent of goods in Qatar are imported. Qatari companies and businesses expressed interest in Kazakhstan's large-scale privatisation and public-private partnership programmes and the sides agreed to establish a business council seeking expanded economic and trade ties.

Washington hosted an official reception celebrating Kazakhstan's 26th anniversary of independence, gathering representatives of the White House, U.S. State Department, Pentagon, leading American companies and investors and business and academic circles, reported Kazakh TV. The participants praised the nation's contribution to a global nuclear non-proliferation regime, stability, security and peace building efforts and its role as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for South and Central Asia Lisa Curtis noted Kazakhstan has remained a reliable partner in all key areas, adding the U.S. is anticipating President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit in January.

The Kazakh visa centre, the first institution of its kind in the history of the nation's diplomacy, was recently unveiled in Beijing, bringing Kazakh-Chinese tourism partnership to a new level. The centre is the result of a series of events seeking to promote travel, including Kazakh tour operators' visit to China followed by a presentation of domestic tourism potential. More than 100,000 Chinese tourists visited Kazakhstan this year and the sides expect the figures to increase. The visa-related service will be outsourced to TLScontakt, one of the leading companies in the field.

Kazakhstan exported more than 100,000 tonnes of grain to Iran in the first ten months of 2017, reported Kazakh TV. The shipments also included 2,000 tonnes of chilled lamb and 200,000 tonnes of fodder crops, such as rapeseed, oilcake and barley. Iran has offered to process Kazakh grain at its plants, allowing it to reach markets in neighbouring countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, and representatives of Kazakhstan's Food Contract Corporation have expressed interest in the proposal. The sides also agreed to export frozen lamb and are currently negotiating shipments of Kazakh beef.

Kazakhstan supported prolonging the United Nations resolution on humanitarian aid to Syria during the recent meeting of the UN Security Council (UNSC), where the overwhelming majority voted in favour of a year-long extension. The Kazakh delegation also advocated for the UN and non-governmental organisations working in Syria to improve the monitoring and transparency of humanitarian operations under their auspices. The diplomats stressed the inefficiency of humanitarian efforts alone and urged the UNSC members to support the Geneva talks and the Astana process seeking to settle the six-year crisis.

Trade turnover between Kazakhstan and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) members Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Russia totalled \$13,971.4 million from January-October, a 28.1-percent increase compared to the previous year. Kazakh exports reached \$4,154.1 million, 32.1 percent more than in 2016, and imports were \$9,817.3 million, a 26.5-percent increase compared to the previous year. Russia continues to represent the biggest share, accounting for 92.2 percent of Kazakhstan's trade turnover within the EAEU.

## Latest Astana Process Syria talks result in documents on confidence-building measures

Continued from Page A1

- Express joint determination to continue coordinated efforts to ensure that the progress in reduction of violence is irreversible. They underscore the necessity to take urgent and active international steps in order to assist the Syrians in restoring unity of the country, and achieving a political solution of the crisis through an inclusive, free, fair and transparent Syrian-led and Syrian-owned process leading to a constitution enjoying the support of the Syrian people and free and fair elections with the participation of all eligible Syrians under appropriate UN supervision;

- Reaffirm their determination to closely interact on a regular basis to support preparation for and convening of the Syrian national dialogue congress in Sochi [on 29-30 January 2018] with the participation of all segments of



the Syrian society and call on the representatives of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the opposition that are committed to the sovereignty, independence, unity, territorial integrity and non-fractional character of Syria to actively cooperate.

To this end three guarantors will hold a special preparation meeting in Sochi before the congress, on 19-20 January 2018;

- Emphasise that they view the upcoming Syrian national dialogue congress as an initiative aimed at giving momentum to negotiation process

under the UN auspices in Geneva and facilitating an intra-Syrian agreement based on mutual consent;

- Adopt, with a view to building confidence between the conflicting parties in Syria, the "Regulation on the Working Group on the release of detainees/abductees and

handover of the bodies as well as the identification of missing persons" and the "Joint statement on humanitarian mine action in Syria including the UNESCO list of cultural heritage sites";

- Reaffirm their determination to continue implementing the provisions of the Memorandum of 4 May 2017 and other decisions adopted earlier within the framework of the Astana process;

- Emphasise the need to continue efforts aimed at strengthening the ceasefire regime and ensuring the effective functioning of all four de-escalation areas;

- Express their sincere gratitude to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev and the Kazakh authorities for hosting in Astana the 8th high-level International Meeting on Syria;

- Decide to hold the next high-level International Meeting on Syria in Astana in the second half of February 2018.

## FM meets Austrian President, attends OSCE Ministerial in Vienna

By Almasbek Zhumadilov

ASTANA – Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Kairat Abdrakhmanov met with Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen, and attended the 24th Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during a Dec. 6-8 visit to Vienna.

The Austrian President praised Kazakhstan for its holding of EXPO 2017 and Kazakhstan's efforts to help de-escalate the conflict in Syria and other peacekeeping efforts. He also noted Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's leadership in nuclear non-proliferation, according to the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two officials also discussed bilateral cooperation within international organisations, including the UN and the OSCE. They also discussed Kazakh – European Union cooperation in the context of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA). Austria is involved in implementing the EU strategy for Central Asia and seeks to partner with Kazakhstan on transit transport and infrastructure projects.

Abdrakhmanov met with the Kazakh-Austrian society's leadership, Kazakhstan honorary consuls in Austria and Slovenia and Austrian economic officials and businesspeople. The talks focused

on reforms, outlined in President Nazarbayev's address to the nation "The Third Modernisation of Kazakhstan: Global Competitiveness" and "Rukhani Janghyru" programme.

At the Dec. 7-8 24th OSCE Ministerial Council session on the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian challenges, Abdrakhmanov stressed the importance of the principles of the Astana Declaration of the 2010 OSCE Summit – the only political document the organisation adopted in the 21st century.

In his remarks to colleagues from other 56 OSCE participating states as well as eleven partners, the diplomat pointed out the importance of dialogue and cooperation in conflict prevention and outlined Kazakhstan's priorities as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and mediation efforts in the Eurasian region. He also presented the Kazakh President's initiatives to create a Global Anti-Terrorist Coalition and the Code of Conduct on Global Action against Terrorism and Extremism and called for steps to strengthen OSCE cooperation with the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation that will be chaired by Kazakhstan in 2018.

Abdrakhmanov also praised the start of a structured dialogue on military challenges meant to restore confidence in arms control

talks within the OSCE region with a view to preventing the growth of military activity and the increases in the concentration of troops and, as a consequence, the danger of military incidents, confirming Kazakhstan's willingness to actively participate in it.

The OSCE's economic and ecological dimension should help build consensus, stability and cooperation within the OSCE, he said.

"The OSCE can promote greater compatibility between regional economic and integration processes and, ultimately, lead to the formation of a single economic space from the Atlantic to the Pacific. We hope to continue promoting the benefits of enhanced interaction between integration associations, and in this regard remain committed to the idea of a Greater Eurasia, uniting the Eurasian Economic Union, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the European Union," he noted.

An initiative from Secretary General Thomas Greminger to create thematic OSCE missions was welcomed by Abdrakhmanov, who proposed using the former EXPO 2017 site to host the thematic OSCE Centre for Interconnectedness and Green Economy in Astana.

"Kazakhstan is of the opinion that the reduction of environmental risks, resource efficiency and alternative energy uses go hand in hand with good governance, encourage the rule of law, economic progress and the strengthening of cooperation

in the OSCE human dimension," he said.

"I strongly believe that we should build upon this positive momentum in the OSCE to form a healthy political environment as a strong foundation for conflict-free development and the attainment of the vision enshrined in the 2010 Astana Declaration. That declaration itself as the one and only document of such scale in the 21st Century proves that this mission is possible. But we need trust, transparency, tolerance and respect for traditions," Abdrakhmanov concluded evoking the famous 4 Ts slogan of Kazakhstan's 2010 OSCE chairmanship.

On the sidelines of the Vienna ministerial, the Kazakh minister attended an informal meeting of CSTO foreign ministers who discussed the OSCE Agenda and CSTO-OSCE cooperation. Kazakhstan proposed to focus on countering terrorism, cybersecurity and combating illicit drug trafficking as possible areas for cooperation.

Abdrakhmanov also discussed bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the heads of delegations from Austria, Italy, Macedonia, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Estonia and the European Union.

Talking to the European partners, the Kazakh minister stressed the need to strengthen contacts between citizens of Kazakhstan and European countries, including by simplifying the visa regime.

The spectrum of Kazakh-Aus-

trian relations was also discussed during the meeting with the OSCE Chair-in-Office – Austria's Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs Sebastian Kurz. Special attention was paid to the development of economic interaction with an emphasis on trade diversification, as well as legal cooperation, including the establishment of direct contacts between law enforcement agencies, the signing of bilateral treaties and the accession of Kazakhstan to the legal instruments of the Council of Europe.

Abdrakhmanov also congratulated Kurz for the victory of his Austrian People's Party at the parliamentary elections in October, wished him success in forming the new government and invited him to visit Kazakhstan.

A detailed conversation on global issues also took place with Secretary General of European External Action Service Helga Schmid. The diplomats considered the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme, the situation in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

While in Vienna, Abdrakhmanov also met with Lassina Zerbo, executive secretary of the preparatory commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) to discuss Kazakhstan's on-going cooperation with CTBTO in reaching its goal of ensuring the treaty's early entry into force.

## Human Rights Day marked at Foreign Ministry

By Almasbek Zhumadilov

ASTANA – To celebrate the International Human Rights Day, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the round table "Human Rights as the Basis of Harmonious Development of Society and the State" on Dec. 7 in Astana.

The event, chaired by Kazakhstan's Human Rights Commission Chair Kuanysh Sultanov, brought together Kazakh State Secretary Gulshara Abdykalikova, who also chairs the National Commission for Women Affairs and Family, as well as Prosecutor General Zhakyp Asanov, Labour and Social Protection Minister Tamara Duisseynova, Deputy Foreign Minister Roman Vassilenko, Justice Vice Minister Elvira Azimova, UNDP Resident Representative Norimasa Shimomura, head of the EU Delegation Traian Hristea, head of the OSCE Programme Office Gyorgy Szabo, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Coordinator for Central Asia Dejan Keserovic, British Charge d'Affaires Andrew MacAlister and other members of the diplomatic corps.

"President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev attaches great importance to the rule of law and the establishment of a legal culture in Kazakh society and respect for the constitutional rights of citizens in the context of the international obligations of our country," stressed Abdykalikova, opening the round table. "Kazakhstan has created a dynamically developing national system for the protection of human rights; its system-forming elements include the institution of the Ombudsman and the Commission on Human Rights under the head of state, which is a reliable link between the institutions of civil society and state bodies," she added. She noted the timeliness of their discussions on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948 as Resolution 217, as well as the preparation of a national report under the Third Universal Periodic Review in the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

The chair of Kazakhstan's Human Rights Commission stated that the Constitution of Kazakhstan,

having consolidated the political and legal bases of sovereignty, proclaimed the life, rights and freedoms of a person regardless of origin, social status, nationality, language and religion as the highest values of the state. "Kazakhstan is always guided by its international obligations in protection of human rights. The norms of human rights agreements approved by our state are included in the national legislation and practice of law enforcement," Sultanov noted.

Asanov informed participants about new procedures and mechanisms in working with citizens developed in 2017. "In accordance with the instructions of the head of state, we have improved the principles of working with citizens with the aim of increasing efficiency and saving resources. One of the results of the work done is the creation of our Law Enforcement Services Centre, which does not have any analogue in the world," he said.

Vassilenko pointed out that to date, Kazakhstan has joined all key international instruments in the field of the human rights promotion and protection, which demonstrates the firm commitment of the country to

the values and principles of human rights protection, as well as to consistently strengthening its national human rights system. "Kazakhstan actively interacts with the mechanism of the special procedures of the UNHRC. In 2009, we sent an open invitation to all mandate holders of the special procedures of the UNHRC," he stressed.

Shimomura thanked the Kazakh government for organising this important event and confirmed the readiness of the UN to provide further support to the initiatives of the government of Kazakhstan and the Human Rights Commission under the President. "The UN structures represented in your country are always ready to cooperate in fulfilling all obligations in the field of human rights and promoting sustainable development in Kazakhstan and beyond," he stated.

Assuring the commitment of the EU, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the IOM and British government to continue providing support to Kazakhstan in its efforts to ensure harmonious dialogue between civil society and the state, foreign speakers welcomed the Kazakh-EU Hu-

man Rights Dialogue in the framework of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the establishment of the office of the Ombudsman for Children's Rights and Kazakhstan's growing desire to strengthen engagement between government and civil society.

During the event, participants discussed issues of the realisation of human rights and freedoms in Kazakhstan, underscoring the importance of the country's current reform projects and Nazarbayev's policy article, "Course towards the Future," in improving human rights mechanisms and strengthening the national system for human rights protection. International and national experts who participated in the discussion praised human rights mechanisms in Kazakhstan.

Concluding the work of the round table, Sultanov presented a letter of gratitude to Szabo to mark the completion of OSCE Programme Office supported training seminars on human rights protection mechanisms that had been organised for representatives of the local governments, civil society and judiciary of areas in the West Kazakhstan, Kostanai and North Kazakhstan regions.

# ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## KABC, AIFC to cooperate on green finance, blockchain technology and crowdfunding

By Arsen Omarkulov

ASTANA – The Kazakhstan Association of Blockchain and Cryptocurrency (KABC) and Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) signed Dec. 11 a memorandum of cooperation covering fintech, green finance, asset management, development of a crowdinvesting environment, ICO and crowdfunding, as well as the blockchain technology.

This is definitely an important milestone for KABC and for the entire blockchain industry. The MoU signed today confirms that this topic

is on the AIFC's radar as well. We hope that the signing of this agreement will further boost the development of applications of the blockchain technology in our country. We, as an association, will direct all our efforts to encouraging our members to launch new projects within the AIFC's platform," said Eset Butin, chairman of KABC.

Butin and AIFC board chairman Nurlan Kussainov signed the document.

Kazakhstan Association of Blockchain and Cryptocurrency (KABC) was founded earlier this year in Almaty.

## All regional centres to be covered with 4G by end of 2017

Staff Report

ASTANA – Deputy Chairman of the State Control Committee in the field of Communications, Informatization and Mass Media of Kazakhstan Mikhail Komissarov recently announced Kazakhstan hopes to cover all regional centres with 4G by the end of 2017.

"The coverage of the population by 3G services amounted to 86.8 percent in 2016. 4G mobile services are provided in towns with a population of 50,000 people and higher. We expect that by the end of this year all regional centres will be covered with 4G," Komissarov said at a meeting of the public council on the development of information, information and communication technologies and the provision of public services.

He noted that one of the ministry's priorities in telecommunica-

tions is to provide the population with broadband internet access services.

"As a result of the creation of a modern telecommunications infrastructure, the number of internet users was 76.8 percent in 2016. According to this indicator, Kazakhstan ranks 36th in the Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum," the ministry official said.

Already the population is connected to the internet via a fibre-optic cable in all major cities of the country.

"The world trend is now certainly moving towards the development of wireless mobile networks, as evidenced by the growth in the number of cellular subscribers, the country now has more than 26 million subscribers. In Kazakhstan, the density of cellular subscribers ranked 17th in the world in 2017," Komissarov said.

## Kazakh GDP grows 3.9 percent in 11 months

Continued from Page A1

Transportation services rose by 4.8 percent, communications services by 3.2 percent, trade by 2.8 percent and real estate transactions by 2.5 percent.

"The investments in fixed assets grew by 5.7 percent and reached 7.5 trillion tenge (US\$22.35 billion). The main increases in investments go into agriculture, trade, construction and industry," he added.

The country's foreign trade turnover increased by 25.6 percent to \$62.1 billion. The export surplus soared by nearly 71.7 percent as a result of a more than twofold prevalence of growth in exports over growth in imports. The figure was also improved by growth in processed product export.

Sustained economic growth was accompanied by improvements in the social sector.

Job creation is one of the main priorities, said Suleimenov. The number of employees increased by 53,100 to 6.4 million and the average nominal monthly salary rose by 4.6 percent to 146,500 tenge (US\$437).

"The industry is making a breakthrough with an increase of 7.3 percent, while there was a drop last year. There are several reasons for this. Oil production and the manufacturing industry are growing. We expected 8.3 percent growth in oil production, but we already have growth of 10.9 percent. As for the manufacturing industry, growth was expected

at 4.5 percent, but it already reached 5.2 percent," said First Vice Minister of National Economy Ruslan Dalenov at the briefing.

The positive growth dynamics in industry, agriculture and construction are also noted in certain regions. The Atyrau region registered a 21.4-percent rise in industry ensured by stable oil production at the Kashagan field. The 11-month period produced 7.3 million tonnes, 46 percent ahead of the annual plan.

The Kyzylorda region with a 3.9 percent decrease and Mangistau region with a 0.4 percent decrease are still in the negative zone against the backdrop of a decline in oil production as a result of depletion of reserves.

## Electronic customs declaration to be launched January 1

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Two new customs codes, one each for Kazakhstan and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), will come into force Jan. 1. Under the new legislation, Kazakhstan will introduce the ASTANA-1 information system for electronic declaration, based on the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA). The programme has been under development since 2015, when the Ministry of Finance's State Revenue Committee signed the relevant agreement with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

"The ASTANA-1 information system is a multifunctional and complex system that will provide favourable conditions for participants in foreign trade activities and will allow automated monitoring of the entire customs process from the moment of submitting preliminary information to control after the release of goods," said Minister of Finance Bakhyt Sultanov, adding the introduction will lead to reducing the corruption level by

minimising direct contact between participants in foreign economic activity and customs authorities.

The programme launch will also include the single window for export-import operations, which is also aimed at significantly reducing customs clearance and simplifying customs declaration procedures.

"ASTANA-1 is being introduced in stages. On Oct. 1 of this year, the Customs Transit subsystem was put into trial operation. Starting from Jan. 1, 2018, there are plans to put its other subsystems into operation. The ASTANA-1 information system is set up in accordance with the norms of the Customs Code of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). At the same time, some innovations in the field of customs legislation have already been implemented, such as electronic declaration of goods, automatic registration of a customs declaration and automatic release of a declaration for goods," said Sultanov.

The main differences between the existing customs operations and ASTANA-1 are the reduction

of the number of information systems, the possibility of paperless declaration of goods, auto-release and auto-registration.

"In order to simplify the customs administration starting from Jan. 1, 2018, the single window mechanism will be launched for nine permissive documents. Out of these, seven documents are under the competence of the Ministry of Agriculture, one under the competence of the Ministry of Healthcare, one under the competence of conformity assessment bodies (organisations accredited by the Committee for technical regulation and metrology of the Ministry of Investment and Development), which account for 80 percent of the total number of permitting documents required for customs clearance," he added.

ASYCUDA has been introduced in more than 90 countries, mostly developing ones. According to asyCUDA.org, 43 countries are in Africa. Thirteen European and Central Asian nations have introduced it as their customs declaration system, including Afghanistan, Georgia, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Turkmenistan.

## Mining companies in Kostanai region boost digital technology use

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Large mining enterprises in the Kostanai region have developed and implemented roadmaps for technological modernisation under Kazakhstan's third modernisation programme. Investments in projects executed by companies through 2025 will total 92.7 billion tenge (US\$276.2 million).

The roadmaps are in use by SSGPO, Kostanai Minerals and Varvarinskoye. Regional deputy akim (governor) Meirzhan Myrzaliyev spoke about the ways each enterprise plans to introduce the new technologies and modernise their operations during the regional administration meeting, reported Kazinform.

SSGPO has taken the first steps in the updating process. During the Dec. 6 nationwide TV broad-

cast, the Smart Career system was launched at Kachar quarry with the participation of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Using the system, the company plans to increase mining equipment productivity by 10 percent. Increases are expected as well in movement speed and equipment distribution.

The company also plans to implement cycle-flow technology in the quarry's career programme, a project planned for 2017-2021,

and a new factory complex to be launched in 2018-2023.

"The construction of the factory complex will increase the volume of mining of iron ore at the Kachar quarry by 50 percent, which will give an additional two million tonnes of finished products per year. At the same time, the productivity of one section of the concentrator will increase 3.5 times. There is a need to invest 92.1 billion tenge (US\$274.4 million). The construction of a new factory complex involves the creation of an additional 250 jobs," said Myrzaliyev.

Kostanai Minerals plans to modernise the enrichment complex by transitioning to a one-stage enrichment scheme and introducing an automated system to monitor and control technological equipment. Plans are also underway to automate the concentrating plant. The company will be buying drum classifiers, which will allow controlling the fractional composition of the finished product and improve the performance of high chrysotile grades.

"In the next year, we plan to introduce a digital system for the registration of technical inspections and equipment repairs, which will allow us to visualise the technical condition of the mechanisms. Also, we plan to develop a system for accumulating information on the quality of blasting operations," said Kostanai Minerals chairperson Yerbol Nurkhozhaev.

The company has implemented approximately 200 projects from 2012-2017 and invested more than two billion tenge (US\$6 million). The investments helped the company receive an economic boost of 4.7 billion tenge (US\$14 million). In the near future, more

**Kostanai Minerals plans to modernise the enrichment complex by transitioning to a one-stage enrichment scheme and introducing an automated system to monitor and control technological equipment.**

than 100 large projects with investments in excess of 2.5 billion tenge (US\$7.5 million) and total efficiency reaching at least 4.3 billion tenge (US\$12.8 million) are planned.

Varvarinskoye expects to build a crushing and screening complex at the gold extraction and processing plant and install additional equipment for SART + AVR detoxification. Construction of a tailing pond is also anticipated.

### ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Akhmetzhan Yessimov was appointed Dec. 23 Chairman of the Board of the Samruk Kazyna National Welfare Fund. On behalf of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev and Head of the Presidential Administration Adilbek Dzhakysbekov introduced Yessimov to the staff of the Samruk-Kazyna. Yessimov previously held the post of the Chairman of the Board of the Astana EXPO 2017 National Company and was widely credited for the successful organisation and holding of the EXPO 2017 international exhibition last summer. Sagintayev noted Yessimov's merits before the country and emphasised his high professionalism and responsibility in accomplishing the most difficult tasks set by the government.

The Atyrau refinery is set to increase motor fuel production and the commissioning work has started on the deep oil refining complex, reported 24.kz. The project, part of the Industrialisation Map, aims to increase refining depth and volumes and produce high-quality fuel. Nearly 500 new jobs have been created at the complex. The plant's management has noted one-stage production growth is still not possible, as the tests and reaching the designed capacity will take several months. "The commissioning of this complex will allow sharply increasing the production of diesel fuel of the K4 and K5 standards, which are an analogue of Euro 4 and Euro 5... Diesel fuel production will increase 23 percent," said Atyrau Oil Refinery General Director Galimzhan Amanturilin.

Fifty-five significant projects worth 162 billion tenge (US\$484.38 million) were implemented under the Industrialisation Programme in the Zhambyl region, reported khabar.kz. In the country's 26 years of independence, the region has attracted about 2 trillion tenge (US\$5.98 billion) in investments, creating more than 6,300 new jobs and growing its gross regional product 110-fold in nominal terms. Zhambyl's agro-industrial complex is also developing dynamically, industrial production volumes are increasing, social and cultural facilities are being constructed and the quality of residents' lives has significantly improved.

The current year has become the most successful for air carriers in Kazakhstan in the past five years, according to finprom.kz. Approximately 6.8 million individuals were transported from January-November, a 1.3 million or 22.2-percent hike compared to last year, as incomes exceeded 260 billion tenge (US\$777.4 million). The increase in the number of passengers has translated into growth in airline revenue, which reached 266.4 billion tenge (US\$796.53 million), or 26.4 percent more than the same period in 2016.

Several additional major international brands will be franchised in the Kazakh market next year, reported 24.kz. They include projects from Australia, Japan and South Korea, according to Franchising Association forecasts. Experts note the domestic market currently offers sufficient copies of the world's most famous clothing and fast food brands and the market is saturated. As a result, entrepreneurs are looking for new niches and the franchises will feature coffee shops and retail, medical and other services. Domestic brands will also be franchising in China, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine.

The Ontustik Business Service Centre provided support for more than 2,000 entrepreneurs to set up their own businesses in the South Kazakhstan region, said head of the centre Gani Umirzakov at a Dec. 22 briefing. It is planned to create 3,600 jobs. "The annual indicator is 2,500 people and the plan is fulfilled by 105 percent. This year, 705 residents completed business basics courses and invested 2.5 billion tenge (US\$7 million) in their own business. Other participants are expecting funding," he said. The financed projects are mainly in the livestock, agriculture, production and services spheres. More than 240 business plans worth more than \$3 million have been developed for nearly 47 agricultural production cooperatives and 196 members of cooperatives. The centre is transferring its operations into a digital format.



# BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Farmers in the South Kazakhstan region have increased their meat exports to Iran. High-quality products are in high demand in the foreign market, and the Kazakh Kayip Ata company sold 6,000 sheep in the Iranian market this year. The sale of meat to Iran, where about 2.4 million tonnes of lamb is consumed annually, is a great opportunity for Kazakhstan to significantly increase its export potential. Kayip Ata has up-to-date equipment for the production and processing of meat and processes up to 1,000 head of small cattle.

Halyk Bank is going to finance exporters through the Kazakh-Export programme. Pre-export financing will be provided to Kazakh exporters at a reduced rate through KazakhExport, along with a wide range of support tools. Most domestic companies operating in foreign markets have problems with capital and pre-export financing can help them resolve the issue of increasing supplies to foreign partners and minimise losses in the event of non-fulfilment of their financial obligations. As of today, KazakhExport provides pre-export financing for companies including the Kentau Transformer Plant, Khlopokrom-Cellulose, Almaty Product, Araltuz, Huyndai Trans Auto, the Arasan Firm and others.

Hilton is to open two more hotels in Kazakhstan: DoubleTree by Hilton Almaty and Hampton by Hilton Astana Triumphal Arch. The company plans to have four hotels under four different brands in the nation, with the goal of attracting a diverse range of travellers. Hilton finds great potential in the local market in all areas of tourism. Head of Hilton Astana Stephan Reiter says the hotel has a perfect location, sitting very close to the EXPO exhibition area. According to him, the hotel was designed by a Kazakh expert whose touch can be seen throughout the premises.

Fitch Ratings reported about minority share buyout and delisting of KazMunayGas Exploration & Production (KMG EP). Experts believe that a 63 percent-owned upstream subsidiary of KazMunayGas National Company (NC KMG) should improve its financial flexibility and give it full access to KMG EP's cash flows and cash reserves, according to Kazinform. On Dec. 8, KMG EP announced that its board unanimously approved the launch of a conditional tender offer to repurchase all of its outstanding global depository receipts.

Starting in April 2018, Russia's Angara Airline plans to launch flights to Kazakhstan, Kapital.kz reports. At present, the Angara airline is undergoing the procedure for accrediting a foreign carrier for flights to Kazakhstan. Angara plans to open the following routes: Krasnoyarsk-Almaty, Irkutsk-Astana, Irkutsk-Almaty and Krasnoyarsk-Astana. The Kazakh Civil Aviation Committee is actively implementing a programme linking the large cities of Kazakhstan and Russia, thereby developing the transit potential of local airports. According to Angara Airline representative Andrei Pautov, this direction will be in demand by members of the Kazakh diaspora living in the Irkutsk region, Siberia and the Far Eastern Federal District of Russia, as well as tourists wishing to visit Baikal Lake. Angara is one of the main air carriers of Eastern Siberia and provides regular passenger flights in the Irkutsk region, Siberia and the Far Eastern Federal District, as well as charter flights around Russia.

Kazakh companies produced 77,196 kilogrammes of raw gold from January to November, 13.9 percent more than in the same period in 2016, Kazinform reports. According to the Statistics Committee of Ministry of National Economy, the volume of raw silver production reached 958,040 kilogrammes for the reporting period, 12.8 percent less than last year.

## PM stresses commitment to attracting foreign investment

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – Eleven agreements and memoranda worth more than \$3 billion were signed at the Dec. 5 Kazakhstan Global Investment Roundtable, which gathered investors from more than 30 countries in advance of Industrialisation Day in the Kazakh capital.

In particular, agreements were reached on the Big Almaty Ring Motor Road and public-private partnership (PPP) project establishing the Nur Zholy motor vehicle crossing point within a section of the Western Europe – Western China highway. Memoranda were also signed on constructing an agribusiness complex and fruit processing facility, ceramic tile production and plant protection products.

Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev discussed economic trends, investment possibilities and

measures to promote foreign direct investments (FDI) with representatives of more than 100 major international companies.

"The government aims at forming a large-scale and sustainable strategy to stimulate a new generation of investments in Kazakhstan. Today's meeting is one of the important steps in this direction and we are open to your suggestions and new ideas," he said to welcome the participants.

He outlined measures taken in the country to improve the investment climate and expand investment opportunities.

"First, after the difficulties of 2014-2016 linked with world changes, the economy of Kazakhstan has stabilised. Thanks to the adopted measures, the GDP grew 4 percent in the first 10 months of this year. For the first time [since the slowdown], private investments exceeded state ones," he said.

Sagintayev added implementing major new reforms, including constitutional reform, modernisation of Kazakhstan's identity and a strategy on a new model for economic growth implies the country's entry into a new stage of development and facilitates its ambition to enter the top 30 developed countries of the world.

Foreign investors can benefit from the nation's policy on developing science-intensive production, renewing the basic branches of the economy and the agro-industrial complex, he said. The third stage of modernisation opens new opportunities for investors in various sectors of the economy, such as metallurgy, machine building, agro-industrial complex, processing and the food industry, Sagintayev said.

"Today, Kazakhstan is one of the world leaders in the production of wheat and flour. We are strengthening this advantage, but we are also

carrying out structural reform of the agricultural sector, diversifying crop areas in line with market demand," he noted.

Investors gain access to the largest markets through Kazakhstan's integration policy within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Sagintayev believes it is important to establish effective trade relations with neighbours to raise the country's attractiveness, especially with China.

"The remaining trade barriers with China will be regulated and removed as early as 2018. This will open a very large market. Agricultural and organic products manufactured in Kazakhstan are in high demand in China," he said.

According to PriceWaterhouseCoopers and the World Bank, Kazakhstan is 18th of 189 countries in terms of investment climate favourability, he noted. The nation is also ranked 36th of 190 countries in the

World Bank's 2018 Doing Business ranking. In that same ranking, Kazakhstan was rated first among the 190 countries considered in Protecting Minority Investors. In addition to protecting minority investors, the country ranked sixth in enforcing contracts.

"Nevertheless, the government is focused to further promote Kazakhstan in the Doing Business rating. Thus, the new seventh package of legislative amendments has been prepared to improve the business environment at national and sub-national levels," said Sagintayev.

"Over the last 10 years, approximately \$250 billion of FDI was attracted in various sectors of the economy. We are grateful to every investor who came to Kazakhstan and implements projects here. We hope their example and today's conversation will inspire you to conquer new business heights in Kazakhstan," he added.

## Halyk Bank board of directors approves merger with Qazkom

By Frol Leandoer

ASTANA – The Halyk Bank board of directors has approved a merger with Kazkommertsbank (Qazkom). The agreement will be finalised after passing all necessary procedures, including appropriate coordination with regulatory bodies.

"After five months of painstaking work with international consultants, we can confidently state that the potential of the transaction is huge both in scale and in terms of the degree of influence on the economy of Kazakhstan and a number of neighbouring countries. Integration of banks is the most optimal option for further development of the group. The core of integration is the principle of maximum synergy, based on combining the strengths of the two banks. We will take all the best: the most developed banking infrastructure in the country and the best risk management of Halyk Bank and the modern technologies and standards of Qazkom customer service, as well as knowledge, experience in serving

millions of customers and the most competitive products and services of both banks," said Halyk Bank board chair Umur Shayakhmetova

The accession will be completed once the necessary prerequisites and service and technological readiness provisions of the two financial institutions have been created. The steps include synchronising the product offer, banking procedures and processes and integrating the IT systems and banking infrastructure.

"We expect that the association, when creating the largest bank, will improve the access of clients to loans and a broader product line and provide additional incentives for the development of business and the economy. The investment opportunities of the Halyk Group will allow the advanced development of Qazkom's know-how to be more actively developed. All this together gives us confidence that we will continue to maintain and strengthen our technological leadership and quality of service," said Qazkom board chair Ulf Vokurka.

The main emphasis in the integration process will be on ensuring the

smooth operation of all services at both banks to ensure customers are not inconvenienced.

Improving services and increasing their availability began with the unification of ATM networks in July. Halyk Bank and Qazkom subsequently implemented joint card projects, including the consumer lending programme Halyk Light + Homebank Orange. In the future, banks will bring a number of services for money transfers and card payments to market on the internet, launching a completely new online bank and its mobile application for entrepreneurs being serviced at the Halyk Group. The banks will seek to make every effort to more fully reveal the synergetic potential of the association to clients.

## S&P gives Tengri Bank B+ rating

By Arsen Omarkulov

ASTANA – On Dec. 13 the international rating agency S&P Global Ratings confirmed the long-term credit rating of Tengri Bank at the level of B+.

Tengri Bank is one of five second-tier banks with the same or higher rating from S&P Global Ratings among 32 second-tier Kazakh banks.

The bank's major shareholder is the second largest state-owned bank in India – Punjab National Bank (PNB), which was established in 1895 and services approximately 100 million customers through more than 6,000 branches.

The equity capital of Punjab National Bank (PNB) is \$6.8 billion, assets total \$113.2 billion, and the long-term credit rating of Punjab National Bank (PNB) is BBB.

As of Nov. 1, Tengri Bank assets increased 49.4 percent compared to the beginning of the year and stood at \$317.9 million. The increase resulted from an increase of the bank's loan portfolio by 59.2 percent to \$257.4 million for the same period. Therefore, the bank's deposit portfolio as of the indicated date increased 52 percent to \$188.9 million, and the bank's equity capital to more than \$68.5 million.

Currently, the debut issue of Eurobonds worth \$175 million is going on, which will strengthen the funding base of the bank. Thus, as of Nov. 1, Tengri Bank is in first place in terms of asset increase, in third place by the increase of the loan portfolio and in second by the growth of the deposit portfolio among second-tier Kazakh banks.

## Largest Chinese bank considering opening subsidiary in Kazakhstan

By Frol Leandoer

ASTANA – China Construction Bank (CCB) is considering opening a subsidiary in Kazakhstan as a result of negotiations between the governments. The parties understand the important role of Kazakhstan as a link in China's Belt and Road Initiative and the nation's financial institutions.

Kazakh Ambassador to China Shakhmat Nuryshev met with CCB board chair Tian Gol to discuss cooperation issues between the country's and bank's financial structures. Nuryshev noted the important role of Chinese financial institutions in combining the Nury Zholy new economic policy and Belt and Road, as well as in implementing 51 projects worth \$28 billion under the Kazakh-Chinese industrialisation and investment programme.

"In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Kazakhstan and put forward an initiative to build the Silk Road Economic Belt. Over the past four years he visited Kazakhstan three times, which indicates the high level of our relations. This contributes to the development of political, trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian cooperation between the two countries. Recently, the Shanghai International Stock Exchange successfully hosted the presentation of the Astana Inter-

national Financial Centre (AIFC), which will be starting in 2018 on the territory of EXPO 2017 and operate the largest financial hub in the Central Asian region. In this regard, we invite your bank to take an active part in AIFC activities," said Nuryshev.

"Kazakhstan has great potential and is an important link in the implementation of the initiative of the Silk Road Economic Belt. Our bank is ready to take an active part in implementing projects and investing in the country's economy," said Goli.

The parties also discussed opening a CCB subsidiary in Kazakhstan. Founded on Oct. 1, 1954 in Beijing, the bank provides financial services such as lending, mortgage lending, insurance, savings accounts and currency and credit card transactions.

CCB has approximately 375,000 employees. The bank has 15,000 branches in China, 11 subsidiary banks and 22 branches abroad, including in East Asia, Germany, Russia, South Africa, the U.S., U.K., and Vietnam.

The bank was ranked second this year in the Forbes Global 2000 international rating and 28th in the Fortune Global 500 rating. As of May, CCB's assets were \$3.01 trillion; market capitalisation, \$200.5 billion; annual income, \$134.24 billion (-8.7 percent) and profit, \$34.98 billion (-4 percent). CCB has 3.9 million legal and 340 million physical clients.

FROM THE HEART OF EURASIA

A WORLD OF PRIVILEGES

Thank you for your continued loyalty and support over the past 10 years.

airastana.com

# EDITORIAL & OPINION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## Challenging year should strengthen resolve to do better in 2018

As we enter the final few days of the year, turbulence seems the best way to sum up the last 12 months internationally. As this newspaper has said before, in too many cases the divisions sadly evident within the global community have widened. The world seems, too, further away from finding lasting solutions to major challenges, such as ending conflict in the Middle East.

The violence of extremist groups continues to cast its shadow over many millions of lives across the world. Successes in some geographical areas are offset by increased worries elsewhere. It is also profoundly disturbing, as we have remarked, that the threat of nuclear conflict between states is again a real concern. It has never been more important, as Kazakhstan is determined to help achieve, to re-energise the drive to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Nor has the need for dialogue and cooperation, which our country has consistently championed, been clearer. Kazakhstan should continue to use its position on the UN Security Council over the next year to help deliver these goals just as initiatives such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions are helping promote understanding between the faiths.

But while few would claim that the last 12 months internationally have been positive, here at home there are more reasons to look back on the year with optimism. Thanks to the courage in taking tough long-term decisions, the economy is again going strongly in the right direction.

After the challenges caused by the collapse of global oil prices, growth in the first 11 months of 2017 reached almost 4 percent, and it is projected to reach that number by the yearend. Coupled with steady inflation, this has led to upgrades in the international forecasts for the Kazakh economy for the years ahead.

Importantly, too, for the future, this improved performance extends well beyond the oil and commodity sectors. We are now seeing the results of the efforts and investment to diversify and modernise the economy which has been given powerful fresh impetus over the last 12 months. The Third Modernisation programme set out by President Nursultan Nazarbayev is aimed at accelerating the speed of progress.

Kazakhstan is also reaping the rewards from the

indispensable role the country is playing in the modern Silk Road. By investing in transport links and infrastructure, it is creating new jobs and driving economic growth at home as well as supporting global trade and prosperity.

Kazakhstan has signalled strongly, against a background of protectionist tendencies around the world, that it will remain an open economy. The New Silk Road and the wider Belt and Road initiative, put forward by China, along with the other new transport routes in which Kazakhstan is deeply involved, are powerful examples of an international, collaborative approach for shared rewards. There is a strong need for other countries and regions to follow this lead.

EXPO 2017 was, of course, another example of the strong international stance that underlines Kazakhstan's policies and ambitions. The exhibition was enjoyed by many thousands of visitors every week during the summer and was seen as a success by more than 100 international exhibitors.

In the long-term, the role EXPO played in showcasing the latest developments in future energy will help promote sustainable growth around the world. At home, the knowledge learned and ideas shared will help drive the modernisation of our economy and the higher profile will increase investment and boost tourism.

The exhibition was also carefully planned to leave a lasting physical legacy. Astana's new rail station and airport terminal are key parts of the plan to improve Kazakhstan's transport infrastructure while the modern, developed and sustainable site will also house the Astana International Financial Centre. Its launch next year will provide new opportunities for new partnerships in the Kazakh and Central Asian economy.

This is an exciting development which, along with the celebration of Astana's 20th anniversary, will be extensively covered in our paper next year. So, too, will Kazakhstan's continued position on the UNSC, which the country will chair next month. It is a heavy responsibility in an era of such division and tension.

But it is more important than ever that the sound values which underpin Kazakhstan's foreign policy help guide global decision-making so trust can be rebuilt across the international community. This should be all our hope for the happier New Year which we wish all our readers.

While few would claim that the last 12 months internationally have been positive, here at home there are more reasons to look back on the year with optimism.

## Every day is Human Rights Day

By Norimasa Shimomura

Ever since the Charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945, human rights have constituted one of the three pillars of our work, along with peace and development.

This year, Human Rights Day kicks off a year-long campaign to mark the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The power of the Universal Declaration is the power of principles to change the world. It tells us that human rights are essential and indivisible – 365 days a year. Every day is Human Rights Day: a day on which we work to ensure that all people can live with equality, dignity and freedom.

The commitment to 'leaving no one behind' is a key feature of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2016-2030, meaning that the UN Member States commit to ensuring that every individual achieves the full package of rights and opportunities the SDGs promise, by ending extreme poverty, promoting equity, creating a sustainable and inclusive economy, and by protecting the planet, in close partnership among the nations.

Standing behind the principle of 'leaving no one behind', the UN system strives to work on a number of issues:

– We work closely with Kazakhstan's law enforcement bodies and forensic experts to ensure effective



torture investigation in accordance with the principles of Istanbul Protocol on Effective Investigation and Documentation of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

– We pay special attention to the gender-based violence focusing on overcoming stereotypes and gender barriers and building a violence-free environment for women, children and persons with disabilities. In particular, we provide expertise on protecting victims' rights and avoidance of secondary victimisation;

– We support the efforts of the Supreme Court to improve the justice system for children and protect their rights.

– We also promote broader access to justice by supporting alternative dispute resolution mechanisms with application of out-of-court decisions, including mediation and conciliation.

– We help strengthen Kazakhstan's judiciary by modernising training of judges and the courts' administration staff.

As currently Kazakhstan is preparing its report to the Committee

on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN is ready to support the initiatives of the Commission on Human Rights under the President of Kazakhstan and the Kazakh Government in this area. Further to our earlier support to the development of the new Concept on Family and Gender Policy signed by the President, we will continue our support in relation to the programme of Family without Violence, of the National Commission and the Prosecutor-General's Office.

Kazakhstan ratified almost all core human rights documents, and I take this opportunity to call on the Government to join in the others. The country has actively engaged with the UN human rights mechanisms, including the recent visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The constant test for the Government is to implement recommendations given by the UN human rights mechanisms. This is an on-going process that should guide not only the country's legislative and policy developments but also programmes and measures at all levels, and in the law-enforcement practice.

The UN entities present in the country stand ready to partner with Kazakh authorities and civil society in meeting all the human rights obligations and advancing sustainable human development in Kazakhstan and beyond.

The author is UN Resident Coordinator for Kazakhstan.

## We are only at the beginning, says Latvian ambassador of relations

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – December marks a quarter century of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and Latvia. To highlight the anniversary, Latvian Ambassador Juris Pogrebnaks spoke about what has been reached and what is ahead for both countries.

"I would like to congratulate all the people of Kazakhstan on last year's 25th anniversary of independence and congratulate all friends of Latvia in Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan's friends in Latvia on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. And it is only the beginning," he said in an interview with The Astana Times.

"We share some common pages of history. Perhaps it gives us additional opportunities to understand each other better, to develop the political dialogue and to respect our different cultures," he added.

All five Latvian presidents have visited Kazakhstan in the last 25 years, two during the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) summit and Astana EXPO 2017. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Latvia in 2006.

The visits have given strong support to various relations between the countries.

"In parallel, we have established everyday working relations between the governments. We have an inter-governmental commission, which is meeting regularly. We have established a special mechanism of cooperation between the business circles of both states, which is the business council. In general, it gives a very good base. I have to mention the wide legal basis and the agreements we have concluded between the states. It gives a legal platform for cooperation in all the spheres of our bilateral relationships starting with political dialogue, but also including business, cultural and educational exchanges," said Pogrebnaks.

"Latvia, being a member of the European Union since 2004, recently held the Presidency of the EU Council [in 2015] and one of the priorities in foreign policy was to help European relationships with Central Asia and



Juris Pogrebnaks

Kazakhstan in particular. I should remind you that during our presidency, the institution of the EU special representative for Central Asia was re-established and reintroduced. During 2015, the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed between the EU and Kazakhstan and Latvia was the first EU member to ratify the agreement," he said.

Pogrebnaks emphasised this shows Kazakhstan has a very good friend within the EU.

"After 2015, we continued to be active within Central Asia and making EU policy towards the region and we consider that the EU's new foreign policy strategy should pay additional attention to the Central Asian region and it should be properly tackled in the strategy as well," he noted.

Latvia is the newest member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and can offer its experience to Kazakhstan, which is seeking to become a member of the organisation in the future, he added.

Kazakhstan is Latvia's main trading partner in the Central Asia region. According to Latvian data, last year's turnover was 122.6 million Euros (US\$145 million), which included both products and services.

"Services take a bigger part and this shows that it is already modern business relations, because in modern society services provide additional value to the old relationships. Of services, the first place goes to transportation. The tourism sector and commerce services are also growing within the service package," said Pogrebnaks.

Latvia seeks to strengthen cooperation in traditional areas, such as

transportations and logistics, which "pays special attention both in bilateral relations and in multinational context to develop a connection between Asia and Europe in general," said the ambassador.

"We can play bigger roles in providing these connections between two parts of the continent or fostering trans-Eurasian transportation. The visit of Latvian President Raimonds Vējonis to Astana during the expo and Kazakhstan's First Deputy Prime Minister Askar Mamin's visit to Riga at the end of September gave new impetus for the cooperation in the transit and transport spheres," he noted.

"The first container train was launched from the Chinese province of Urumqi through Khorgos dry port to Riga's seaport and further on to Western Europe, and we see great potential in the cooperation of the railway connections in the future as well. As you know, we can provide the distribution of goods for the Baltic region and Scandinavia," he added.

The nations are also cooperating in green economy. Information technologies and communication is the fastest growing industry within the Latvian economy and also an area where the country is looking to expand ties. Latvia also sees an additional possibility to enhance cooperation in education.

As for the priorities of his term, Pogrebnaks noted in addition to developing all existing and possible fields of cooperation, he would also like the two countries to learn more about each other's culture, history and traditions.

To mark the anniversary, the embassy will soon launch an exhibit dedicated to Latvian achievements in the 20th-21st centuries, including Minox cameras, the heart drug Meldonium, drones, JZ microphones and citric acid. A bigger exhibition is planned next year as part of Latvia's centenary.

The exchanges between Riga and Astana as sister cities are contributing to the Latvian-Kazakh relationships, said Pogrebnaks. Air Baltic, the country's national carrier, is planning to re-establish direct connections between the two states next spring which is meant to link even more closely the people of Latvia and Kazakhstan.

**KAZAKH TV**

DISCOVER KAZAKHSTAN WITH KAZAKH TV

kazakh-tv.kz

THE ASTANA TIMES

THE ASTANA TIMES

Editor-in-Chief: Roman Vassilenko

Moscow Business Centre, 18 Dostyk Street, Office 33, Astana, 010000

Telephone/Facsimile: +7 7172 78 00 08

Distribution in Astana: +7 7172 44 51 58, (224)

Publisher: Svezhaya Pressa LLP

News and Editorial: yuatkhanov@astanatimes.com

Advertising: +7 727 252 08 82

Inquiries: info@astanatimes.com

KazPost Subscription index: 64572

Advertiser bears responsibility for the content of advertisements. The newspaper does not answer the readers' letters, does not mail them, does not consider copies the size of over 5 printed pages, does not review and does not return the materials not ordered by the newspaper. Guest opinions do not necessarily reflect the newspaper's opinion. For reprinting, permissions must be sought and obtained first from The Astana Times, and reference must be made to "The Astana Times". The Astana Times is printed at "Media Holding "ERNUR" LLP, 30 Sileti Street, Astana.

The Astana Times is published since November 2010. The Astana Times is re-registered by the Ministry of Communications and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the registration No. 14037-G of 20 December 2013. The newspaper is typed and made into pages at the computer centre of "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda". Published biweekly, the size of 8 pages.

ORDER: 2005

PRINT RUN: 6,000

# OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## Contemporary model of state, independent from corruption: initiatives and achievements of Kazakhstan

By Alik Shpekbayev

Considering the dynamics of the progress of developed countries, Kazakhstan continues modernizing and building a modern state similar to leading countries in preventing corruption. Non-acceptance of compromises in the formation of corruption free society is emphasized by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Key components of success are the following:

- transparent and accountable to society state;
- professional, efficient and economically motivated state apparatus;
- ensuring the rule of law and strengthening the protection of rights and freedoms;
- support and protection of businesses;
- purposeful and consistent implementation of anti-corruption policy;
- development and enhancement of international cooperation.

All necessary conditions have been created to achieve this purpose. Large-scale economic, social and political reforms have been carried out. The third modernization of Kazakhstan is underway.

The first prerequisite of modernization is the establishment of an open and accountable government.

In this regard, we have adopted a Law on Information Access and created an Open Government electronic platform, consisting of five open data websites that facilitate citizens' participation in the affairs of state.

This enables every citizen to check budget expenditures, receive online consultations and file online complaints, assess the effectiveness of government authorities as well as participate in discussing draft laws in distance.

In 2017, 47 percent of public services rendered electronically. All the licenses and permits issued for businesspeople in electronic format only.

Twenty-four percent of services rendered through "one stop shop" of the "Government for Citizens" state corporation.

These measures have allowed reducing the level of "day-to-day corruption" by two thirds.



Database integration of the ministries of internal affairs, finance and justice has already made it possible to exclude the need to obtain about 3 million one-time certificates.

As a result, Kazakhstan reached leading positions in the electronic government development index among South East Asian countries. Kazakhstan is 33rd among 174 countries according to the UN index.

In the coming years, 90 percent of public services will be transferred to an electronic format, the rest 10 percent will be delivered through "one stop shop" based on the experience of European and other most developed countries.

"Digital Kazakhstan 2020" state programme is implemented in four key areas such as development of affordable and high-speed digital infrastructure and increasing digital literacy of population in order to achieve sustainable economic growth, increase the country's competitiveness, and improve the quality of life of the population.

As part of the country's modernization process, 35 functions of the President Nazarbayev have been transferred, thus strengthening the role of the Parliament and the autonomy of the government.

Starting from 2018 local budgets will be adopted only after considering the needs and interests of every region's citizens. Society will actively participate in the state governance.

Kazakhstan Government works on reducing in 2018-2020 more than 40 percent of supervisory functions by transferring to a competitive environment and increasing civil servants' salaries by two or more times. The civil service begins with entry-level positions. It is necessary to pass a three-stage selection system,

including testing for knowledge of legislation, assessment of competences and an interview. Career promotion is merit-based.

As a result, the number of newcomers to the civil service has increased threefold, the turnover of staff has decreased by half, and transfers have decreased 18 times.

In order to increase the transparency of the state apparatus, it is envisaged that foreign managers can be hired in state authorities.

A key aspect of the reforms was the development of modern justice: transition to a three-level justice system, the independence of the procedure for the selection and appointment of judges, adoption of a new code of ethics for judges, full automation of managing of court records and distribution of court cases, as well as continuous audio and video recording of all court hearings.

In December 2015, the President signed the Law on the establishment of the Astana International Financial Centre. Following the experience of Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, an independent financial court, based on the principles of the English common law, will operate within the Centre starting from January 2018.

This will allow for effective protection of foreign investors and resolution of investment disputes.

The results of international ratings prove the effectiveness of the on-going reforms. According to the Global Competitiveness Index, Kazakhstan has improved its "Judicial Independence" indicator by moving from 111th to 79th place.

In the past three years, Kazakhstan's judiciary moved 29 positions up (from the 35th to the 6th place) in the "Ensuring the fulfilment of contracts" indicator of the World Bank "Doing Business - 2018" rating among 190 countries.

The reforms also touched upon the law enforcement system and the prosecutorial authorities.

The new appearance of the prosecutor's office meets the best practices of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and puts a priority on the protection and restoration of human

rights and freedoms, as well as the legality of the criminal process.

Functions of the police are decentralized by creating a local police service, which is accountable to local executive authorities.

The system of recruiting to law enforcement agencies has changed. Now, candidates for law enforcement agencies undergo the same selection process as all state employees.

Today, the emphasis in the penal system is shifted to probation and re-socialization.

As a result, the number of institutions of the penitentiary system is decreasing. In total, this allowed to reduce the prison population by three times.

Protection of the rights and interests of business is another vector in the development of the modern state. In this regard, the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs was established in 2013. Its activity is aimed to improve the investment climate and develop business conditions for both national and foreign investors.

In order to improve the undertaken measures further and strengthen the role of business in combating corruption, the Institute of the Ombudsman for the Protection of the Entrepreneurs' Rights was introduced and the Council for the Protection of Entrepreneurs' Rights and Anti-Corruption was created.

The Foreign Investors' Council, chaired by the President of Kazakhstan, has been operating since 1998. It is focused on investment issues and investment attractiveness of the country.

The effectiveness of these institutions is evident in international ratings.

Notably, Doing Business - 2018 assessment ranks Kazakhstan 36th in the overall rating of 190 countries. We are the 1st in "Protecting minority investors."

Given that the activities of many entrepreneurs are related to public procurement, a number of measures have also been taken in this area to ensure transparency of all its procedures.

Today, all stages of public procurement, from planning to pay-

ment, are conducted electronically.

Full automation of the public procurement system has allowed for off-site online control (remote control) through the website.

Kazakhstan has made significant steps to reduce corruption. First of all, they are related to the implementation of the new anti-corruption policy of the state. The 100 Concrete Steps Plan of the Nation and the Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2015-2025 have formed the conceptual basis for the policy.

International rating agencies and national experts have positively evaluated the implemented measures.

According to the Transparency International's "Global Corruption Barometer," the proportion of Kazakh citizens observing the progress in combating corruption has doubled and the number of people giving bribes decreased by one third compared to three years ago.

These trends are facilitated by a new format of dialogue with the non-governmental sector, political parties, trade unions, businesses and academic communities.

Openness and willingness to cooperate have become important tools for increasing citizens' involvement and engagement in anti-corruption processes. This also serves as evidence that the society is becoming more responsible and conscious.

Modernization of public consciousness is impossible without changing habits and stereotypes and fostering anti-corruption culture of citizens.

The tools for preventing corruption identified in the new anti-corruption legislation have already demonstrated their effectiveness. These include anti-corruption monitoring, analysis of corruption risks, developing anti-corruption culture, anti-corruption standards, and preparation of the annual National Report.

The adopted systemic and comprehensive measures have generated the following results:

- administrative barriers, bureaucratic procedures and corruption risks have been reduced;
- quality of public services has been improved whilst the human

factor has been excluded due to automation and introduction of standards and regulations;

– legal awareness as well as legal and anti-corruption culture of people have increased;

– implementation of the Code of Ethics has led to close monitoring over its observance by civil servants;

– increase in civil servants' salaries is guaranteed.

The state does not intend to loose institutes of criminal prosecution of corruption crimes.

Officials convicted of corruption, regardless of their positions and ranks, are prosecuted with all the severity of the law. According to official data, more than 10 thousand people (10,931) have been convicted of corruption crimes since 2001. They are two former prime ministers, nine ministers and chairpersons of agencies, fifteen mayors of regions and cities, eight heads of national companies and eight generals of the national security, defense and law enforcement agencies.

The effectiveness of the anti-corruption measures implemented in Kazakhstan has been positively assessed by experts of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, the United Nations Development Programme, foreign diplomatic missions and international organizations based in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan intends to develop cooperation with international organizations and implement international standards.

The Agency currently works on a priority issue – accession of Kazakhstan to the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) of the Council of Europe.

In September 2017 the OECD gave a positive assessment of the implementation of the recommendations of the Istanbul Plan, which Kazakhstan has consistently implemented since 2004, embodying the anti-corruption standards of the OECD countries in legislative acts.

**The author is Chairman of Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Public Service Affairs and Anticorruption.**

**The full version of the opinion available online.**

## Cybercrimes divide the world into two

By Shavkat Sabirov

In the end of 2017, the world has developed a situation in which cybersecurity issues are considered as urgent as nuclear threats. The world has become digital.

The threats of the global network have become so grave that losses and damage are measured not just by large amounts of money, but also by human lives, sometimes of the rising generation.

Cyberspace opportunities are so powerful that they can organize rallies in tens of thousands of people and create real threats to the existence of the state system. There is even a new model of the global internet – the "splinternet," which implies the creation of national state segments of the Internet. New media and social networks represent the next stage of internet development, which by the number of users exceeds the population of many countries.

Alliances and arrangements that previously existed between countries were more of an intelligence nature and did not provide for a joint struggle regardless of the countries' bloc affiliation. That is why the Council of Europe adopted the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime in 2001, which for the first time defined and classified crimes in cyberspace and determined mechanisms for cooperation between countries, the order of interaction of law enforcement bodies and conditions for information storage by Internet providers. The convention entered into force July 1, 2004 and was signed by 30 countries in 2005, including European countries, the USA, Canada, Japan and South Africa.



It was based on voluntary information exchange and provision of technical access for participating countries. The countries that signed the convention had strong economic ties and most were part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) military bloc.

By the mid-2000s, the world was divided into two according to their approaches to cyberspace. Some countries, like the U.S. and Europe, insisted on the adoption of joint measures to counter cyber threats based on voluntary access to the countries' technical resources, while Russia, China and others insisted on taking measures to prevent the very threat of an information war. After heated debates at the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the sides began to act independently. One side acted within a military and political union; the others acted within bilateral relations and various associations. Joint cybersecurity collaboration continued only within the Computer Emergency Response Team.

The starting point for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was the establishment of joint measures to counter information security threats. The first intergovernmental SCO agreement

on information security cooperation was signed June 16, 2009. The document is unique in the sense that the participating states commit themselves not to use cyber weapons against other countries and assist other parties. In fact, the obligation not to use cyberforces equalises the threats of cyberspace with the threats of using nuclear weapons against the parties. Kazakhstan ratified the agreement on May 6, 2010.

By that time, Kazakhstan had already made significant steps towards building an information society and begun to provide public services in electronic format. Government databases were created and maintained, while the e-government had become an actual link between government agencies. With the digitalisation of the government system, the population learned to enjoy the benefits of the information society. However, the threats emanating from cyberspace had become widespread and affected the national security of entire states.

At the meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State on June 15, 2011, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that "it is time to introduce new concepts into international law such as electronic border and electronic sovereignty."

"It might be useful to think about creating a special SCO body that performs the functions of a cyberpol. Separatism, terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking use the global network to penetrate our countries and spread throughout the world," he said.

The Kazakh President's proposal to create a special SCO agency was relevant and timely. Some countries have already had rele-

vant offensive units and set up so-called "cyber troops." The development and maintenance of a new modern branch of troops in terms of intellectual costs are available only to some countries, such as the U.S., China, Russia, the U.K., Israel, Germany and, perhaps, Iran. Can Kazakhstan have such an army? It is very unlikely, but it is simply necessary to have e-borders and e-sovereignty.

Two years later, in December 2013, the OSCE participating states adopted the initial set of OSCE confidence-building measures (CBMs) to reduce the risks of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technologies. The CBMs list provides for data exchange and cooperation, consultations and coordination of participating states in information and communication technology (ICT) and internet security. The fundamental element of the entire document is the voluntary information exchange. Additional CBMs to "step up individual and collective efforts to address security in the use of ICTs in a comprehensive and cross-dimensional manner in accordance with OSCE commitments" were introduced in March 2016.

After the Edward Snowden case, significant changes were made to the work of the U.S. intelligence agencies; many countries took relevant measures to protect their information space and governmental institutions from external interference. Each country thought about its own digital sovereignty and started to carry out relevant work.

Resolution No. 407 of the Kazakh government of June 30, 2017 approved the concept of cybersecurity (Cybershield of Kazakhstan), which "determines the main

directions for implementing state policy in the field of protection of electronic information sources, information systems and telecommunications networks." Among them are the establishment of a national information security coordination centre, development and construction of electronic borders, "a unified approach to the monitoring of information security" and "the development of mechanisms for preventing and promptly responding to information security incidents."

The key problems of Kazakhstan's information space identified in the concept include the presence of a large number of malicious programmes, low legal literacy of the population in information security, poor knowledge of protection methods, lack of educational institutions and specialists, less than 5 percent of products of Kazakh origin, high risks of high level of digitalisation and automation, the illusion of impunity created by the cross-border nature of cybercriminals and, finally, tension and the "use of ICT for intelligence, subversive and other purposes" created by ICT militarisation by countries.

It appears that in their analysis of international experience, the authors of the Cybershield Concept focused on the Global Cybersecurity Index of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which, albeit useful, does not reflect the real situation in countries since it is based on formal signs of cybersecurity development. There is a need to study the real experience of countries that are truly advanced and have all the potential for this.

Kazakhstan, which is rapidly integrating into the digital world,

considers cybersecurity as its top priority. Automation of enterprises and organisations, e-government development, introduction of information systems into national companies and widespread use of modern technologies in the banking sector require appropriate security systems not only at the corporate level, but also at the national one.

Over the past six months, there has been a large number of documents, legal acts and draft laws seeking to change legislation in the field of cybersecurity. This is done primarily to ensure the compliance of the work of the recently created Ministry of Defense and Aerospace Industry with the legal framework. This new industry destined to become a backbone of the economy is under development; and these processes and changes accompanying them will affect all levels of the society and the state.

Unfortunately, the reality so far is that each country promotes its own models of information security, taking into account only military-political and bloc interests. Further development and efforts on collective confidence-building measures between countries could only be ensured at the global platforms of the UN and the OSCE. Cross-border nature of cybercrimes is a problem not only at the national, but also at the international level. The immediate and effective fight against cyberterrorism is possible only through cooperation between countries. There is no other option.

**The author is President of the Internet Association of Kazakhstan and a member of the Public Council overseeing the work of the Kazakh Foreign Ministry.**

# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## Officials and experts agree united efforts against corruption give positive results

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – More than 60 per cent of Kazakhstan's public services are provided in electronic format which has reduced the level of domestic corruption by two-thirds, said State Secretary Gulshara Abdylkalikova at the Dec. 8 Modern Anti-Corruption Standards and International Cooperation Development conference in the capital. The event was held one day prior to the UN-recognised International Anti-Corruption Day, marked annually since 2004.

"President Nursultan Nazarbayev's political will is the basis of the country's anti-corruption policy. The fight against corruption is one of the key priorities of the Third Modernisation of Kazakhstan. The Plan of the Nation and the Anti-Corruption Strategy up to 2025 are aimed at a systemic fight against corruption with a focus on preventing it. The new legislation on public service and anti-corruption is based on this initiative," she said.

Kazakhstan ranks 33rd among 174 countries in the United Nations E-government Development Index. Seven state programmes to combat corruption have been implemented and eight draft laws, 30 by-laws and eight public service standards developed since 1995, as further means to reduce potential for corruption.

"One of the main tasks is to use a wide array of means of media communication to involve the entire society in the fight against corruption, to form a strong immunity to corruption and to develop a sustainable anti-corruption culture in the context of promoting digitalisation in Kazakhstan," she said.

Fifty-nine laws have been adopted as part of the institutional reforms, said Chairman of the



Agency for Civil Service and Anti-Corruption Kairat Kozhamzharov.

The transparency of state bodies' activities and openness of public and private quasi-sectors are ensured. The administrative barriers were significantly reduced and constructive dialogue with civil society widely implemented. New prevention institutions and anti-corruption monitoring were introduced.

"More than 10,000 people have been convicted for corruption crimes, including two former prime ministers, 17 ministers, chairpersons and deputy chairpersons [of state agencies], 15 akims (governors and mayors), eight heads of national companies and eight officials from the law enforcement bodies since 2001," he said.

The nation is resolutely opposed to bribery and corruption, an important priority included in the Kazakhstan 2050 development strategy.

"To reveal the whole chain of the criminal scheme from executors to organisers is the priority. It is important to identify public sector corruption and prevent capital withdrawals at an early stage. Fugitive criminals and stolen assets are topical issues for each country. The world community is taking

measures right up to the disclosure of data of account holders in foreign banks. Kazakhstan welcomes and fully supports these efforts and is ready to cooperate with other countries," Kozhamzharov said.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption is the international legal platform for cooperation. Agreements on the issue and return of assets have been concluded with more than 40 nations, including Lithuania, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, he explained.

During the past 10 years, 152 of 205 suspected corrupt officials hiding abroad were returned to the country. Former ministers and local governors who have stolen more than \$8 billion, however, are hiding abroad, including fugitive banker Mukhtar Ablyazov and Viktor Khrapunov (former Almaty mayor and East Kazakhstan region governor) and his wife Leila Khrapunova, Kozhamzharov said.

"Despite the politicisation of their status, they won't escape prosecution. As a result of our partnership with foreign organisations, every corrupt fugitive will face the court. The state should unite efforts in excluding double standards when extraditing criminals and returning assets," he stressed.

one of the key priorities in the state policy of Kazakhstan encapsulated in a national anti-corruption strategy and other relevant documents. To date, a comprehensive legal framework has been formed. There is a shift in emphasis from law enforcement methods to preventive measures... Great attention is paid to eliminating the root causes of corruption and to reduce corruption risk," he noted.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime has supported Kazakhstan's asset recovery efforts through its Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative in cooperation with the World Bank.

"Despite our joint efforts and achievements and the progress that is being made, still much more can be done to eradicate corruption from Kazakhstan. This requires persistent and consistent implementation of our institutional reform. These reforms, when implemented successfully, will enable effective public control, reduce corruption risk and limit the space for corruption. It is everyone's responsibility – the government, civil society, organisations, the private sector, media, public and general public, including the young people who will play a pivotal role in shaping our world hopefully free of corruption in the years to come," said Shimomura.

No country is immune from corruption, noted British Charge d'Affaires Andrew MacAlister. No country can feel complacent or comfortable and "it's only through collective action working internationally and in partnership that governments can stand a chance of tackling it," he said.

"Corruption is a disease. It hinders growth, it undermines confidence in the rule of law, it eats away at the very fabric of our society and it chokes the growth and development of our very livelihoods. It fuels conflict and it leads

to ever more serious criminality. So, beating it really matters to the UK just as it does to Kazakhstan. It matters to us all, wherever we are in the world," he added.

The British embassy in Astana is working on a project with Penal Reform International's Central Asia office designed to increase accountability and good governance in the law enforcement system specifically by targeting corruption.

"To be successful, this project relies on the support of the Agency for Civil Service and Anti-Corruption of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and I can report that their on-going work to eradicate corruption in the law enforcement system makes us actual partners. We are working successfully together on this. Our shared goals to strengthen government accountability and its capacity to combat corruption and to enhance interaction between the government and civil society in Kazakhstan are another key way of tackling this," said MacAlister.

The UK welcomes the national anti-corruption strategy and programme that are driving the institutional reforms enabling the country to effectively counter corruption.

"We are proud to be working as partners on the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) in recognition of the fact that English law is a tried and tested means of dealing with corruption and malpractice in the international financial sphere," he added.

The conference continued throughout the day in separate sessions each producing a set of recommendations for the international community on how best to fight corruption, strengthen international cooperation in this area and implement the UN Convention against Corruption.

## EP approves EU-Kazakhstan enhanced partnership agreement



Photo credit: europarl.europa.eu

By Aigerim Seisenbayeva

ASTANA – The overwhelming majority of European Parliament (EP) members approved Dec. 12 the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) between Kazakhstan and the European Union (EU) and its member states, the first of this kind concluded with a Central Asian country.

The EPCA, signed in Astana Dec. 21, 2015 and temporarily applied since May 1, 2016, was passed with 511 out of 654 present members voting in favour, 115 voting against and 28 abstaining. The agreement will fully enter into force once ratified by all EU member states. To date, 18 nations out of 28 EU states have approved the document.

"The EU opened a new chapter in its relations with Kazakhstan, the largest country in Central Asia," tweeted EP member and

former Slovakian foreign minister Eduard Kukan.

"The agreement will boost political and economic cooperation with this important country in Central Asia. The European Union is Kazakhstan's biggest investor and one of its important trade partners," said rapporteur and EP member from Finland Liisa Jaakonsaari during the debates the previous day. "Kazakhstan is crucial for the implementation of the EU Central Asia Strategy."

Cooperation in the new format will boost work on such issues as "trade, energy and sustainable development, as well as security issues, such as combating terrorism and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," she added.

On the human rights front, Jaakonsaari argued the EP requires tangible reforms and improvements. Economic interests cannot take precedence over human rights, she said.

"The Parliament believes it's a good thing for us to begin human rights dialogue with Kazakhstan and we hope that this country will regularly participate in this dialogue. We sincerely believe that an ambitious agreement will have a significant benefit for both parties," she added.

European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra Jourová noted the EPCA "reflects the new level of ambition in our relations with one of the EU's closest partners in the region."

She stressed the EU's relationship with Kazakhstan "has never been stronger."

"The EU and our partners in Central Asia share many common objectives: regional peace and stability, fighting terrorism, fostering the rule of law and increasing prosperity and trade. The reinforced cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan is an excellent example of how to advance in practice the goals and interests shared by both sides," she said.

The agreement covers 29 areas of cooperation, from economy and trade to countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism and cooperation in climate change, healthcare, public finance management and taxation.

Jourová noted the EU "appreciates Kazakhstan's commitments to promote the green economy," one of the European Commission's priorities, as well as the country's essential contribution to execute the EU Strategy for Central Asia.

On the international platform, she noted Kazakhstan has become "an extremely important partner in matters of regional and global security." She highlighted the nation's role in "strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and international stability."

**PUT TECHNOLOGY TO WORK FOR KAZAKHSTAN.**

**WE AGREE.**

**Chevron** Human Energy

The oilfields here are complex. But technology helps turn complexity into opportunity. Since Chevron started here, we've increased production 27 fold. Recovering more oil. And boosting Kazakhstan's growth for years to come. Learn more at [www.ChevronKazakhstan.com](http://www.ChevronKazakhstan.com)

**Bolat Tenizbayev**  
Director  
High Industrial Lubricants and Liquids  
Cooperation in Kazakhstan

**Botagoz Zhaimbetova**  
Health, Environment and Safety Manager  
Chevron Eurasia

CHEVRON and the CHEVRON logo are trademarks of Chevron Intellectual Property LLC. HUMAN ENERGY is a trademark of Chevron Intellectual Property LLC. © 2014 Chevron U.S.A. Inc. All rights reserved.

# Nation&Capital

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

**PEOPLE**

**MBionics creates nation's first bionic prosthesis**

**B2**

**CULTURE**

**Astana Opera holds charity concert**

**B3**

**SPORTS**

**Win in Prague secures FC Astana's historic progress to Europa League playoffs**

**B7**

## Paralympic athlete aims to change perception of people with limited abilities



By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – Almaty resident and Paralympic athlete Serik Yesmatov, 19, is one of Kazakhstan's 100 New Faces. Despite his young age,

he has already achieved numerous victories and has great plans for the future.

As a member of the National Paralympic Volleyball Team, Yesmatov participates in the Para-

lympic movement and studies at Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism.

"I often hold seminars for people. I think I am a good orator, a motivator. I share my experience

of overcoming problems with people who face similar challenges. I think my story encourages many people," he said in an interview for this story.

Continued on Page B5

## Kazakh TV starts broadcasting in new format

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Kazakh TV became the first channel in the country and the Central Asian region Nov. 16 to switch to multi-channel broadcasting. Network director Andrei Tarakov spoke about the transition in an exclusive interview with The Astana Times.

"Kazakh TV channel has been dynamically developing in the state for the last 15 years, showing the state's investment and tourist potential, global initiatives, cultural and historical heritage and directions of sustainable development. On Nov. 16, we launched a new broadcast format. Now, Kazakh TV broadcasts in Kazakh 24 hours a day. Along with Kazakh, the channel is available in Russian and English around the clock," he said.

The practice is similar to those implemented at Euronews and certain foreign film channels.

"This is a very important event for us. First of all, I hope that our viewers will like this option, as digital TV subscribers will now have an opportunity to choose a language which is

the most convenient for them," he added.

The transition has allowed Kazakh TV to establish a new trend in industry development, not only in Kazakhstan, but in the Central Asian region as well.

"This once again confirms that the channel is always a step ahead in terms of technology. For example, in the beginning of the 2000s when the satellite television market was just emerging in the world, Caspionet was the first satellite TV channel in Kazakhstan," said Tarakov.

"Prior to the launch of multi-channel broadcasting, the channel's broadcast grid consisted of two language blocks – 50 percent in Kazakh and 50 percent in Russian in the domestic branch of the channel and 50 percent in Kazakh and 50 percent in English in the international one. Language blocks alternated every three hours. I am sure that the new format of broadcasting will contribute to the channel's competitiveness in the international television market and increase the interest of operators of cable and satellite networks," he added.

Continued on Page B3

## First Kazakh sports food producer seeks quality, promotes healthy lifestyle

By Assel Satubaldina

ASTANA – Demand for sports nutrition is rising in Kazakhstan, as people are becoming eager to stay fit and be more involved in sports. Eldar Beldeubayev, Yerzhan Kamzabayev and Erik Karabayev, the founders of Beyond, the nation's first sports food producer, discussed the challenges of establishing a sports nutrition brand, the company's activities and sports food-related stereotypes in Kazakh society in a recent interview with The Astana Times.

The trio met while training at the Crossfit centre in the capital, where Karabayev was one of the co-founders and partners.

At the time, Beldeubayev was studying chemistry at Nazarbayev University and working as a coach at the centre, while Kamzabayev was employed in the country's Ministry of Finance. Their connection was a passion for sports and enthusiasm to start their own business.

"We have a network of Crossfit centres. We are familiar with the fitness industry. We also have a



certain base of clients that we can involve to develop a new project. In the winter of 2016, together with Eldar and Yerzhan we came up with the idea of establishing the first Kazakh sports food brand," said Karabayev.

"We realised everything is possible," he added.

Being the nation's first sports nutrition brand entailed certain difficulties, said Kamzabayev, including the lack of qualified specialists, bureaucracy, slow

registration process and high costs to register products with competent state bodies, a process that needed to be addressed before the company launched in June.

Continued on Page B2

## Kazakh government tests GPS tracking of state-owned vehicles

Staff Report

ASTANA – The Information and Registration Centre is testing a system that would use GPS to track government vehicles, Inform.kz reports.

The project will include the use of electronic maps from the www.gosreestr.kz project, which protect the database of information about the movement of vehicles.

"If the attempt turns out to be successful, it is possible that the use of official vehicles will be monitored throughout the country. The press frequently raises the question of the use of official cars by officials. Every now and then, users share photos and videos on this topic on social networks. It is quite easy to solve the problem technically – you just need to install a special device on the car that will transmit complete information

about the movement of the car, its speed, stop time, route and even show approximations on fuel consumption," said Chairman of the board of JSC Information Centres, Zhanasyr Ospanov.

The project would need to be approved by the Agency for Civil Service and Anti-Corruption before being implemented.

"By the way, the current head of the agency Alik Shpekbayev himself repeatedly raised this issue and even initiated the action with sticking special stickers on cars. The essence of the method in sticking information sheets with an appeal to inform about the finding of this car outside of working hours, for example, near entertainment facilities, is based on citizenship consciousness and does not guarantee the result. The installation of GPS trackers, I think, will solve the problem completely," Ospanov added.

## National volunteering strategy presented in Astana

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – The Kazakhstan volunteering concept was presented at a Dec. 5 first national forum in the capital devoted to International Volunteer Day.

The event was held under the Youth Corps Development Project implemented by the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science and the World Bank, reported tengrinews.kz. The forum was part of the Ruhani Janghyru (Modernisation of Kazakhstan's Identity) programme.

"The development of the youth corps is a big project, under which volunteering is developing in Ka-

zakhstan and young people are actively involved in the life of the local community. This project is unique, because for the first time the strategy has been designed to involve young people in volunteering in Kazakhstan. This was a proposal by the non-governmental sector – those people who volunteer on a daily basis. The main priority areas of the strategy are motivation and stimulation of volunteers, information support and recognition of the volunteers' contribution to the development of Kazakhstan, as well as the continuous education of volunteers," said project manager Gulmira Yeskendirova.

Young volunteers from different regions of the country exchanged their experience and shared ideas for promoting and developing volunteering. Members of Parliament's Mazhilis (lower house) and Senate, representatives of state agencies and business structures, heads of international organisations and leaders of public associations, as well as more than 100 ambassador-volunteers from throughout Kazakhstan took part in the forum.

According to United Nations Volunteers programme coordinator for Central Asia Dmitry Frischin, developing volunteering in each country is a guaran-

tor of the nation's competitiveness.

"Today's event is an indicator of the development of the Volunteering Law in Kazakhstan, adopted last year in the form of a strategy. Why do young people get involved in volunteering? On the one hand, this is patriotism; on the other hand, this is about the increase of skills and professional knowledge," said Frischin.

Representatives of some social projects held a photo exhibition and installations as part of the event. Kazakh volunteers attended plenary and panel sessions devoted to volunteer activities and master classes on communication skills.

**THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO**

**KAZAKHSTAN CONCERT HALL**

December 28 at 7 p.m. New Year's Concert

**BARYS ARENA**

December 29 at 7.30 p.m. HC Barys – HC Sochi

**ASTANA OPERA**

December 30 at 12 p.m., 6 p.m. The Nutcracker, ballet

January 5 at 7 p.m. The Nutcracker, ballet

January 11 at 7 p.m. Carmen, opera

January 14 at 6 p.m. The Fountain of Bakhchisarai, ballet

**SARY ARKA VELODROME**

January 6 at 3 p.m. PBC Astana - PBC Nizhny Novgorod

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## MBionics creates nation's first bionic prosthesis

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Maulen Bekturganov, one of Kazakhstan's 100 New Faces, is the founder of MBionics, the company that developed and created the nation's first bionic prosthetic hands designed for disabled people of the third group. The young engineer helps people return to regular life after losing a limb.

Fifteen-year-old Akezhan Argyngazin, of the East Kazakhstan region, is the first prosthesis owner.

"I was surprised when I learned that such prostheses exist in Kazakhstan. I liked even the prototype version, although that model did not allow squeezing and holding some objects. This prosthesis is more functional: it squeezes much stronger than my own hand and in a few minutes I learned to make several gestures," he said.

Bekturganov made the first prototype in January 2016. Argyngazin is using the fifth model.

"In the fifth version of the prosthesis, we applied all the accumulated knowledge and achievements. This is a reliable and convenient device which uses the most successful solutions of five different models of prostheses. The software that we developed allows fully managing the prosthesis the next day after fitting," he said in an interview for this story.

With existing analogues, several months are needed to learn how to manage the prosthesis, while Argyngazin, for example, learned the way to fully use MBionics' product in a week. The company uses only certified details, while most start-ups use cheap ones, said Bekturganov, adding the device is also easy to attach without glue.

The prosthesis was developed with the help of 3D PM, which provided prosthetic socket modelling and manufacturing using 3D printing and based the prosthetic details on stump scanning. MBionics specialists engaged in electronics and software development.



Akezhan Argyngazin, 15, of the East Kazakhstan region, is the first MBionics prosthesis owner.

"Kazakh developers for the first time managed to create a model of a bionic prosthesis, which is practically applicable in domestic conditions. Unlike imported analogues, we have manufactured a customised product that takes into account all the features of the biometrics of a particular person. Saving time and resources is achieved by scanning the stump at the stage of modelling the elements of the prosthesis," said 3D PM co-founder and technical director Oleg Lobakh.

"With the help of such a prosthesis, a person can take a cup in his hand or open a door. He can even play sports! And there is no need to cut the hand to connect nerves with the bionic wrist. The prosthesis is equipped with sensors that are attached to the skin. Each prosthesis must be assembled individually to better suit a particular user. For example, when a person has muscle atrophy, the individual settings of the prosthesis can help him or her manage the prosthesis, even if he or she has already forgotten how to manipulate fingers or wrist," said Bekturganov.

In creating MBionics, Bekturganov emphasised reliability. The prostheses, made with impact-resistant plastic, are currently produced on a 3D printer, but he wants to replace certain parts with titanium.

The company also plans to produce traction prostheses, wrist trainers for individuals who have suffered strokes.

Bekturganov's journey in the field started in 2015, when he first saw a device that enables a person to interact with technology through muscle impulses, or the power of thought. He was interested in the technology and began studying it in detail. Bekturganov had the idea of helping those who lost their hands and decided to make a bionic prosthesis controlled by muscle impulses.

He first made a prototype which repeated the movements of his own hand. The second model, devised in fall 2016, was more suitable for a prosthetic hand. Bekturganov invented the third version similar to the second prototype in its control system, followed by the fourth model in April 2017 which was successfully installed and tested.

Bekturganov subsequently founded MBionics, where he and his colleagues are working on developing new versions of bionic prostheses. While he admitted lack of financing is an issue, he does not want to attract investors. The company plans to expand as the sales grow, even though several months are needed to create each prosthesis since the company has a small number of employees.

## TV films to be produced about 100 New Faces

Staff Report

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's 100 New Faces will become recognizable visages. An equal number of TV films will be made about the programme's participants and the country's new heroes will deliver motivational speeches at schools, colleges, universities and youth meetings, said Minister of Information and Communications Dauren Abayev at a public council meeting dedicated to promoting information.

"We have developed a roadmap for the 100 New Faces project. Next

year, I very much hope that there will be 100 TV films about the participants of the project. Social videos will be made about them and they will participate in TV programmes. We would also like to organise the performances of these people among the youth with lectures and open lessons. We will not leave this project," he said.

Abayev added President Nursultan Nazarbayev recommended reviewing the histories of all 2,112 applicants as part of Kazakhstan's 100 New Faces forum.

"Next year, perhaps we will present a new version [of the project] to promote people who have achieved

success or who have committed a feat]. We will continue to work with these people," he said.

The applications were received from June 5-Sept. 15 according to Kazcontent, the organisation responsible for 100 New Faces project. The applicants were whittled to 302 and the names of the nominees published on the project's website, where online voting started Oct. 18. As a result, 102 people were selected, all of whom were included on the final list. More than 342,000 Kazakh residents, a number comparable to the population of Taraz, voted in less than a month.

## World Bank names conference hall in Washington after bank's first female Kazakh employee

Staff Report

ASTANA – The World Bank recently named a conference hall in its Washington offices after the first Kazakh woman hired by the bank.

The conference hall was named after Alma Ourazalinova who died in 2015 after battling an illness and who worked for the World Bank for more than two decades.

Ourazalinova held a degree from Moscow State University and was the first Kazakh woman to receive a doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She worked on syndication processes and Islamic financing for the bank, among other issues, and colleagues say she was highly respected within the institution.

"I knew Ourazalinova for 20



years. All these years we worked together on various projects, we were not just colleagues, but really close friends. It often happened that we were late at work and were the last in the office. We usually sat opposite each other and talked

about philosophy, politics and economics. She was always very deep in her reasoning," World Bank staff member Jane Clement said.

Colleagues of Ourazalinova called her a pioneer for her work in developing countries. They also remember her modesty, kindness and mercy. She continued working even during her illness.

"She was very humble. One never would have guessed her status, the number of her degrees, the summits she conquered. She could work on the Wall Street and in general anywhere, but she chose the way to fight poverty," Clement added. "We still feel her presence, so it was decided to name the conference hall in her honour in the hope that the legacy of her work, her art of being herself will help us in our future work."

## First Kazakh sports food producer seeks quality, promotes healthy lifestyle

Continued from Page B1

The team members invested their own funds. Registering each product costs approximately one million tenge (US\$2,990) and they were required to submit the materials used in production for review, a time-consuming process. Businesses need assistance and subsidies to foster development and production of local goods and services, said Kamzabayev.

The product line, which currently includes a protein, branched-chain amino acid (BCAA) and weight gainer, is represented in Kazakhstan's eight cities. The team hopes to eventually increase production.

"We are planning to expand our range of products. There is a wide array of sports products now. Sports are becoming very popular now. People are becoming keener on keeping fit; they are taking part in competitions and marathons," noted Kamzabayev.

"Everything is intertwined. We need more people to be involved in sports for us to prosper," he added. Price and quality are among the key enticements.

"People say the taste is good, as is the effect," noted Beldeubayev.

Because of his major, he is involved in the production process. Prominent British nutrition specialist Drew Price assisted the team in developing the recipe.

"We shared our opinions and ideas. The development of a recipe,

however, is regulated by law. There are certain allowed norms for vitamins and based on that we worked out the recipe," he said.

Before finalising the formula, the team conducted taste tests, where people had a chance to try a product and leave feedback.

"We offered several options; they tried it and then were asked to fill in the blanks. We then analysed the results. It is a long process," said Beldeubayev.

Russian sports food products currently occupy nearly 50 percent of the local market, said Kamzabayev. U.S. and European products were previously also in great demand, but with the sharp devaluation of the tenge, residents' ability to purchase these products decreased. As a result, the locally-produced items have the potential to occupy a niche in the Kazakh market.

"Russian goods are at a more reasonable price, but still not all of them. We are trying to line up with Russian products. We are trying to sell our products at a lower price and trying to make them tastier in terms of perception," he added.

The team seeks to make "a Kazakh product of European quality," maintaining high quality at a reasonable price. The sceptical and stereotype-based attitude towards locally-produced goods and sports nutrition, in particular, however, raises difficulties, noted Karabayev.

"Due to certain reasons, there is a negative attitude towards locally-

made goods. People try to avoid everything that is locally made. But in neighbouring countries, in Russia or Uzbekistan, there is no such thing; on the opposite, people try to support their own products, which fosters the development of the country," he said. "When it comes to sports food, a person starts thinking and stereotypes come into play."

Kamzabayev agrees with his colleague and has a positive outlook on the future of the industry. The team believes building a dialogue with dealers and consumers will help overcome the problem.

"Consumers in Kazakhstan are quite picky. They get used to everything that is imported from abroad. But time goes by and products become more expensive. The ratio of income and price is becoming wider," he said.

"It is a matter of time," he added. "The mentality is such that at first it is negative and judging, but later when everyone has it, the attitude changes as well."

Karabayev noted the dynamic of development has been good so far. "The geography is expanding, as is the range of products," he added.

Entering the Russian market is among the team's future goals, though Kamzabayev believes the Russian market is currently oversaturated with sports food products. Plans also include involving more brand ambassadors, including eminent Kazakh boxers, to promote the products.

## Artist Alexandra Roganova shares her 'Life Cycle'

By Natalya-Aurora Kim

ALMATY – Any meeting with Alexandra Roganova, an artist from Almaty, is an occasion for wonder. She switches from the mystical, like Vladimir Vernadsky's theory on the noosphere, straight to more home-spun topics like salmon spawning.

Roganova's artistic interests are equally widespread. She paints, draws, makes ceramics and shoots photographs. She might drive 1,000 kilometres for the perfect shot, wake up at dawn and spend a day searching for wild tulips at a riverside. But she always gets her image. And from these trips she brings home things like seeds and wild bird feathers, which make up her collection of memories and feelings. Later on, she views these things through a microscope and makes new discoveries. The discoveries help her comprehend the world and bring the inspiration to



Alexandra Roganova and her daughter.

create new art objects. In her studio is a microscope, right between a large book on ceramics and a sketchbook.

There is a great variety of fishes in this sketchbook, as well as in the studio. Large and small fish, flat and three-dimensional fish, multi-coloured and black-and-white fish, joyful and sad fish live everywhere. They gather together on paper and on canvas, on shelves and panels. The fish swim up and down and whirl in dance. Roganova confesses that she always paints or sculpts fish between projects.

Do not take this to mean the artist's studio is in chaos. Roganova's workspace is in exceptional order; it is reminiscent of a researcher's lab. However, the order contrasts the motley colour scheme of her art. The artist, like a child, loves to paint her world with vivid colours. Here we can see that the researcher and the artistic child are good friends, and their collaboration pro-

duces pure, innocent art full of deep thoughts.

The ceramic panel "Life Cycle" is one of a kind. According to the artist, the work represents meaning-bearing evolution layers. It is a ceramic square panel with an endless spiral on it. The spiral is the symbol of eternal evolution. On the helix are dancing fish. A road crosses over their path, on which men wearing sun symbols walk. The fish and the men move in the same rhythm on the road of life, the fish carrying secrets to the men. The dots, lines and circles build up a fluid composition. One can see the throbbing tunnel that leads to the depths, and the shining sun up in the sky. The universe's sounds are brought by white and black waves. Multidirectional movements untwist the spiral of the evolution. The ceramic panel delivers the concept that the true meaning of life is eternal development. This is Roganova's belief, and her message.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## Astana Opera holds charity concert



By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Approximately 300 children from low-income families, those from large families and youngsters with disabilities attended the Dec. 3 Diversity of Musical Voices charity concert at the Astana Opera Chamber Hall. The opera house holds such events every year for children who otherwise would not have an opportunity to attend the opera.

“The Astana Opera has been holding regular charity concerts since its opening. Every year, we try to give three-four children’s musical performances and hold New Year’s charitable performances. In addition, we organise

separate concerts for retirees. Parents with many children cannot afford to take five-six children to a concert and disabled children also rarely visit the Astana Opera. Nevertheless, our opera house gives them this unique opportunity and, of course, we receive only positive feedback, hear words of gratitude and we understand that our work was not in vain,” said audience service department director Assel Zhandauletova in an interview with The Astana Times.

The young guests included children from low-income and large families, youngsters from the Astana Association of People with Disabilities and pupils from school-gymnasium No. 58, school-lyceum No. 56 and second-

ary schools No. 34 and No. 40. They were joined by 20 children from Akkol in the Akmola region and the same number from Taraz. They were also treated to a tour of the opera house.

Concert host Saule Mauletova, the opera house’s musicologist, gave an entertaining presentation about the various kinds of operatic voices from soprano to bass. Well-known soloists Yelena Ganzha, Madina Islamova, Malika Minisini and other singers performed popular arias and duets from the works of Georges Bizet, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Gioachino Rossini and Giuseppe Verdi, Neapolitan songs and other tunes. The Astana Opera Chil-

dren’s Studio Choir under the direction of choirmaster Altyn-ganim Akhmetova also participated in the programme and the piano parts were performed by international competition laureates Raushan Beskembirova and Meruert Zhekenova.

The children were given fragments from the well-known animated films “Nu, Pogodi!” and “Snegurochka” and archival records of great singers.

The smartly-dressed youngsters listened attentively to the concert. When it was finished, they took pictures with the soloists and expressed their gratitude for the chance to experience the high art.

The next charity concert will be held shortly before the New Year.

## UNESCO includes traditional Kazakh game on Intangible Cultural Heritage list



By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – UNESCO recently included the traditional Kazakh game Asyk Atu on the organisation’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity. The inclusion came during the 12th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the ICH on Jeju Island, South Korea.

The session featured an exhibition dedicated to the ICH of Kazakhstan and the presentation of the Asyk game, according to the Kazakh Foreign Ministry.

The traditional Kazakh game is believed to develop cognitive and physical skills as well as promote

“The secretariat of Kazakh National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO, experts of the National Committee for the ICH Protection and the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the UN, as well as the Ministry of Culture and Sports carried out the work to prepare the nomination,” the report said.

The ICH list inscribes seven nominations with the participation of Kazakhstan, including the “Kazakh traditional art of Dombra Kui,” “Kazaksha Kures” (Kazakh wrestling), joint Kazakh-Kyrgyz nomination of “Aitys/Aitysh, the art of improvisation” and others.

The presence of Kazakhstan’s nominations in the UNESCO list could help popularise Kazakhstan’s ICH at the international level and develop measures to protect

## Kazakh TV starts broadcasting in new format

Continued from Page B1

Broadcasting in three languages fully meets the needs of both domestic and foreign viewers.

“The Russian language will allow establishing effective interaction with an extensive Russian-speaking audience in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) territory. English as a language of international communication will be a good tool for interaction with viewers from distant foreign countries. A broadcast channel in Kazakh will, among other things, provide access to information in the native language for a large Kazakh speaking audience,” he said.



Andrei Tarakov

Switching to a multi-channel broadcast signal was under discussion for several years. A great deal of work was necessary prior to the transition.

“The main directions of the programme policy of the TV channel have been preserved. The mission

remained unchanged – to be a guide to the original world of Kazakhstan, to promote the country’s image. In general, the content of the Kazakh TV channel is defined in six main directions: economy and international relations, nature and tourism, history, traditions, culture and art, and people and persons,” he said.

The change was initiated with the fall season, when the network updated its content and launched 15 new educational, cultural, historic and entertainment programmes. Certain shows focus on the ideas outlined in the Ruhani Janghyru (Modernisation of Kazakhstan’s Identity) national programme.

“The total audience of the TV channel is more than 300 million viewers. I think that a full-fledged English soundtrack will allow the Kazakh TV channel to further expand the foreign audience and effectively acquaint the world with our unique country,” said Tarakov.

Kazakh TV is currently available around the clock in Kazakhstan and four continents via the HotBird 13B, Galaxy 19 and AsiaSat 5 satellite platforms. The signal is available in 118 nations, including in North and Central America, Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, Australia and Oceania, North Africa and the Middle East.

The traditional Kazakh game is believed to develop cognitive and physical skills as well as promote friendship and the rapprochement of cultures regardless of ethnicity among youth.

friendship and the rapprochement of cultures regardless of ethnicity among youth. As a symbol of childhood, Asyks, which are made from the knuckles of the sheep’s hind legs, play an important role in strengthening the social cohesion of the Kazakh people and creating unity and identity.

it at the national level, the ministry believes.

Kazakhstan also plans to submit for inclusion “Traditional Spring Rituals of Kazakh Horse Breeders” and the multinational application “Korkyt-Ata’s Heritage” with Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

## Almaty independent theatre raises socially sensitive issues in Astana performance

By Assel Satubaldina

ASTANA – The Almaty-based independent theatre Artishock travelled to Astana Dec. 12 to present its hit play “Uyat,” (“Shame” in Kazakh), which was warmly welcomed in Almaty in September 2016.

“Uyat,” though translated as “shame,” actually reflects a much stronger social code that condemns any actions that go beyond traditional norms prevalent in Kazakh society.

“What is not supposed to be discussed, but impossible to be silent about,” is how the theatre describes this play, which raises so-

cially sensitive issues and views them from a different angle, letting audiences see another side of certain social norms and principles. The very name of the theatre, which is a wordplay on words ‘art’ and ‘shock’ and which, combined, projects an impression of a multilayered meaning reminiscent of an artichoke, denotes its approach to art.

The play weaves together salient social issues, including a lack of sexual education among girls and subsequent early pregnancies, the gap between people living in urban and rural areas and rising religious radicalism among young people.

Directed by Artishock founder

Galina Pyanova, the play was written by well-known Ukrainian playwright Natalya Vorozhbit and is based on the book “Molotov Cocktail: Anatomy of Kazakhstan Youth,” written by a group of political scientists guided by the research work of prominent Kazakh political scientist Dossym Satpayev and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, “Youth in Central Asia.”

The theme of Satpayev’s book became of great interest to the theatre, said Artishock Managing Director Anastasiya Tarasova in an interview for this story.

“We started thinking about how we could use the material. Our di-

rector came up with the idea to invite a professional playwright to stage a play for Artishock based on this research,” noted Tarasova.

Aside from the research findings, the play incorporates Vorozhbit’s observations during her stay in Almaty and stories told by the theatre actors, to bring the play closer to reality. It took 10 months to prepare and stage it.

The play starts with a group of colleagues working at a popular TV channel and challenged to find new ideas for a show. Close to losing hope, one of workers, a lighting technician, tells a story of a young girl coming to a big city from a village, who finds herself pregnant, de-

livers a child in a toilet, and in fear of uyat or shaming, leaves the child there.

The topic eventually intertwines with several other acute issues, producing a reality that the audience can relate to.

Explaining the decision to work with a playwright from abroad, Tarasova noted the insufficient development of dramaturgy in Kazakhstan.

“Dramaturgy in Kazakhstan is at its infancy, only starting to develop. They are not very active. An outsider’s view was also interesting. A person from Kazakhstan would not be able to detach from a situation and be unbiased,” noted the theatre director.

The actors were encouraged to find out what motivates people to make certain decisions in different situations. The concept of uyat in this case plays a significant role, especially in families strongly committed to traditions.

“One case leads to a system. Family is a system leading to a state and this turns into a chain of private cases and experiences,” added Tarasova.

Theatre is a tool that allows certain topics that are resonant in public to be voiced, she noted.

“Such dialogue is needed now, because there is no such dialogue on TV, in parliament or in government,” said Tarasova.

“This is what we are talking about, but we remain silent. We are not supposed to discuss it, but it is already impossible to be silent,” she added.

Comparing the reaction to the play in Almaty and Astana, Tarasova noted the latter had a stronger reaction.

“The audience reaction was very important for us. People in Almaty could not relate to some moments, but it was a 100 percent shot in Astana. People are living inside of this and you do not have to explain the text or ideas. People understand them,” explained Tarasova.

The theatre opened a second stage in October, collecting money on their own. According to Tarasova, their work now focuses on the new stage.

“Our goals focus on this stage to promote it. We have to work hard. We are planning to stage Cervantes’s ‘Don Quixote’ next April,” she added, stressing the experimental and all-genre nature of the theatre.

“We have existed as an independent theatre for 17 years – this is when the theatre does not have government subsidies or permanent sponsors and investors. We are working as a theatre company, earning money, looking for investors, working with foreign cultural institutes and various companies,” said Tarasova.

The mission of the theatre, according to her, is to promote and develop the contemporary theatre arts in Kazakhstan.

“It is an important goal in terms of communication with people and formation of audiences’ taste. We cannot work for the sake of sales; we have different objectives. We are doing what is interesting to us and what we want to convey to people,” she noted.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## Digital Kazakhstan programme to create 300,000 jobs by 2022

By Assel Satubaldina

ASTANA – The Digital Kazakhstan programme, part of the nation's effort to build and promote digital infrastructure nationwide, is expected to create 300,000 work places by 2022. The programme, endorsed by the government Dec. 4, is now under consideration by President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

"The document includes five main directions – digitalisation of the economy, transformation of traditional industries using progressive technologies to increase productivity and build on capital, digital government envisioning a new quality level of public services provided to the population and business com-

munity, digital Silk Road referring to the development of high speed infrastructure and transfer and storage of data and development of human capital, and the establishment of an innovative eco system by creating a favourable climate for the development of technological entrepreneurship and innovations," said Minister of Information and Communication Dauren Abayev, stressing the measures will affect all segments of the population.

One of the key ideas behind the project is a greater involvement of business and private companies, eventually minimising the role of the state in the process, noted Deputy Prime Minister Askar Zhumagaliev.

The programme will require more

than 169 billion tenge (US\$508.69 million) in investment from the quasi-public sector, according to Abayev, and 141 billion tenge (US\$424.41 million) from the national budget.

The ministry estimated the return on investment will be approximately 4.8-6.4 times the total volume of investment, with the added value totaling 1.7-2.2 trillion tenge (US\$5.12 billion-US\$6.62 billion) by 2025.

The programme's partner is the Boston Consulting Group, and its managing director Sergei Perapechka believes the investment in digitalisation will eventually pay off.

"We conducted a thorough analysis; the return is estimated at five-six times per tenge and nearly 30 percent of the GDP growth will depend

on the effect of digitalisation. The 300,000 work places – these are very serious indicators," he noted.

Digital inequality will be rising, he said, and oil and gas resources will no longer ensure success in global competition. Developing human capital and modern technologies will take their place.

"The digital revolution opens up unprecedented opportunities for countries and we are glad to see that Kazakhstan is aware of these advantages," he added.

Yet the digitalisation process may come with several pitfalls, said Perapechka, including self-digitalisation and the prevailing role of the state, too much focus on information and communication technologies and accepting fast results.

## 1.2 million tonnes of cargo to be transported through Trans-Caspian route by year's end

By Frol Leandroer

ASTANA – Rather than the initial plan of 700,000 tonnes of cargo, approximately 1.2 million tonnes will be transported through the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) by the end of the year, reported the Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) press service.

Members of the TITR international association met recently in the capital. Speaking about the corridor's viability, KTZ head and TITR management chair Kanat Alpyshbayev noted "by the end of this year, the volume of transportation will reach about 1.2 million tonnes instead of the planned 700,000 tonnes."

"For further development of the route, there is a need to fix competitive tariffs approved by all TITR participants for a longer period," he said.

Alpyshbayev stressed new opportunities for transportation growth along the route, which is connected to the opening of the new Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and the launch of the automobile component at the Kuryk port ferry

complex on the Caspian Sea. He also proposed signing a roadmap to reach delivery deadlines of no more than 15 days.

"This will result in big cargo traffic and strengthen the volumes of these facilities, as there is a need to strengthen joint work with Azerbaijani, Georgian and Turkish partners. The Kazakh side will make every effort to maximise the stimulation of cargo flows, including reducing the delivery time of cargoes to 14-15 days," he said, referring to the total time needed to ship goods from China to Europe.

To attract cargo traffic to the route, he noted the importance of organising the launch of regular container trains, at least twice a month, in the China-Turkey/Georgia direction. Consideration should also be given to the use of feeder vessels, with the possibility of transporting 40-50 containers.

As part of the general meeting, multimodal operator KTZ Express concluded an agreement on rail transportation services in Turkey. The association also approved a new board in connection with the changes in the first leaders of Georgian Railways and Batumi Sea Port.

## Ban on anonymous web comments explained

Staff Report

ASTANA – The bill on Amendments and Additions to Some Legislative Acts on Information and Communications prohibiting anonymous Internet comments was explained recently by Minister of Information and Communications Dauren Abayev. The ban is necessary to control statements that incite interethnic discord or negative comments that offend citizens.

"We plan to make it possible for information portals so that they can track and find out who leaves comments. We do not in any way [want to] abolish the right to use aliases, but there is no problem



Kazakh Minister of Information and Communications Dauren Abayev.

here and the information portal will know who a certain citizen is. In the case of inciting ethnic hatred and calls for some unconstitutional

actions, I think it will be possible to track down the claims for the law enforcement bodies," he said.

Abayev noted violators were previously tracked through their IP address, but the technology was inconsistent.

"It is a normal practice. Every person should openly state those things that he wants to comment on. There is nothing supernatural about this; we are not pursuing criticism, valuable advice or practical things. The question is not that we are thus eradicating comments," he added.

Abayev indicated work with non-Kazakh social networks will continue in the same format. If there are calls for unlawful actions, the ministry sends a notice to

the administrator and the messages are deleted.

The minister noted no one within the ministry specifically monitors the comments, but that information and communication ministry employees are reacting to complaints of ordinary Kazakh citizens. Approximately 3,000 websites with prohibited content were blocked this year, said Abayev.

The Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) voted Nov. 22 to approve amendments to the legislation on information and communications. Under the draft law, owners of electronic resources will be obliged to conclude written agreements with the readers using EDS or SMS identification.

## Multiple arrests made in suspected laundering of more than \$50 million

Staff Report

ASTANA – The interdepartmental investigative and operational group of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the National Security Committee apprehended Nov. 13 in Almaty Iskander Yerimbetov, Vasilina Sokolenko, Dmitriy Pestov and Mikhail Zorov on suspicion of embezzlement and money laundering.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau reports that pre-trial investigations were requested by BTA Bank officials about the involvement of these individuals and the companies they controlled in laundering and legalising more than \$50 million previously stolen from the bank by Mukhtar Ablyazov, the bank's former chairman who is convicted of embezzling more than 7 billion dollars from the lender.

According to the bureau, Yerimbetov is also suspected of embezzling about 1 billion tenge (US\$3

million) of budget funds through SKY SERVICE LLP, which he controls. In addition, Yerimbetov and his accomplices acted jointly and in the financial interests of the people hiding from Kazakh justice abroad.

One of them is Yerimbetov's sister Botagoz Jardemali, Ablyazov's accomplice and consultant, the bureau said. Jardemali was personally involved in the illegal issuance of loans by BTA Bank worth about \$500 million that she had known wouldn't be repaid, it claims. In 2013, she was declared an international wanted person on charges of misappropriation or embezzlement of entrusted property of others committed on a large scale as part of an organised criminal group.

Yerimbetov, Pestov, Sokolenko and Zorov were placed in the remand prison of the Almaty Department of Internal Affairs. The court authorised their detention and seizure of property.

The investigative authorities have noted that the rights of the detained

regarding qualified protection and conditions of detention are being observed. No complaints have been received about violations of procedural norms from the suspects and their lawyers and the suspects are cooperating with the investigation.

Thus, according to the bureau, "the efforts of the fugitive suspects Ablyazov and Jardemali to politicise and deliberately distort the course of this investigation through the use of relatives, suspects and controlled persons are another attempt to avoid responsibility".

Chairman of Kazakhstan's Agency for Civil Service Affairs and Anti-Corruption Kairat Kozhamzharov spoke on the issue during an international anti-corruption conference in Astana on Dec. 8. [Kozhamzharov was appointed the country's Prosecutor General by President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Dec. 11 following the consent from the Senate.]

"Over the past 10 years, out of 205 corrupt officials hiding outside Kazakhstan, 152 have been brought

back. However, former ministers and akims (governors) who have stolen more than \$8 billion from the country continue to hide abroad. First of all, those are the leaders of an organised criminal group – Ablyazov and the Khrapunovs. We are confident that, despite the politicisation of their status, they will not escape responsibility. Thanks to our partnership with our foreign colleagues, every runaway corrupt official will bear a fair punishment imposed by the court. The states should unite efforts in excluding double standards when extraditing criminals and returning assets," he said.

Kozhamzharov highlighted that the UN Convention against Corruption is the international legal cooperation platform in this sphere. According to him, Kazakhstan has concluded agreements on extradition and return of assets with more than 40 states, including Spain, Turkey, Poland, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates and Lithuania.

## Kazakhstan increases storage capacity at Khorgos – Eastern Gate

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – The Kazakh government recently began construction of state-of-the-art storage facilities at the Khorgos – Eastern Gate special economic zone. The facilities are expected to be completed by the end of the year and are part of the national Nurly Zhol economic programme and 100 Concrete Steps Plan of the Nation.

The storage capacity will add to other infrastructure meant to facilitate Kazakh-Chinese trade within the zone, which also includes business favourable taxes and no customs duties.

The project is being financed by Baiterak National Managing Holding. Head of the holding's management board Aidar Arifkhanov said the project exemplifies Kazakh efforts to develop infrastructure with the participation of foreign businesses.

Foreign investors have proposed more than \$295 million in projects for 2018 involving the develop-

ment of the Khorgos – Eastern Gate, including the construction of warehouses, a feed mill, a food cluster and the production of building materials.

"Today's ceremony demonstrates the willingness of foreign companies to cooperate in our project and they believe in the future development of this region," said Chief Operating Officer of Khorgos – Eastern Gate Hicham Belmaichi.

Heads of Verno Capital and PNK Group also recently presented an investment project at the logistics zone of the special economic zone, which is part of a large project for the construction of more than 100,000 square metres of warehouse and class A industrial facilities in the regions of Kazakhstan. The financial group has implemented projects in Russia, the U.S. and Europe.

Khorgos – Eastern Gate officials hope developing the zone will better integrate Kazakhstan into the global cargo transit network.

## Kazakhstan to consolidate energy transmission companies by 2022

By Inga Selezneva

ASTANA – The Kazakh government plans to consolidate the country's electrical grid and reduce the number of energy transmission companies by 30 percent by 2022.

"We expect the number of energy transmission companies to reduce from 160 to 110 and 27 public utilities and 23 private energy transmission enterprises will cease operations by 2019 and by 2022 as part of the consolidation of regional electric grid companies," said head of Electric Power Industry Department of the Ministry of Energy Bauyrzhan Sarsenov at the briefing, adding that only a small number of companies meet the country's requirements.

"These companies are Kazakh-

stan Electricity Grid Operating Company (KEGOC), Regional Electricity Company and 14 medium-sized supply companies. At the moment when we move to consolidation, there will be a chain: the station – KEGOC – regional electricity company and then the energy transmitting organisations will deliver electricity to consumers," Sarsenov said.

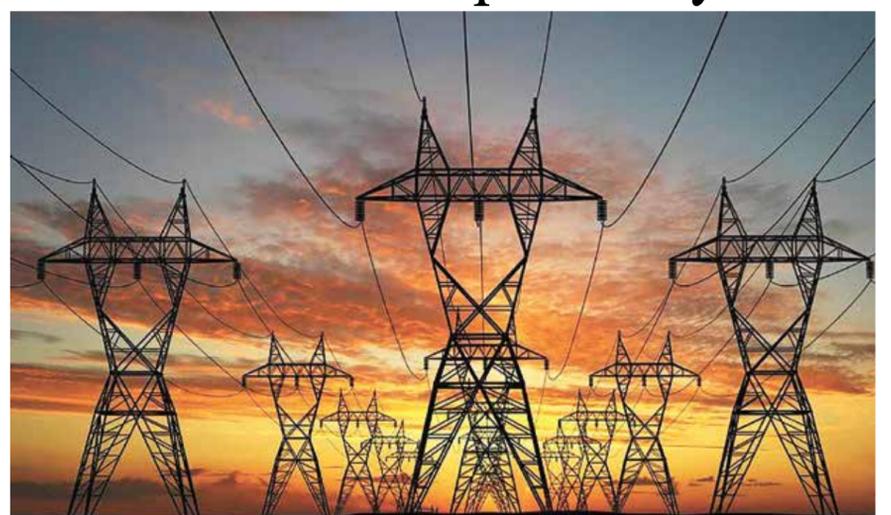
The largest number of electricity intermediaries are in the Karaganda and East Kazakhstan regions.

"There are up to 40 energy transmitting organisations. There are 17 such companies in the East Kazakhstan region. It is still difficult to say whether they will be able to meet the necessary requirements," he said.

The electricity tariff and charges will remain the same with a reduction in the number of electricity transmission organisations.

"The fees will not be included in the tariff. The system and all the services that are needed to operate the networks will be automated at the expense of their own investments. Accordingly, these expenses will not be taken into account in the tariff," he said.

Kazakhstan adopted a law to consolidate energy transmission companies to increase their reliability last July. The law also provides for the release of power transmission organisations from corporate income tax and property tax after receiving abandoned electrical grid facilities and lifting the prohibitions provided for by legislation in the field of natural monopolies. The law contains a mechanism for transferring abandoned electricity grids through amendments to the law on state property.



# SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## Young developers create energy saving industrial solutions

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – Almaty-based Sheberkhana is the company behind ecoSocket, the technology that helps to conserve energy and save money by controlling power usage. The start-up was among the top 10 best Central Asian and South-East European projects from the 500 applications at the Echelon Asia Summit 2015 in Singapore.

“The ecoSocket adapter is able to turn your home into a smart home. You can connect the easy-to-use device to the refrigerator or TV. With the help of your smartphone, you can calculate power consumption and control home appliances,” said company co-founder and CEO Sanzhar Myrzagalym, one of Kazakhstan’s 100 New Faces.

Myrzagalym built the business and team during his college years.



Sanzhar Myrzagalym

After graduation, they received job offers from global firms including Google and Amazon.

“The prototype device is ready for production. After reviewing the market research we decided to focus on the industrial market, as the potential for energy savings in this sphere is much higher than in homes and apartments. More

than 50 percent of electricity in the country is used by several large enterprises and the coefficient of efficiency from our device will be much higher,” he said.

“We don’t want our team to be associated with one device. It’s just the beginning. This adapter is a part of a system. We want to work in the field of machine learning. If you

store a large amount of data, the computer can understand the relations between some activities and these data. If the activity repeats and it affects some indicators, then it concludes that this activity was caused by other activities and on the basis of the machine learning algorithm, we make analyses and recommendations to users,” he added.

With the help of the smart device, it is possible to conduct an energy audit of the industrial enterprise. The device is directly connected to the Internet of Things.

“Our device is able to analyse the cost of electricity, why consumption is higher or lower and what impacts it. The Energy Efficiency programme 2020 was adopted by providing that all industrial enterprises should undergo an energy audit to confirm that they use energy efficiently to reduce overall consumption throughout the country.

This is a smart system that allows us to understand why we consume more or less energy. Due to this, we can save more energy,” he said.

In addition to serving as a partner technology strategist at Microsoft Kazakhstan, Myrzagalym is involved in educational activities.

“When we started to work, we knew that it was necessary to develop the IT sector. We have extensive experience in developing new products and equipment including printers, devices and multimedia tools. The concept of our company can be compared with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab. We conduct free master classes for students about new technologies and trends. On one hand, we share our knowledge and experience; on the other, we create a like-minded community,” he said.

Myrzagalym shared his impressions of Ruhani Janghyru (Mod-

ernisation of Kazakhstan’s Identity) programme.

“This is a great honour for me to be a part of the 100 New Faces project. This is a big responsibility to motivate people into doing good deeds. We are glad that our product is getting more attention and people are interested in collaborating with our team. We met with Astana Hub representatives and plan to apply for residency there. We also intend to launch our crowdfunding campaign so that the local IT product will enter the world market,” he said.

The developer believes the IT sector can boost economic growth.

“It requires fewer expenses and time for development. In addition, we have huge human capital potential. If there’s no progress in 20 years, the next generation will blame us. We should do our best to make a better future,” he said.

## Student literacy in Kazakhstan above international average

Staff Report

ASTANA – The International Association for the Evaluation and Educational Achievement of students (IEA) announced the results of its 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Kazakhstan came in 27th among the 50 participating countries.

The average score of Kazakh schoolchildren in fourth grade was 536 points, which is 26 points higher than the international average.

The purpose of PIRLS is to determine fourth-grade readers’ literary experience and skills in mastering the use of information. Currently, this study is the only global tool for measuring the literacy of primary school students. The previous PIRLS releases in 2001, 2006 and 2011 helped many countries improve their curricula, textbooks and content of courses for teachers and national assessment systems. The IEA study is held every five years. Its organiser is also known for the Trends



in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

The top 30 countries in the study are overwhelmingly leaders in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). Russia and Kazakhstan were the only countries from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to crack the top tier. Russia has been a participant in this research from the very beginning, and has re-confirmed its status as one of the most reading countries in the world. For Kazakhstan, participating for the first

time in PIRLS, the result is a significant achievement.

About 5,000 schoolchildren from 172 schools from all regions of Kazakhstan took part in the study. In Kazakhstan, unlike Russia and many other countries, the testing was conducted in two languages: Kazakh and Russian.

The study showed that the absolute majority (96 percent) of Kazakh fourth graders are very fond of reading. Teachers showed high satisfaction with their work and trust in children. Some 91 percent of parents praised the school’s help

in improving the reading skills of children. In addition, on average, Kazakh children come to school more prepared than do their peers from many other countries.

The common trend for most countries, both developed and developing, is the reading of informational texts through information and communication technologies. Thus, 37 percent of Kazakh students read texts in an electronic format and about 40 percent use the internet to search for information and perform educational tasks. As in most of the participating countries, it is difficult to read literary texts and analyse them.

According to the plans of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan, the national report on the country’s results in PIRLS-2016 will be published in the second quarter of next year. The results of international and national reports, as well as PIRLS-2016 Encyclopaedias, will be included in the knowledge base used to further improve the content of primary education in Kazakhstan.

## 413,000 people find jobs in 2017 through national employment programme

By Dana Omirgazy

ASTANA – Kazakhstan’s national Employment 2020 Programme helped 413,000 citizens get a job over the last 12 months. Of those, 279,000 were permanently employed, Kazakh Minister of Labour and Social Protection Tamara Duisenovova said during a Dec. 20 government meeting.

The programme includes 527,000 participants so far. More than 50 percent are inhabitants of rural areas. According to the minister, the main indicators of the programme have been achieved.

“Under the first direction, 90,000 people were trained to meet the needs of regional labour markets. Of them, 21,000 people are unemployed youth; the remaining 69,000 are unemployed and self-employed. Short-term training courses were completed by 43,500 people,” Duisenovova said.

Almost 15,000 people underwent training to support entrepreneurial initiatives under the Bastau business programme. Approximately 8,200 attendees protected their business projects and over 3,000 received loans. Next year, the government hopes to double the number of trainees among unemployed and self-employed citizens.

The third direction of the programme provides targeted support

in employment of vulnerable categories of citizens and increased mobility of labour resources.

“This year, approximately 134,000 people have been introduced to social work places, youth practice and public works,” the minister noted.

The programme gives special attention to the increase of citizens’ labour mobility. Duisenovova reiterated that more than 2,000 families expressed a desire for voluntary resettlement in the northern regions under the interregional job fairs.

“Given allocated funds, 381 families or 1,479 people have voluntarily moved from the southern to the northern regions under the programme. Next year, it is planned to increase the regional quota of resettlement by five times, that is, to settle up to 1,700 families or about 7,000 people,” Duisenovova reported.

The minister submitted for the government’s consideration changes to the programme to more effectively encourage the voluntary resettlement of citizens, support entrepreneurial initiatives of citizens and improve the education system.

In addition, Minister of National Economy Timur Suleimenov, Minister of Education Yerlan Sagadiyev and First Vice Minister of Agriculture Kairat Aituganov reported on the implementation of the programme for the Development of Productive Employment and Mass Entrepreneurship.

## Paralympic athlete aims to change perception of people with limited abilities

Continued from Page B1

Yesmatov has been an active person since his school years, where he danced, sang and performed in the choir at various events. Sports, however, were his main pursuit, including playing professional football, volleyball and basketball. Yesmatov also posted good results in track and field, relay races and single combats.

“In 2009, I started boxing and got onto the reserve team of Kazakh Olympic Champion Serik Sapiyev. Unfortunately, I did not participate in the competitions. Then, I started cycling and performed at the competitions. Later, my coach left Kazakhstan. However, I decided not to stop there and tried swimming. My coaches promised a great future for me. I had a dream to become an Olympian and defend the honour of the country at international competitions and the Olympic Games,” he said.

His dreams changed “radically,” however, when he accidentally fell under the wheels of a freight train.

“I lost both legs. After rehabilitation, I got my first prostheses and I learned to walk again. Then, coaches of the Kazakhstan Paralympic Volleyball Team noticed me and offered for me to continue playing sports on a professional level. I could not refuse,” he added.



Yesmatov began Paralympic sports in 2013, joining the nation’s youth Paralympic Volleyball Team and travelling to his first international competitions. After winning the bronze medal at the Asian Youth Games in Malaysia, the athlete’s life started changing for the better. The excellent opportunities helped him become what he is now.

Yesmatov has also run several marathons. This year he participated in the Almaty marathon, overcoming a distance of more

than 42 kilometres. Among Paralympians, he finished first in three hours, 56 minutes and placed 128th among the 13,000 registered runners. Within EXPO 2017, he took part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) marathons, finishing 133rd of 5,000 registered runners.

“I worked as a volunteer at the 2017 Winter Universiade in Almaty. Then, I was recognised as the best volunteer of the Univer-

siade. By this, I proved that people with limited abilities do not differ from full-fledged people,” he said.

Yesmatov wants to change society’s perception of people with limited abilities. He aims to achieve more and is glad people have noticed and appreciated his efforts.

“I would like to tell everyone that life loves those who do not complain about it. You need to clearly set the goal and achieve it anyway. The greatest victory is a victory over yourself,” he said.

## More than 500,000 residents are on travel ban list due to unpaid debts

Staff Report

ASTANA – More than 500,000 Kazakh residents cannot travel overseas because of unpaid debts. As of December 13, 690,529 temporary restrictions have been imposed on travel outside the country, including 164,972 temporary restrictions in 2016 and 229,656 this year, noted a statement released by the Ministry of Justice.

According to the law “On enforcement proceedings and the status of court bailiff” the law enforcement officials have the right to execute restrictions if a citizen has an unpaid debt equal to the 20 monthly calculation indices (one MCI equals \$7). Debt payments can be made through cash services and terminals at check points near the state border and in public places in cities and regions.

“Online payment was also implemented using mobile apps beginning June 10. By entering their personal identification number, people can

obtain information about the existing debt and pay for it except for recovery of alimony, compensation for harm and requirements of an executive document related to non-property rights. The restrictions can be cancelled within 30 minutes,” said the release.

The temporary restriction can be cancelled automatically for debts issued after July 2015 when they are satisfied using the cash services and terminals. Kazpost terminals are installed in the Aktau, Aktobe, Almaty, Astana, Atyrau, Karaganda, Kyzylorda and Shymkent airports and round-the-clock payments have been accepted since June 21. There are plans to install terminals throughout the country.

“The Ministry of Justice plans to replicate the payment service in all second-tier banks using their ramified network of ATMs, similar to the payment service implemented jointly with Kazpost,” said the ministry.

Approximately 24,391,725 tenge (US\$72,931) was paid by 396 debtors using the online service.

NATION&CAPITAL

# TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## Altai Alps ski resort welcomes visitors to enjoy winter activities, improve skills



By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – With its gorgeous mountain views and large variety of slopes for outdoor enthusiasts, a tour of the East Kazakhstan region is the perfect winter trip idea. Located 24 kilometres from Ust-Kamenogorsk, the Altai Alps ski resort is an amazing and affordable vacation destination for families and friends.

The cozy and remote resort is included in the list of top 10 popular destinations in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and neighbouring countries.

“Clean air and pristine nature make our resort an excellent place for family holidays. We offer night skiing and snowboarding for people with different levels of skills, as we are a beginner-friendly ski resort. The slopes are also recommended for freeriding. Here there are the ski lifts, T-bars and other modes of transportation to get up the mountain,” said representative Yana Saikovskaya.

The resort is also famous for its healing procedures including pan-totherapy, massage, physiotherapy, a weight loss programme and bath treatment.

“We offer new warm cottages with all the conditions for a large group of people,” she noted.

The resort hosted basic instruc-

tional ski and snowboard training Nov. 21-30 in accordance with International Ski Instructors Association (ISIA) standards.

“Our coaches took part in the National Russian League of Instructors programme and became C-category instructors. They constantly improve their skills and follow new trends. The school attaches great importance to safety. Instructors offer specially-equipped safe routes for teaching children and speak three languages – Russian, English and Kazakh,” noted Saikovskaya.

The Assyl Tau ski school team includes professionals with a great

deal of pedagogical and sports experience, sports masters, prize-winners and participants in the European Cup and International Universiade 2017.

“At the moment, we have visitors from China, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Russia. There are also a lot of tourists from Europe. We can accommodate 3,000 tourists in the winter season, which lasts from mid-November to Apr. 10,” she said.

Altai Alps may be accessed by air or ground. Air travel is \$180 and a 40-minute ride from the airport to the resort costs approximately \$10. The 15-hour Talgo high speed train from Almaty and Astana to Ust-Kamenogorsk is \$60.

Accommodations start from 10,500 tenge (US\$31) per person a day. Meals, equipment rental and ski lifts are included.

“This place is really beautiful. There’s a lot of trees on the mountains. Most people come here with their families,” said capital resident Aibarshyn Akhmetkali, who recently visited the resort. “The prices are much cheaper compared with the Shymbulak ski resort. We first improved our skills with an instructor who taught us some basic tricks. It cost approximately \$12. All the outdoor sporting equipment is available for rent except for ski clothing.”



## Tourism industry on rise, figures show



By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – A record number of foreign tourists visited Kazakhstan in the first nine months of 2017, according to finprom.kz analytical service, as the number traveling to the country from abroad grew 18 percent compared to the previous year. The domestic tourism sector followed the same trend, with the number of residents vacationing locally increasing 25 percent during the period.

This summer’s EXPO 2017 and the simplified visa regime for 48 countries were among the main contributors to the growth.

“All the achieved indicators of improvement are a great legacy of expo and encourage us to further develop the tourism industry. At the moment together with foreign consultants, a strategy for the development of tourism in Astana until 2020 has been developed and we very much hope that this strategy will bring tourism in the city to an entirely new level. Thanks to expo, the infrastructure of Astana is ready to accept tourists of any level,” said the city’s deputy akim (mayor) Yermek Amanshayeve during the early November meeting devoted to the expo.

Kazakhstan has strengthened its position on the international tourism map, noted finprom.kz, with 5.8 million foreign tourists entering the country in the first nine months of the year. During the previous five years, the same indicator fell short of or only slightly exceeded the five-million mark.

More residents are choosing to travel within the country as well. According to the figures, the number of domestic tourists reached 4.4 million, 25 percent more than the previous year and the sharpest growth since 2010.

The boom has contributed to the growing demand for services in Kazakh hotels, hostels and other accommodations.

From January-September, 3.9 million rooms of various levels were booked, noted the analyst, a 23.7-percent increase over the same period last year. As a result, the current occupancy rate is estimated at an average of 27.8 percent, higher than 2016 and 2015 (25.8 percent and 26.1 percent, respectively). The number is lower than 2014, however, before the period of sharp economic deterioration and fall in the population’s real income.

The highest increase has been seen in five-star hotels. According to the data, the occupancy rate in the accommodations was about 50.5 percent, compared to last year’s 40.5 percent.

By contrast, the occupancy rate during the same period in four-star hotels was 33.9 percent, three-star (31.9 percent), two-star (18.4 percent), one star (21 percent) and hotels without categories (22.6 percent).

The tourist industry revival was also recorded in a survey of 184 travel agencies completed by the Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy. The third-quarter study showed an economic increase compared to the previous year.

## Open skies initiative proposed for Almaty airport

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

ASTANA – The open skies initiative proposed for Almaty International Airport will boost tourism and the country’s attractiveness, said Kazakh Tourism Board Deputy Chairperson Timur Duissen-galiyev. The national company expects to create a plan to develop air services in cooperation with the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

“Today, the tourism sector is accounting for only 1 percent of the total gross national product (GNP). We have ambitious goals to reach 8 percent of the GNP by 2023. The development of air services is of great importance,” he said at a Dec. 4 press conference in the capital.

The open sky policy will be considered based on the positive experience at the capital airport, as the programme was introduced in May for EXPO 2017.

“We want to continue this experiment. We are currently negotiating with the government to introduce the open skies initiative at Almaty airport. If we want to develop tourism in Kazakhstan, we need to understand that there are so-called growth points to boost travel in the country. We essentially have two starting points – Almaty and Astana,” he said.

The international experience does have some negatives, he add-

ed, indicating the national carriers went into bankruptcy after introducing the policy, but noted “there is a need to find a certain balance to make the Air Astana company competitive.”

“The policy will be implemented in stages. We are now planning to collaborate with the IATA on the programme until 2030. We will decide what year to introduce the initiative, what should be done and what measures should be taken to develop

regional aviation,” said Duissen-galiyev.

Kazakh Tourism intends to cooperate with IATA in terms of research and analysis of domestic air transport communication until 2030.

“The IATA will make an analytical review to develop a long-term policy in air services and international flights. Our country has huge transport and transit potential. It is important to learn how to make Kazakhstan available in

terms of air traffic and to forecast potential flows,” he said.

A regional aviation network will be also established.

“There were 100 landing grounds in the country during the Soviet era and this made it possible to solve the issues in the most remote areas of our country. The regional aviation is not well developed. Transport and air transport accessibility is a key factor influencing destination choice,” he said.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

# Win in Prague secures FC Astana's historic progress to Europa League playoffs

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – FC Astana secured a 1-0 win away against SK Slavia Prague in the sixth round of the UEFA Europa League's group stage Dec. 8, becoming the first Kazakh club to ever make it to the European Cup playoffs.

Slavia was one point ahead before the match, so Astana needed a victory to progress from the group. What made it worse was for the team was that the Kazakh football season ended just over a month ago and the team did not have any game practice, while Slavia has been playing regular matches in the Czech championship.

From the beginning, Slavia went on the offensive, but the Astana players coped with the opponent's attacks. When the host team's striker Tomas Necid took the field, their attacks became more intensive and unpleasant. Miroslav Stoch also made a good shot, although the ball hit the post.

FC Astana strictly followed the



tactics of the game, waiting for the moment to go on a counter-attack

and eventually saw a chance. After a pass from the penalty area,

the Slavia defenders made a gross mistake trying to clear the ball,

which helped Astana defender Marin Anicic send it into the empty net.

The pattern was fairly similar in the second half. Slavia actively pressed and Astana did not let the Czechs bring their attacks to the logical end. At times, however, it seemed Slavia could level the score. Necid went one on one with Nenad Eric, but hit above the net. He then tried to redirect the ball into the net with his head, but Astana's goalkeeper saved it again.

The end of the game was nerve-racking for the Kazakh fans, as Slavia had a few scoring chances and Astana struggled as if it was the last match in its life. The final whistle, however, marked the team's victory and the Kazakh champs reached the playoffs, earning second place with 10 points. First place in the group went to Spanish Villarreal.

"This team is meant to make history. They changed the history of Kazakhstan's football again. I am glad we were disciplined,

although we had some problems in the second half, but it is always like this in matches of such level. The guys are heroes," said FC Astana head coach Stanimir Stoilov after the match.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev also congratulated the team on its playoff berth, wishing the members good health, prosperity and success in reaching their goals.

"This achievement made millions of the team's fans and supporters happy. Your success will surely make a huge contribution to further development of football and sports in Kazakhstan. This victory also has a symbolic meaning ahead of the 20th anniversary of our capital city, Astana," he wrote in his message.

The draw for the first game of the round of 32 was held Dec. 11 in Nyon (Switzerland). FC Astana drew Portuguese team Sporting CP. The first leg is scheduled for Kazakhstan for Feb. 14, 2018, while the return leg in Portugal will be played on April 1.

# Yulia Galysheva wins gold in China

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's Yulia Galysheva won a gold medal in moguls at the International Ski Federation (FIS) Freestyle Ski World Cup stage in Thaiwoo, part of China's northeastern Hebei province, on Dec. 22.

The future facility for the upcoming Winter Olympic Games 2022 turned out to be successful for the Kazakhs. On the second day of competition, Kazakhstan's Yulia Galysheva won her gold medal with 80.88 points. The previous leader, Jaelin Kauf of

the United States, lost to her by 0.80 points. Third place went to Andi Naude (Canada) with 80.03 points.

This was the second medal for the Kazakh athlete in these competitions as Galysheva won silver on the first day of the World Cup stage.

The day before she took the second place in moguls with 77.79 points, losing 0.11 points to Kauf.

"I decided to give my all after I failed at the first World Cup stage. I thought I should get out of this situation and at least get into the top 10 to score points in the World

Cup. That is how I succeeded yesterday," Galysheva said.

However, on the second day, she took a confident win.

"It was terribly cold, and I could not see anything. I came 9th to the final. The coach said I should go forward, and I decided to take another chance. I got to the final. Well, I had nothing to lose then, and I just enjoyed. It so happened that I won. This is my first victory in the individual moguls, before I was 2nd and 3rd," shared Galysheva.

In men's event, Canada's Mikael Kingsbury won again. This was his tenth victory in a row at

World Cup stages, with a total of 44 victories in cup competitions. The Canadian athlete scored 85.94 points, while Kazakhstan's Dmitry Reiherd with 84.92 points took the second place. The third place went to Australian Matt Graham with 82.96 points.

After these successes in the World Cup rankings in moguls, Galysheva is placed second with 180 points, Reiherd is second among men with 160 points. The season's main competition in winter sports, the Olympic Games, will be held in South Korea's PyeongChang Feb. 9-25, 2018.

# Astana cycling team presents line-up for new season

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – The Astana professional cycling team members and managers presented its new line-up Dec. 8 in the capital. The team is part of the Astana Presidential Sports Club, which includes rosters competing in cycling, football, ice hockey, basketball, boxing and motorsports, and is backed by the country's Samruk Kazyna sovereign wealth fund.

The ceremony opened with a tribute to Michele Scarponi, the team rider who died in a road accident last spring. The invited officials, including Minister of Culture and Sports Arystanbek Mukhamediuly and Astana Akim (Mayor) Asset Issekeshev, delivered welcoming remarks.

"Thanks to the wins of the Astana Presidential Club teams, people around the world learn more about our country. I want to congratulate the Astana team on their great achievements. As [Astana cycling team's general manager] Alexander Vinokourov told me, more than 30 percent of the international cycling world's star riders used to be or are now members of the Astana club. I wish Astana cyclists new victories and achievements," said Mukhamediuly.

Astana Pro then presented its new line-up for 2018. The team will be represented by 30 cyclists, including first-time members Magnus Cort (Denmark), Omar Fraile (Spain), Yevgeny Gidich (Kazakhstan), Jan Hirt (Czech Republic), Hugo Houle (Canada) and Davide Villela (Italy). Ten of the new riders are Kazakh.

One of the highlights of the ceremony was the Presidential Club announcement about rebranding its sports projects and changing its conceptual ideol-

ogy. The club will no longer divide its logo by team type, as all projects will now be under a common name and logo with the "Astana" inscription. The teams' corporate outfits will also have a single design, style and colour scheme.

Vinokourov summed up the results of the past season and announced the club's key goals for the upcoming year.

"We had big wins and remarkable achievements at the highest level in 2017, both at the World Tour races and Grand Tours. I am especially pleased to highlight the successes of our Kazakh riders. Today's presentation officially opens a new season for our team. We are entering a new year with a new line-up and we will focus not only on Grand Tours, but also on week-long and classic races," he said.

Astana Presidential Club board chair Darkhan Kaletayev noted the cycling team's contribution to promoting the Astana brand around the world.

"The big sports family of the presidential club recently had a big event. FC Astana reached the playoffs of the UEFA Europa League for the first time. I think this is an important event, especially ahead of the new season for our cycling team. It is a jewel of Kazakhstan's sports, which will win and strengthen the image of our country. Astana has always proved that it can cope with any situations. The year was hard, but the team has strengths and [it has new] opportunities. It has newcomers who will give extra strength, and, first of all, I believe in Alexander Vinokourov," he added.

The cycling team secured 20 wins and 25 prizes in international cycling competitions in 2017. To date, it has received 286 prizes.

# Major table tennis tournament in Astana

By Anuar Abdrakhmanov

ASTANA – The final matches of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) World Tour Grand Finals took place in the Kazakh capital Dec. 14-17. Ping-pong lovers watched the world's strongest players compete at the Daulet Sport Complex.

Kirill Gerassimenko, 21, represented Kazakhstan at the Grand Finals. At the 1/8 finals draw, he played against a 14-year-old prodigy, Japanese Tomokazu Harimoto. Winning all four consecutive games with a total score of 4-0, the representative of the Land of the Rising Sun went through to the quarterfinals, where he lost in a very close competition to the world's No. 1 in table tennis (according to the January ITTF ranking), Dmitry Ovcharov, representing Germany.

"Table tennis is one of the most

popular and accessible sports [worldwide]. About 150,000 practice table tennis in Kazakhstan. The number of professional players exceeds 5,000 athletes, who are trained by more than 200 coaches. Unfortunately, today we could not beat the world leaders of this interesting and challenging sport representing China or Japan. But our athletes have the opportunity to try [themselves] and earn invaluable experience, consistently becoming stronger," said President of the Table Tennis Federation of Kazakhstan, Chairman of the Kazakh Senate Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

According to him, holding such a major tournament in Astana was another significant event for the nation's sports community.

"Holding such a tournament is a big success for our Table Tennis Federation. Kazakhstan is recognised as a sports power in the world that can be proud of its

athletes and the experience of hosting major international competitions. Over the years of independence, our country has held various world-scale tournaments. Now Astana has appeared on the world map of table tennis that gains huge popularity. We should remember that the Table Tennis Federation has a great responsibility [on its shoulders]. We understand this very well. The federation has done great work to prepare for the tournament. I believe the tournament was a success. This was a great chance for Kazakh players to learn from the best competitors from a number of countries," said Tokayev.

In women's doubles, Chen Meng and Zhu Yuling of China won over Japan's Hina Hayata and Mima Ito. Later the representatives of China played against each other in women's singles, where Chen won.

In men's doubles, Japan's Ma-

sataka Morizono and Yuya Oshima, won in the uncompromising competition against the team from Hong Kong. In the finals of men's singles, the future world's No. 1, according to the ITTF rankings (as of January 2018), Ovcharov played against the leader of the Chinese national team, Fan Zhen-dong. After four games, the first place went to the Chinese players.

ITTF President Thomas Weikert thanked Kazakhstan for the high-level organisation of the tournament.

"The World Tour Grand Finals is one of the most important events for us. We really see how people here in Kazakhstan are happy that such an event was held here, and everything was organised at a high level. Astana has some modern facilities, both large and small, an ambitious team and young athlete Gerassimenko, so it is most likely ITTF will come back here," said the ITTF President.

# Barys loses to Dynamo Moscow 3:5

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – In an away match on Dec. 21, Barys lost to Dynamo Moscow 3:5, but managed to at least shred the nerves of the home team in the rollercoaster game. Top scorer for both Barys and the league Nigel Dawes missed the game because of an injury.

The match started with Dynamo's Danil Tarasov scoring in the first minute of the first period – promising a high-scoring game for the local audience of 4,479 people at Moscow's VTB arena.

But Barys, recently struggling to straighten out their win-loss ratio, answered back soon enough: Vladimir Markelov netted an unassisted one at 13:12 and tied the game.

After the intermission, Barys' Roman Starchenko scored at 28:02 and put his team ahead by one. But about 10 minutes later, Dynamo tied things up again with a goal by Nikita Komarov, whose shot deflected off a Barys defenseman and slipped by Henrik Karlsson. Just two minutes later, Tarasov scored his second of the game, nicely sliding the puck into the top left corner past the goalie and changing the course of the game. With his second goal, Tarasov boosted the confidence of the team and shook up Karlsson.

In the beginning of the third, however, Barys came back to score again right off the face off in Dynamo's zone. This time, it was James Wright giving fresh hope to his team.

Tied at 3:3, the teams were looking to break the game their own ways. Dmitry Vishnevsky of Dynamo gave his team the edge two minutes later to make it 4:3 and Dustin Boyd sealed the deal with another goal against his former team with over five minutes to go in the match.

"The guys fought well," Evgeny Koreshkov, head coach of the team, said after the game. "When the score was 3:3 they lost concentration and allowed a goal. Missed out by a little. On the whole no complaints, they fought until the end," he said.

Barys has been struggling to recover from a series of losses since the second week of November. Astana's team has won only twice since then and lost 12

games. In several of them, Barys was shut out.

Rumours that Barys is looking for a new goalie after Karlsson's recent unimpressive matches were quickly dismissed by the team. Karlsson is apparently applying for Kazakh citizenship in order to play for the national team.

This was 22nd loss for Barys, which put the team in sixth position in the Eastern Conference. It slipped into the seventh position on Dec. 22 as Traktor from Chelyabinsk won against Vityaz from Podolsk and moved into the sixth spot.

Barys will face Neftekhimik Dec. 23 in Astana and is starting a series of home games. If they win at least four of these, they will have a chance for a playoff spot.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

## Three ice towns built in Astana for winter amusement



Photo credit: Astana mayor's office.

By Frol Leandroer

ASTANA – Three ice towns were built in the capital for New Year's and opened Dec. 18, said the city's department of culture, archives and documentation.

The main ice town is located on the expo grounds. EXPO 2017: Future Energy was chosen as the main focus, with the idea of conducting a tour of the most recognisable architectural symbols from the history of world exhibitions. Visitors are able to see a fragment of the Crystal Palace built in London for the

1851 event and the Eiffel Tower, which served as the entrance to the 1889 exhibition in Paris.

Two large slides, measuring five metres high and 40 long, were built for adults. The two children's slides have a height of 2.5 metres and length of 14 metres. The town features ice trees, sculptures of famous superhero movie and cartoon characters, Disney Land castle and futuristic ice towers. Sculptures of Santa Claus and the Snow Maiden were made of coloured ice.

Children will be especially interested in a more than 80-me-

tre long ice maze with light-dynamic illumination, noted the culture department. In addition, the country's main New Year's tree is located near the Nur Alem sphere, Kazakhstan's national pavilion at the expo this past summer.

The second ice town, with one adult and two children's slides similar to the expo site, is on the square in front of the city government. Ice figures of Santa Claus, the Snow Maiden and 12 zodiac animal figures were also installed.

The third ice town with a large slide was built in Student Park.



Photo credit: Astana mayor's office.



Photo credit: Astana mayor's office.



Photo credit: Inform.kz.

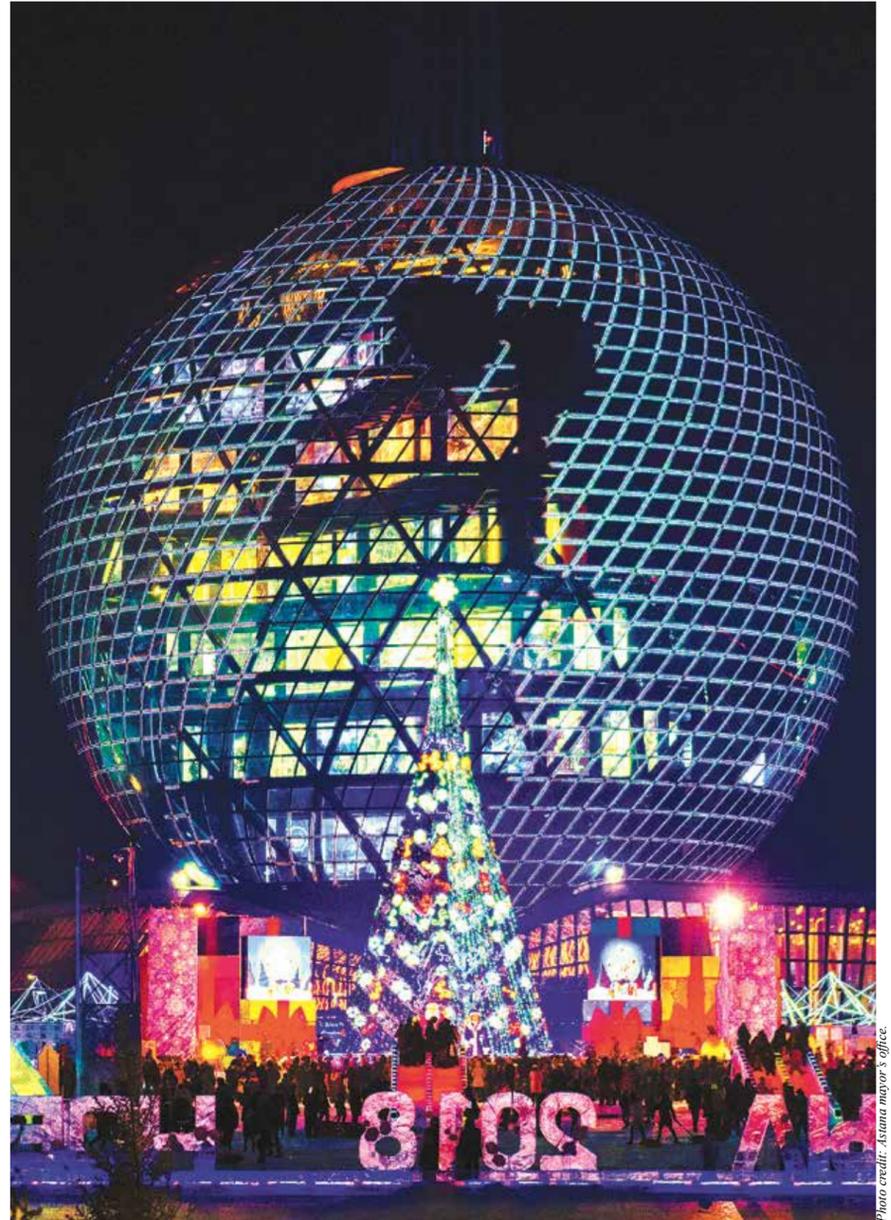


Photo credit: Astana mayor's office.

 Advertisement for Tengri Bank. The background features large, 3D geometric shapes in shades of purple and blue. The text includes the bank's name, its association with Punjab National Bank in India, a slogan, a phone number, and a website.
 

**TENGRIBANK**

AN ASSOCIATE OF PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK. INDIA

**TO THE TOP  
HAND IN HAND!**

3434 FREE

[www.tengribank.kz](http://www.tengribank.kz)

14.12.2017 жылғы № 1.2.53/43 Қазақстан Республикасы Ұлттық Банкінің лицензиясы. Лицензия Национального Банка Республики Казахстан № 1.2.53/43 от 14.12.2017 года