



## Seven candidates compete for country's highest office in June 9 election



Candidates for President of Kazakhstan in the order of their registration by CEC. L-R, top row: Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Sadybek Tugel and Amangeldy Taspikhov. L-R, bottom row: Daniya Yespayeva, Toleutai Rakhimbekov, Zhambyl Akhmetbekov and Amirzhan Kossanov.

By **Saltanat Boteu**

**NUR-SULTAN** – The Kazakh Central Electoral Commission (CEC) registered May 6 the last four candidates to qualify for Ka-

zakhstan's June 9 presidential election. Registration closed May 11 and a total of seven candidates will campaign until June 8 for election to the country's highest office.

The last four candidates to be registered by the CEC include a

member of Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) Committee on Finance and Budget Daniya Yespayeva. The commission also registered May 6 Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (CCPK) Central Committee Secretary and Mazhilis

Deputy Zhambyl Akhmetbekov, National Agrarian Research and Education Centre Chair Toleutai Rakhimbekov and a journalist and a member of Ult Tagdyry Movement Amirzhan Kossanov.

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## Economic integration: a driving force for sustainable development

By **Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana**

Leading thinkers from the world over gather at the Astana Economic Forum this week. Their focus is on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and how it should shape long-term economic growth and social development strategies in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. As international best practice and practical solutions are considered, one longstanding objective must remain in our sights: deepening economic integration between Central Asia and the broader region. This is a key means of accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Kazakhstan, with its experience of reforming and modernising its economy, mainstreaming sustainable development and successfully attracting foreign direct investment, has a major contribution to make.

This contribution is important as our analysis demonstrates the region must significantly strengthen

its effort to achieve sustainable development. Progress in Asia and the Pacific has been made towards eradicating poverty and providing universal education. Measures are underway to achieve affordable clean energy. Yet on its current trajectory, the region needs to do more to achieve all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This includes Central Asia, where action is needed to improve gender equality, build sustainable cities and communities and achieve decent work and economic growth – Sustainable Development Goal 8. Regional economic integration will be a key part of the solution.

Kazakhstan has demonstrated its commitment to achieving this goal overtime, despite the financial and economic crises in international markets by which it has been affected. The digitisation of the economy and public life is underway and key programmes such as the 'Business Roadmap' or the 'Employment Programme' are being implemented.

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## Kazakhstan to build new green energy production facilities

By **Yerbolat Uatkhanov**

**NUR-SULTAN** – Kazakhstan plans to build new green energy production facilities and is considering exporting electricity to Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries.

"Over the past three years, the total volume of exported electricity reached 13,798 billion kWh, or 4.6 percent of the total electric energy generation. As part of the work on the formation of a common electricity market in the Eurasian Economic Union, the signing of the corresponding protocol between

the EAEU countries is expected by the end of May. This action is dedicated to the fifth anniversary of the signing of the treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union," said Energy Minister Kanat Bozumbayev at a meeting with representatives of the civil sector and NGOs.

The minister also said the country is considering expanding export routes. In general, a gradual formation of a common electricity market is planned on the basis of parallel operating electricity systems. The regulatory framework is still under development by the EAEU countries.

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## Nation evacuates 231 more citizens from Syria

By **Malika Orazgaliyeva**

**NUR-SULTAN** – Two-hundred and thirty-one Kazakh citizens, including 156 children, were evacuated from Syria May 7 and May 9, according to a special announcement by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

The evacuations were part of a large-scale humanitarian effort, called Operation Jusan, that began in January under former President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The most recent evacuees included 18 orphans and Kazakhstan has given priority in its evacuation efforts to women and children, primarily those in need of medical care. All of the returned citizens will be provided medical, psychological and social assistance from the government and Kazakh non-governmental organisations.



Photo credit: tangnews.kz

Kazakhstan is the only country to have carried out large-scale evacuations of its citizens from Syria where tens of thousands of citizens from more than 50 coun-

tries are believed to remain in refugee camps, said Yerlan Karin, an advisor to President Tokayev.

Many of those returned this year are believed to have been in-

fluenced by terrorist groups to go to Syria to fight in that country's conflict. According to the Kazakh President, the citizens returned to Kazakhstan earlier this year have denounced radical views, have found employment and have re-established ties with their relatives in Kazakhstan. The children have also begun attending schools and kindergartens, he said.

In his announcement, President Tokayev said Kazakhstan would continue its evacuation efforts from Syria. He also reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to fighting terrorism and assisting Kazakh citizens abroad.

President Tokayev thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Security Committee and other government agencies as well as Kazakhstan's foreign partners who took part in the evacuation.

## UK to support Kazakhstan's development, strengthen relations throughout country's political transition, says British envoy

By **Dilshat Zhussupova**

**NUR-SULTAN** – As Kazakhstan enters a new period in its history, the United Kingdom seeks to continue supporting the country's development and maintaining and strengthening relations, British Ambassador to Kazakhstan Michael Gifford told The Astana Times.

Former Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev resigned March 19 and President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who stepped in to serve the

remainder of his term, recently called for an early election on June 9.

"This is an important moment of change for Kazakhstan. The leadership transition that we are witnessing is being closely watched around the world, including in the United Kingdom. The resignation of Nursultan Nazarbayev was a momentous event in the history of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. We should acknowledge his role as having been central to the establishment of the country and the development of the sovereignty and economy of Kazakhstan," said Gifford.

Strengthening relations throughout Kazakhstan's period of political change began this month when U.K. Minister of State for Europe and the Americas Sir Alan Duncan visited to the capital to consolidate the ties between the British and Kazakh governments, which have enjoyed diplomatic relations since 1992. Baroness Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne, U.K. Prime Ministerial Trade Envoy to Kazakhstan, also visited Atyrau, Almaty, and the capital in late April and early May to deepen bilateral trade, which, according to the Brit-

ish statistics, reached approximately \$3.65 billion last year. The level is unsurprising, as the U.K. is Kazakhstan's sixth largest investor and among its largest trade partners in terms of trade turnover.

"Our relations are continually evolving and cover a wide range of sectors, not just trade and industry but also culture, education, defence, political cooperation, legal, security and energy," said Gifford, noting the annual U.K.-Kazakhstan military exercise Steppe Eagle that in June will include additional partners.

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## Kazakhstan hosts IIHF 2019 World Championship, qualifies for top league

By **Aidana Yergaliyeva**

**NUR-SULTAN** – The Kazakh capital hosted the International Ice Hockey Federation's (IIHF) 2019 Ice Hockey World Championship for the first time April 29-May 5, with teams from Division I, Group A vying at Barys Arena. The Kazakh team earned its promotion to 2020 IIHF World Championship in Switzerland.

Kazakhstan took the lead in the standings with 14 points and confirmed its first place as it beat Hungary 3-1 during the May 5 last round of games.

Earlier the same day South Korea beat Belarus 4-1. Yet these games could change little in the overall standings. South Korea stayed fourth, while Belarus stood solidly in the 2nd place. Thus, for the very last game of the championship the Kazakh team walked in

to the ice already as the top qualifying team.

Placing first and the second in Group A makes teams eligible to play in the top division next year. The Kazakh team knew they will be promoted even before the game with Belarus May 4, because South Korea, which was competing for a top-two spots with Belarus, surprisingly lost to Lithuania earlier that day.

The fans haven't expected this scenario, as the Lithuanian team lost all three previous matches to Belarus (3-4), Kazakhstan (3-1) and Hungary (4-1).

"We were desperate to win and we did that. We got some bounces and good saves from our goalie and the guys stepped up when it was needed. Our guys believe in each other and play hard for each other," said Lithuania head coach Daniel Lacroix.

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# ELECTION 2019

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## Kazakh voters had until May 10 to confirm voter registration, must present ID to vote

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh voters seeking to participate in the June 9 presidential election had until May 10 to confirm registration at their local polling station and appeal any inaccuracies, according to regulations announced by the Central Election Commission.

Voters must also present a state ID or passport at the time of the vote, according to the regulations.

Voters can be included on only one voter list based on their place of residence. Voters had

until May 10 to submit a written request to their local executive body seeking inclusion on voter lists or changes to inaccurate information about the voter.

These appeals and registrations were considered by the local election body on the day the written request is received. If the application was rejected, the election commission is required to promptly provide a copy of the decision. The decision could be appealed to the relevant court at the location of the local election commission. If the decision was made in favour of the applicant, corrections to the voter list are made immediately.

Temporarily registered citizens are included on voter lists on the basis of the application submitted by them to a local executive body.

Voter lists for each polling station must be submitted by authorities to the election commission May 20.

The recently announced regulations also require local polling places make accommodations allowing people with physical challenges to vote or provide them the opportunity to vote at home.

Kazakhs abroad at the time of the vote can vote at most of the Kazakh embassies and consulates which number more than 60.



Photo credit: mfa.gov.kz

### NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

An election monitoring project was presented at the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, reported Khabar 24 TV May 7. Civil platform representatives will monitor electoral transparency, barrier-free access to polling stations for those with disabilities and compliance with safety standards. The project developers are also interested in the candidates' campaign transparency and their equal media coverage. "We should control whether there is a bias or preference for one of the candidates. We will pay attention to the outdoor advertising. There should be no pressure on entrepreneurs to provide some kind of sponsorship to the election campaign. According to the law, an election campaign should be conducted from specially constituted voter funds. This is a very important issue," said Kazybek Shaikh, head of the Amanat civil platform's Almaty branch.

Kazakhstan is developing a national plan until 2025 to protect the rights and improve the quality of life of people with special needs. Beginning in the second half of this year, there are plans to launch a social services portal and revise the standards to ensure the option of technical rehabilitation according to individual needs. Approximately 5,000 microloans will be provided in the rural areas to develop entrepreneurship among mothers with many children and persons with disabilities. "We discussed the issues of accessibility of education, healthcare and employment services at the coordination council on social protection in the East Kazakhstan region. The plan will include new approaches to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities and provide additional measures to support people," said Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Population Berdibek Saparbayev.

The Big Almaty Ring Road, which is expected to accommodate 38,000 vehicles per day, will be commissioned in 2021, reported Kazinform. The builders have completed mobilisation and begun construction and installation. "The Nur Zholy vehicle checkpoint at the Almaty-Khorgos road section along the Western Europe – Western China corridor was put into operation June 22. The contractual obligations of the concessionaire are fulfilled in full. To date, the time of inspection of vehicles has reduced four-fold. Daily vehicle traffic is 200 cars," said Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Roman Sklyar.

Birlik, an asphalt-concrete production plant with a capacity of 100 tonnes per day, will be launched by 2020 in the Turkestan region as part of the Business Road Map programme. The 120-million tenge (US\$314,800) project will create 20 jobs. The Shymkent chicken farm that will produce 1,000 tonnes of broiler meat per year, will also be opening. "The number of entrepreneurs in the region reached 16,072 people. The production output was 40.5 billion tenge (US\$106 million). The local agricultural producers export goods to countries near and far abroad. For example, last year Gazpromneft-Bitumen Kazakhstan produced 230,000 tonnes of bitumen and 148,000 tonnes were exported to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Astyq Sauda exported 36,300 tonnes of flour products to Uzbekistan and Afghanistan," reported the regional press service.

The Ministry of Healthcare will build more than 5,500 facilities in the next three years, reported Primeminister.kz. During the past three years, the regions entered into 111 public-private partnership contracts worth 52 billion tenge (US\$136 million). The unified plan to develop healthcare infrastructure will be adopted by June based on updated regional development plans. "Many medical institutions require major repairs and reconstruction. We will collaborate with the local authorities on long-term plans for the development of health infrastructure for an eight-year period. We need to ensure the availability of medical care for the regions," said Minister of Healthcare Yelzhan Birtanov.

## Government kicks off campaign to encourage election participation

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh government has launched a campaign to raise awareness about the June 9 presidential election and to encourage voter turnout.

The Heart of the Country Votes campaign includes Facebook and Instagram accounts as well as public events.

The social media posts will encourage voter participation. The Facebook Elorda Live page also allows residents to post stories and videos supporting the upcoming presidential elections. The posts will be accompanied by hashtags #WeChooseFuture, #YourVoteIsImportant and #Sailau2019.

The social media component of the Heart of the Country Votes campaign is a part of a larger Kazakh government initiative to better incorporate social media into its outreach and services.

"Social networks will play one of the most important roles. Given the trends that are emerging today, we will pay great attention to this,"

Nur Otan Party Deputy Chairman Maulen Ashimbayev told Tengrinews May 4.

The campaign will also include public events and information kiosks with information about where to vote in local districts.

The June 9 election is an early vote called for by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Tokayev assumed the office of president, per the Kazakh Constitution, March 20 after the surprise resignation of former Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Tokayev has also been registered by the Central Election Commission as one of the seven candidates for the election, standing for the Nur Otan ruling party.

The Central Election Commission has originally accepted the documents of nine applicants.

In related election news, presidential candidate for the Construction Workers of Kazakhstan Union Talgat Yergaliyev has withdrawn from the race. Also, on May 2, the CEC rejected the registration application of Zhumatai Aliyev after Aliyev failed a Kazakh language proficiency test.

## 22 long-term ODIHR observers accredited

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – The Central Election Commission (CEC) recently accredited 22 long-term observers from the Election Observation Mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to observe Kazakhstan's June 9 presidential election, said CEC Member Zauresh Baimoldina at a May 13 meeting.

Having assumed the office of President March 20 per the Kazakh Constitution following former President Nursultan Nazarbayev's resignation March 19, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced early presidential elections April 9 in a televised address to the nation.

An election observation mission typically consists of short-term and long-term observers who are citizens of OSCE participating states, excluding the country where the election is taking place. The accredited long-term observers to Kazakhstan's presidential election include representatives from Armenia, Austria, the Czech



The May 13 meeting of the Central Election Commission.

Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Switzerland and the United States.

Foreign observers and international organisations observing the election must complete an accreditation process, according to Central Election Commission rules announced in April. The process is coordinated by the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which accepts applications at election2019@mfa.kz. Sixty-seven foreign observers have been accredited so far and accreditation of foreign observers will continue until 6 pm June 3.

At the CEC meeting, the commission adopted a resolution stating that states that accreditation of foreign observers is to be conducted via an application, credentials are to be issued to foreign observers and the resolution's execution is to be overseen by Baimoldina.

International media covering the election must also register with the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs by emailing a cover letter from their publication's editor-in-chief, a copy of a valid passport, a completed accreditation form, a 3x4 centimetre digital photo and a brief biography to accreditation2019@mfa.kz.

## Seven candidates compete...

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All presidential nominees provided the CEC with an extract from the nominating meeting minutes of the highest bodies of the national public association that they represent, the candidate's statement of consent to run for president and a document certifying they paid the 2.13 million tenge (US\$5,574) fee. Each candidate also passed a Kazakh language test.

For registration, the candidates also submitted a health certificate showing they were free of 107 physical and mental ailments, a certificate of the state revenue authority on the candidates' delivery of the declaration on income and property and territorial election commissions protocols on the results of the collected signatures' verification in support of the presidential candidate.

The candidates were also required to collect at least 118,140 signatures, representing 1 percent of the country's registered voters, in support of their candidacy. To fulfil this requirement, Yespayeva, the Ak Zhol Democratic Party candidate, collected 144,098 signatures of citizens in 17 regions, 139,541 of them were considered reliable.

Akhmetbekov, the CCPK presidential candidate, collected 138,294 signatures of citizens in 16 regions, 135,506 of them were considered credible.

Rakhimbekov, the Auy (Village) Kazakhstan's social democratic party candidate, collected signatures from 122,309 citizens in 15 regions, 120,754 were considered reliable.



The building of the Central Election Commission in Nur-Sultan.

Kossanov, the Ult Tagdyry United National Patriotic Movement presidential candidate, collected signatures from 131,189 citizens in 14 regions, 129,582 of which were considered reliable.

The candidates received presidential candidate's certificate. The CEC provided information on the presidential candidates' registration to Halyk Savings Bank of Kazakhstan to open special temporary accounts for them.

Previously, the CEC confirmed the candidacy of Kazakh President and Nur Otan Party nominee Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Kazakh Federation of Trade Unions candidate Amangeldy Taspikhov and Uly Dala Qyrandary public association's candidate Sadybek Tugel.

Taspikhov, 59, from the West Kazakhstan Region, nominated April 24 from the Kazakh Trade Unions Federation, is a mechanical engineering graduate of Ka-

zakh Polytechnic Institute. Since 1998, he has worked in numerous positions in the oil and gas and new technologies industry. From 1998-2002, he was a member of the Senate and from 2004-2007 was a Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) deputy and member of its Committee on Economic Reform and Regional Development. His latest position is the Director of Oral Oil and Gas.

Tokayev, 65, the current President of Kazakhstan, was nominated April 23 by the ruling Nur Otan Party. Tokayev graduated in 1975 from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations and in 1992 from the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry. He is a Candidate of Historical Sciences and Doctor of Political Sciences and has extensive experience in diplomacy and state affairs, having served as Deputy Secretary General of the

United Nations and Prime Minister and Speaker of the Senate.

Tugel, 64, from the East Kazakhstan Region, nominated April 17 by the Uly Dala Kyrandary National Public Association, is a journalist and public figure. In 1982, he graduated from Kazakh State University majoring in journalism. From 1988-1990, he studied at Almaty Higher Party School and received a degree in political science and sociology.

He worked as editor-in-chief of several newspapers and television companies and is currently editor-in-chief of the Qazanat national popular science magazine. Since 2006, he has served at times as first vice president of the Kazakh National Sports Association and president of the Kazakh National Equestrian Sports Federation.

Yespayeva, 58, from the Aktobe Region, nominated April 25 by the Ak Zhol Democratic Party, is a member of the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) Committee on Finance and Budget, Atameken Union Board in Aktobe and the region's Coordination Council. For more than 14 years, she was a member of the regional akimat (administration) Committee on Family and Women Affairs. She was elected a deputy of the regional Maslikhat (assembly) in 2008 and 2012.

Akhmetbekov, 58, from the Ak-mola Region, nominated April 26 by the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan, is a graduate of Tselinograd Agricultural Institute and KIMEP University and previously served as central committee head of the Communist People's Party

of Kazakhstan. He served in several positions in the Korgalzhyn District Akimat (administration), as Tengiz District's Culture Department head, Druzhbinsk High School Military-Patriotic Education Deputy Director and Sunkar Lyceum Military-Physical Training Deputy Director, as well as a platoon commander. He was also a member of the Kazakhstan's youth division of the Soviet Union Communist Party.

Kossanov, 54, from the Kyzylorda Region, nominated April 26 by the Ult Tagdyry United National Patriotic Movement, is a journalist, politician and public figure. In 1989, after graduating from the Faculty of Journalism of Kazakh State University, he worked as a correspondent for the Socialist Kazakhstan newspaper. Since 1990, Kossanov has been involved in political and public work starting with the Komsomol of Kazakhstan. Since 1991, he has worked in different positions with the Kazakh State Committee on Youth Affairs. In the early 1990s, he was a Deputy Minister of Youth, Tourism and Sport, press secretary of the Prime Minister and head of the Kazakh government's press service, among other positions.

Rakhimbekov, 54, from the Karaganda Region, was nominated April 25 by the Auy People's Democratic Patriotic Party. He graduated from Kazakh Agricultural Institute in 1986 and received a law diploma from Buketov Karaganda State University in 2001. He is a member of the Kazakhstan National Academy of Sciences and has a doctorate in economics. He started his career in 1986 as a junior researcher at the Kazakh Agricultural Institute. He worked as deputy akim (mayor) of Satpayev town for several years.

# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

The Kazakh Honorary Consulate and Kazakh Invest office for promoting investments opened recently in Split, the second largest city in Croatia. Croatian Foreign Minister Marija Pejčinović Burić, who was in Nur-Sultan April 30 for the opening of the Croatian embassy, noted steady development of Kazakh and Croatian cooperation and growth in trade turnover that last year reached \$350 million. She hopes the office will contribute to strengthening trade and economy and expanding tourism, education, culture and sports contacts.

Vienna-based international organisations expressed interest in strengthening cooperation with Kazakhstan during Minister of Foreign Affairs Beibit Atankulov's recent visit to the Austrian capital. He and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director and UN Office in Vienna (UNOV) Director-General Yuriy Fedotov discussed the fight against illicit drug trafficking, crime, corruption, money laundering and human trafficking and a project designed to de-radicalise Kazakh prisoners. Fedotov emphasised Kazakhstan is one of UNODC's main regional partners that supports the country's foreign policy initiatives to maintain regional security, including the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre to combat drug trafficking, along the so called northern route from Afghanistan. International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Yukiya Amano also noted Kazakhstan's role in nuclear non-proliferation efforts, including the launch of a low-enriched uranium bank in Ust-Kamenogorsk in 2017.

Georgia is seeking to increase the volume of grain imports from Kazakhstan. Grain is among the country's key exports and this year, the nation plans to export approximately 9.5 million tonnes, primarily to Central Asia. Kazakhstan and Georgia recently agreed on subsidies measures for grain transportation. "This is quite a good mechanism to bring grain at a competitive price. Grain goes from Kazakhstan to Georgia through Russia and Azerbaijan. We need to know how much does it cost to cross all borders, which parts will be subsidised and what the final cost will be. Georgia consumes nearly 700,000 tonnes of grain per year," said Georgia's Association of Wheat and Bread Producers Chair Levan Silagava, as quoted by Kazakh TV.

Russian carrier Nordwind Airlines will start flying to Kazakhstan, said the Kazakh Civil Aviation Committee. Nearly 30 percent of Kazakh international flights are to Russia. Nordwind will operate regular flights from Samara to Almaty four times per week on Boeing 737 and Airbus 321 aircraft. Russian airline S7 also launched its first flight from Novosibirsk to Nur-Sultan. The twice-weekly flight will expand to three times a week on Embraer 170 aircraft starting May 28.

Kazakh figure skater Elizabet Tursynbayeva has been included in the International Skating Union (ISU) World Standing list, which includes the results of the preceding two seasons and the current season. She is ranked sixth with 3,108 points. Russian champion Alina Zagitova is atop the ranking with 4,510 points; both are trained by Eteri Tutberidze. Tursynbayeva recently finished second at 2019 World Championships, becoming the first woman to successfully land a quadruple Salchow.

Kazakhstan is a leader in housing construction in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In 2018, the country commissioned 12.5 million square metres of housing. The highest construction volume is in the capital city of Nur-Sultan with 2.4 million square metres, followed by 2 million square metres in the country's former capital and largest city Almaty and 1.2 million square metres in the Mangystau Region that together account for 45 percent of the housing commissioned in Kazakhstan. This year, the plan is to commission 13 million square metres. In the past two years, Kazakhstan invested approximately two trillion tenge (US\$5,332,054,000) in housing through its Nurly Zher housing programme.

## Kazakhstan has turned into 'competitive transit hub', Nazarbayev tells Belt and Road forum

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan's First President Nursultan Nazarbayev briefed the April 25-27 Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on the country's infrastructure development and transport potential.

"Over the past ten years, Kazakhstan has invested about \$30 billion on infrastructure development, transport and logistics assets and competence. Almost 3,000 kilometres of national railways and 12,500 kilometres of highways have been modernised or put into operation. Domestic sea and air harbours were reconstructed. As a result, the country has turned into a modern and competitive transit hub," he said.

The Western Europe – Western China intercontinental highway now connects Europe and China through Russia and Kazakhstan, noted Nazarbayev, adding the highway was completed through cooperation between the country's Nurly Zhol Programme and the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Nazarbayev also said China's Belt and Road Initiative is in line with his own G-Global Initiative to address global economic challenges.

Nazarbayev praised the Belt and



Road Initiative, saying it has succeeded where other efforts to revive the Silk Road over the last 30 years have failed.

"In a short period of time, together we have built economic corridors which avoided complex natural landscapes and geopolitical contradictions," Nazarbayev

said noting trade within the initiative has reached \$5 trillion.

Nazarbayev said the initiative proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in Nur-Sultan (then called Astana) in 2013 has become a successful model for development despite current international political contradictions, sanctions and trade wars.

"It is clear that the world is already tired of conflicting geopolitical concepts and strive for geo-economics and joint development. The Belt and Road displays much more than a complex of new opportunities for economic cooperation. The initiative reflects a strong historical demand for security,

trade and prosperity of more than 120 countries," Nazarbayev said noting Kazakhstan has supported the initiative from its inception.

The former Kazakh President also congratulated the Chinese people during the forum on the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

## UK to support Kazakhstan's development...

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The facts that 4,000 Kazakh students are currently studying in the U.K. and that more visas are issued to Kazakhstan's students than those from Australia or Brazil are indicative of the value of a U.K. education. The United Kingdom is the most popular destination for Bolashak programme students completing postgraduate studies and the British government has also funded Chevening Scholarships for more than 200 Kazakh students to study at the postgraduate level, after which many return home to work in leadership positions.

"This is a way of ensuring strong links between the United Kingdom and Kazakhstan in the future," said Gifford. "We also have many insti-

tutional links. The London School of Economics and the University of London have a partnership with the Kazakh-British Technical University; the University of Cambridge partners with the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools while Coventry University, Loughborough University and many others are also active here. I have been



Michael Gifford

very impressed by the willingness of British institutions to look toward Kazakhstan for establishing partnerships."

"We are increasingly active in cultural cooperation through the British Council," he added. "The Cambridge University Press is cooperating with Kazakhstan's National Translation Bureau to produce an English-language anthology of Kazakh literature, which will be an important cultural milestone. The British Council is also helping Kazakhstan develop its own creative industries because, in the United Kingdom, the creative economy is a very important part of our national economy. We have been running the Creative Central Asia forum in the region for several years. Last year, creative economy leaders from

Central Asia and the United Kingdom came together in Nur-Sultan to talk about ideas and how to develop creative industries on a more solid foundation."

The July 5 launch of the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) set a new level for the countries' legal and financial services cooperation. The April 10 English Law Summit gathered leading Kazakh and U.K. legal professionals in the capital to discuss developments in English law and its benefit for businesses.

"At the AIFC, you have a combination of world-class legal and financial experts and an arbitration court based on English law," said Gifford. "We also have very talented individuals involved with the AIFC, including Lord Woolf, who is the Chief Justice

of the AIFC Court and one of the most influential and well-known figures in the U.K. legal sector, and many other justices who have deep experience in commercial arbitration law."

Gifford, who began his post in January 2018, aims to ensure his nation will continue playing a central role in developing and diversifying Kazakhstan's economy, engaging with the government to ensure the country's sovereignty and working closely in important areas such as China's Belt and Road Initiative. The ambassador, who has become recognisable from his video blogs on Facebook (@BritishEmbassyKazakhstan) and Twitter (@MikeGiffordFCO), also hopes to continue learning Kazakh and Russian and travelling more in Kazakhstan.

## 12th round of Astana Process peace talks advances work to launch constitutional committee

By Elya Altynsarina

NUR-SULTAN – Parties to the 12th round of Astana Process Syrian peace talks April 26 in the Kazakh capital continued efforts to launch a Constitutional Committee to bring peace to Syria.

The committee is seen by the sides in the conflict as a way to achieve political reform and hold elections to unify the country.

Despite trilateral efforts and agreements reached in January 2018 during the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi, Russia, a final decision to launch the committee has not been reached.

Recently appointed United Nations Secretary-General Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen participated in the most recent two-day talks in Nur-Sultan and said the parties will hasten efforts to launch the Constitutional Committee as soon as possible.

Pedersen left open the possibility another meeting might take place in Geneva before consensus on the committee is reached. The Astana Process talks are meant to enhance the efforts of the Geneva talks.

The situation in Syria's Idlib de-escalation area was also discussed during the talks and remains a serious concern. Nearly three million people remain under control of the former affiliate of Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organisation Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

The Astana Process guarantor states Turkey, Russia and Iran reaffirmed their determination to maintain previous agreements to stabilise Idlib and committed to enhance the patrolling and functioning of the Joint Iranian-Russian-Turkish Coordination Centre there. These and other measures would seek to reduce violations in the Idlib de-escalation area.

The sides called upon the inter-

national community to continue supporting Syrians and expediting humanitarian aid and recovery projects without any preconditions.

In a joint statement adopted by the three guarantor states, the sides suggested increasing the number of observers of the Astana format and agreed to invite Iraq and Lebanon to join the Astana format.

The next round of Astana Process talks will take place in Nur-Sultan in July.

## Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan hope planned border trading centre will boost trade to \$5 billion by end of 2020

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are planning to open the Central Asia international centre for trade and economic cooperation on their shared border. The countries have set a goal to increase bilateral trade to \$5 billion by the end of 2020, said Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the April 15 press briefing summing up his two-day visit to Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

"The implementation of this project will streamline cross-border

trade and improve access to control infrastructure, as well as create a large trade and logistics hub in Central Asia," he noted.

During the presidential visit, Kazakh Minister of National Economy Ruslan Dalenov and Uzbek Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Sardor Umurzakov signed the memorandum establishing the centre. The ministries also assigned the working group to curate the project.

In a statement, the Kazakh Ministry of National Economy noted the centre will have an integrated system to accelerate individual

screenings and admit goods and cargo. The programme will give significant impetus to regional tourist flow and cross-border trade and contribute to developing the North-South and Central Asian transport and transit corridor.

The new trading centre will allow countries to coordinate their activities to improve transport logistics. It will centralise trade interaction with other Central Asian countries, as well as partners from other economic regions, Bekzhan Sadykov, a researcher at the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies (KazISS)

under the President of Kazakhstan, told inform.kz.

"The Central Asia centre being created in the future may become the main trade hub that will significantly change the structure of the transport and trading system of the region of Central Asia. For Kazakhstan, the creation of such a centre will allow consolidating and regulating trade flows coming not only from Uzbekistan, but also transit trade flows passing through Uzbekistan to our country with further transportation to other countries," he said.

Kazakh exports to Uzbekistan increased 27 percent in 2018 to \$1.19 billion. Similarly, Uzbek exports to Kazakhstan increased 20 percent to nearly \$450 million. The largest share of Kazakh exports were agricultural products and natural resources in the oil and gas industry.

"Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the most dynamically developing countries of Central Asia and regional cooperation between our countries is of mutual benefit, which, first of all, lies in the area of trade relations," said Sadykov.

# ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## EAEU integration mitigates effects of global economic conflicts for member states, Kazakh official says

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) integration helps mitigate the potential effects of global trade wars, protectionism and sanctions, head of the Kazakh National Ministry of Economy's international integration department, Indira Beisekeyeva, told the 2nd Congress of Eurasian Media, held April 24-26 in Konakovo, the Tver Region, Russia.

"The integration allows us, in coordinating resources, to go through such turning points with fewer losses. Today, the Eurasian Economic Union helps the economies of the countries participating in the EAEU to withstand the global crisis, and also helps create a favourable foundation for business development and investment attraction," said Beisekeyeva.

Direct investments from EAEU countries to Kazakhstan in the first nine months of 2018 increased 31 percent year-on-year to \$1.2 billion. Also, in 2018, trade between Kazakhstan and EAEU countries increased 7.5 percent to \$19.1 billion, said Beisekeyeva.

The EAEU ensures the supply of goods to third country markets without restrictions. The EAEU, for example, had 18.8 percent foreign trade growth with third countries that totalled \$753.4 billion in 2018.

"An important indicator (of integration) is the number of operating joint ventures. Their number in Kazakhstan since the beginning of the EAEU's operation has increased by 67.4 percent and crossed the mark of 10,000 enterprises," said Beisekeyeva.

By the end of the year, the EAEU countries and the Eurasian Economic Commission will finalise the strategic directions for Eurasian economic integration development until 2025.

Kazakhstan as a member state expects integration to open new market segments and improve regional trade relations.

"I will note here that the Kazakh side fully supports the further development of integration processes, but only within the framework of the existing agreements. Within the framework of the EAEU, agreements were reached that in the future will bring additional benefits for our economy. We need to strengthen and develop our positions where we have already reached agreement. We are talking about gas, oil, electric power, financial markets, industrial, agro-industrial policy, etc.," said Beisekeyeva.

The Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) has the potential to become a systemic financial integrator in the EAEU, EDB Chair Andrei Belyaninov told the congress, add-

ing the bank is inclined to choose the ruble or tenge as a common currency to finance projects. At the end of 2018, the EDB head noted that bank investments increased 2.5 times to \$1.6 billion.

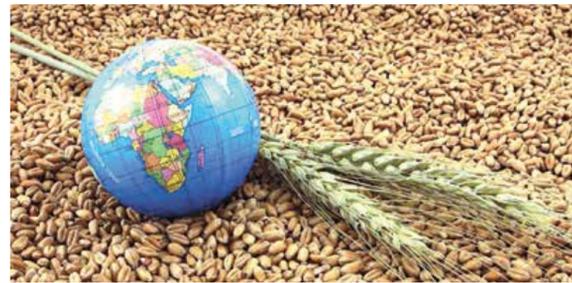
"After talking with the national banks of our countries, I realised that no one would give up their sovereignty, including the Bank of Russia. But our bank is equidistant from everyone, and we can move along this path, become a system integrator," said Belyaninov.

In addition to economic integration, the EDB suggests creating a humanitarian initiative fund to support cultural and informational projects at the end of May.

"We consider this [the humanitarian initiatives] an essential tool for integration. Economic and infrastructure projects are important, but if there is a gap in the humanitarian sphere, the population simply will not know about it. To overcome the stereotypes and lack of information over the past 30 years, it is necessary to create specialised information resources and to consolidate the interaction of journalistic organisations," Russian Journalists Union Secretary Natalia Chernyshova told the April media congress.

The first Eurasian Media Congress was in September in Almaty. May 29 marks five years since the signing of the EAEU treaty.

## Fish to EU, grain to Afghanistan: Kazakhstan exports set to grow in 2019



Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh agricultural exports totalled \$610.2 million in January-February, a 12.9-percent increase compared to the same period last year, reported the Ministry of Agriculture press service.

The bulk of the exported goods were plants and their processed products (\$579.8 million); the balance (\$30.4 million) was livestock and its processed products.

Afghanistan, China, Iran, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have become the country's main agricultural markets. Kazakhstan exports grain, oilseeds and leguminous crops, flour, oil and fat products, as well as fish and seafood.

Rapid export profit growth was seen in vegetable oils sales to the Central Asian region, China, Iran and Russia. Flaxseed oil exports increased 75.5 percent (more than 4,600 tonnes worth \$3.7 million); rapeseed oil sales increased 36.1 percent (6,300 tonnes worth \$4.6 million).

Kazakh farms delivered 1.2 million tonnes of wheat (\$213.8 million) to foreign markets, a 27.9-percent increase year-on-year. The country also exported 293,900 tonnes of flour (\$62.3 million). Both products were shipped mainly to other Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. Barley exports increased 1.5 times to 480,800 tonnes (\$88.8 million).

Oilseed exports continued to grow. In the two months, Kazakhstan sent 253,800 tonnes of flax, sunflower, rapeseed and safflower seeds (\$80.8 million) to foreign markets.

More than 4,000 tonnes of Kazakh fish and fish products (\$10.1 million) are available at stores within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), European Union (EU) and China.

Meat and meat products exports doubled to 5,000 tonnes, more than half of which was beef (2,785 tonnes). The main importers, which also receive live cattle for slaughter, are Armenia, Bahrain, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Uzbekistan.

### ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan nearly doubled defence and veteran support spending to 136.4 billion tenge (US\$357.82 million), which accounted for 7.1 percent of total expenses. To mark the 74th anniversary of World War II Victory Day, Kazakh authorities allocated more than 2.6 billion tenge (US\$6.82 million) in additional financial assistance for the country's 88,900 veterans of what is also termed the Great Patriotic War. These war veterans receive 313,000 tenge (US\$821.1) on average. Veterans living in East Kazakhstan, Nur-Sultan, Akmola and Pavlodar regions received financial assistance amounting to more than 500,000 tenge (\$1,311). The Kostanai and Zhambyl regions' veterans received 150,000 tenge (US\$393). As of May 1, there are 1,425 direct participants of the Great Patriotic War living in the country and 87,000 other veterans including besieged Leningrad residents, rear workers, the spouses of those lost or injured in the war and former minor prisoners of concentration camps, among others.

At the end of April, Kazakhstan's subsistence minimum increased 5.6 percent year-on-year and reached 27,800 tenge (US\$73). More than half of the calculated minimum, 15,300 tenge (US\$40), was accounted for food, while the other 12,500 tenge (\$33) is for non-food products and services. In the same period, prices for goods and services increased by 4.9 percent. Food product prices increased 7.1 percent, non-food products 6 percent and paid services 1.2 percent. Residents of Mangistau Region, Nur-Sultan and Almaty receive the highest subsistence minimums at 34,300 tenge or US\$90, 32,100 tenge or US\$84 and 30,900 or US\$81, respectively. The lowest value of the subsistence minimum is in Pavlodar Region, where it is 24,700 tenge (US\$65).

Meat consumption in Kazakhstan increased by 6.8 percent and averaged 77.9 kilogrammes per capita in 2018. Household expenditures on meat and meat products amounted to 91,000 tenge (US\$239) per capita, a 15.3 percent increase year-on-year to 14.8 percent out of total household expenditures. In rural areas, spending on meat increased 19.8 percent and reached 73,800 tenge (US\$194), while in urban areas, spending on meat increased 12.8 percent and reached 103,600 tenge (US\$272). Horsemeat and chicken consumption increased the most, by 18.6 and 17.7 percent respectively. As for meat products, minced meat consumption increased the most, by 26.1 percent.

The average monthly salary per employee increased 10.5 percent year-on-year to 168,500 tenge or US\$442 in the first quarter of 2019. The real growth in the purchasing power with inflation reached 5.2 percent – a record figure for recent years. Employees in the financial and insurance sector receive the highest wages, at 323,000 tenge or US\$847.30 per month, an increase of 8.1 percent year-on-year. Among the other earners are workers in scientific-technical activities and information and communications. Although the salary of workers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries saw the greatest growth at 16.4 percent, their average wage reached only 93,200 tenge or US\$244.50.

The film "The Avengers: End Game" of the Marvel comics universe broke records for sales before its premiere in Kazakhstan. Kazakh cinemas collected 87.5 million tenge (US\$230,278) from the pre-sale of tickets alone during the first weekend of its release, April 25 to 28. This is 23.3 percent more than "The Avengers: Infinity War," which was released last year and collected 62 million tenge (US\$163,168). Average moviegoers paid 1,213 tenge per ticket, which is 0.7 percent less year on year. The top three other blockbusters included the military drama "Consequences," which drew 8.6 million tenge or \$22,560 after one week at the box office and another superhero film from the DC Comics universe, "Shazam," which collected 8.4 million tenge or US\$22,035 after four weeks at the box office.

## PM briefs Western diplomats, officials on new measures to attract investment

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan hopes recently launched measures by the government will increase foreign investment cooperation with countries and institutions, Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin told an April 24 meeting with a group of Western diplomats and officials.

American Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Doris Bradbury, British Ambassador to Kazakhstan Michael Gifford, Canadian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Nicholas Brousseau, European Union Ambassador to Kazakhstan Sven-Olov Carlsson and U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Theodore Lyng attended the meeting.

Mamin explained the reasons for the April 22 establishment of a new Coordinating Council on Investment Issues that is chaired by himself and includes the first deputy prime minister, deputy prime minister responsible for

infrastructure development, heads of key ministries (Justice, Foreign Affairs, National Economy, Industry and Infrastructural Development, Energy, Agriculture as well as Internal Affairs), the National Bank, Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), national holdings, national companies, Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, deputy chairman of the National Security Committee, chairman of the Supreme Court Specialised Judicial College and deputy attorney general.

"The fact that the Kazakh government pays special attention to creating the most favourable conditions for attracting investments and strengthening the protection of investors' rights and that the Kazakh Prime Minister is directly involved is a very good signal to investors," Bradbury said at the meeting, as reported by Primeminister.kz.

Kazakhstan's foreign direct investment (FDI) increased 15.8 percent to \$24 billion last year,

and its foreign trade increased 20 percent year-on-year. Kazakh officials hope the government's new measures will continue that growth trajectory. The European Union is the largest foreign investor and foreign trading partner for Kazakhstan. The United States is among the largest investors, while Canadian companies are working in the uranium industry, among others.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Alikhan Smailov and AIFC Governor Kairat Kelimbetov also informed the prime minister and heads of diplomatic missions on the AIFC's FDI-friendly initiatives.

The AIFC operates within a special legal regime based on English common law principles, an independent court and an international arbitration centre and positions itself as a financial hub for countries in Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Eurasian Economic Union, Europe, the Middle East, Mongolia, as well as Western China.

## Eurasian Development Bank to provide 102 billion tenge to build Saryarka gas pipeline

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Eurasian Development Bank will be included in the list of Saryarka gas pipeline investors with a commitment to provide 102 billion tenge (US\$267 million) for the project.

"We are now working on our construction of the Astana gas pipeline (Saryarka gas pipeline) project. We talked about this here last year. Our credit committee has already approved this transaction, so we are proceeding to the practical implementation. For us, the sum of our transaction is very significant because it was made using tenge – 102 billion tenge (US\$267 million). There is a tranche to finish and the terms of the transaction are not simple, but

we are there (with the Development Bank of Kazakhstan) working on the project for the construction of the main gas pipeline," said Bank Board Chairperson Andrei

Belianinov at the second Congress of Eurasian Media April 24-26 in Konakovo, the Tver Region, Russia.

The investment is part of Eur-

asian Development Bank growing its loan portfolio.

"Last year, contracts were signed for 29 new projects. The loan portfolio for 2018 increased by 48 percent and reached \$3.4 billion; today, it is already \$3.6 billion," he added.

The pipeline is planned to be built in four stages, reported Inform.kz. The first involves constructing the main gas pipeline along the Kyzylorda-Zhezkazgan-Karaganda-Nur-Sultan route. The pipeline is expected to extend from the capital to Kokshetau and then to Petropavlovsk. The final stage involves building compressor stations in Temirtau and Zhezkazgan.

The gas pipeline measures 1,061.3 km and the cost is 267.3 billion tenge (US\$698 million).

The project involves local companies and labour resources.

A financing scheme has been developed for the project. AstanaGaz is to provide 80.3 billion tenge (US\$210 million) via the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund and Baiterek National Management Holding, with each providing 40.15 billion tenge (US\$105 million). Funds will also be borrowed from banks, particularly the Development Bank of Kazakhstan and Eurasian Development Bank. United Accumulative Pension Fund is slated to invest 85 billion tenge (US\$222 million) from pension assets into AstanaGaz bonds.

Construction of the Saryarka gas pipeline is expected to be completed by December, according to the planned schedule.



Photo credit: Samruk Kazyna press-centre.

# BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

More than 3.2 million people in Kazakhstan are employed in the small and medium-sized business sector, which is approximately 37 percent of the country's employed population, Kazakh Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Roman Sklyar said at the May 4 opening ceremony of Ult'yq Onim, a national exhibition of domestic producers. First President Nursultan Nazarbayev set as a national goal increasing the share of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to 35 percent of Kazakhstan's gross domestic product by 2030 and to 50 percent of GDP by 2050. At the end of 2018, the share of SMEs in the country's GDP was more than 28 percent and valued at 26.5 trillion tenge (US\$69.52 billion). Sklyar added that through the Business Road Map 2020 state programme, the Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund supported 22,400 businesses with loans of 495 billion tenge (US\$1.3 billion) in 2018.

Kazakhstan will build hospitals through public-private partnerships (PPPs), an approach commonly used in Turkey, Kazakh Minister of Healthcare Yelzhan Birtanov told a recent government meeting. The ministry's analysis of the PPP approach found that it resulted in hospitals that are built quickly, at good quality, with equipment that meets modern requirements and that hospital processes are able to be performed without interruption.

New private schools with a capacity of at least 40,000 students will be built by the end of 2021, Kazakh Minister of Education and Science Kulyash Shamshidinova told a recent government meeting. She also put forward mechanisms for the construction of schools in the country, including funding through the state budget, through public-private partnerships or, for private schools, through per capita financing. The three mechanisms should function in parallel to effectively address the shortage of places for students at schools, the minister noted.

Information technology company DAR has launched the DAR Lab competition for IT startups. Participants may submit commercial projects in logistics, financial technology, insurance, retail, e-commerce, pharmacology or social projects in improving the rural and urban environment, health, ecology or nature conservation. The competition is open to IT students and start-ups from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan looking to launch their projects. The most promising IT projects may receive an investment of up to 4 million tenge (US\$10,493) for commercial projects and up to 10 million tenge (US\$26,233) for social projects and join the DAR Lab Asia Accelerator. To participate, apply at [www.darlab.asia/contests](http://www.darlab.asia/contests) before May 29.

New support mechanisms for renewable energy sources will be presented by the Kazakh Ministry of Energy at Solar Fest Qazaqstan in Borovoe July 4 and 5, Inform.kz reports, citing Kazakhstan Association of Solar Energy Chair Kaliya Khisamidinova. The outcome of discussions at Solar Fest Qazaqstan will be a document addressed to the Kazakh government on behalf of the country's renewable energy industry, presenting its vision for the development of renewable energy in the short and long term.

Kazakhstan Aselsan Engineering will export optoelectronic devices to Turkey, reports the press service of the Kazakh Ministry of Digital Development, Defence and Aerospace Industry. The company will also cooperate with Turkish companies in modernising avionics for helicopters in Kazakhstan. These agreements were reached at the 14th International Defence Industry Fair in Istanbul, which has been organised by the Turkish Armed Forces Foundation since 1993. Kazakhstan's military-industrial complex was presented in a single national exposition this year.

## Astana International Exchange to align with Green Investment Principles; CCB joins AIFC

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – The Astana International Exchange (AIX) recently announced plans to align with the Green Investment Principles (GIP), reported the organisation's press service.

The GIPs aim to build an international network to improve the management of environmental risks for investments in the Belt and Road Initiative region. The GIPs were developed by China Green Finance Committee and the City of London in collaboration with other international organisations and approved at the second Belt and Road Forum April 25 in Beijing.

"From its inception the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) has identified green finance as one of its core pillars and focused on developing the necessary

rule system, regulatory framework and products which can be favourable to promote and develop green finance in Kazakhstan and in the region. In light of growing attention to climate and environment changes around the world, the awareness and appetite for green finance investments is growing globally. Hence, the sign up to the GIP is fully aligned with AIFC core strategy and principles to become the financing hub for the Belt and Road Initiative projects which incorporates the global green investment principles," said AIFC Governor Kairat Kelimbetov.

The principles include sustainability in corporate governance, understanding of environmental and governance risk factors, environmental information disclosure, information sharing with stakeholders and utilisation of green financial instruments, which are effective set of investment principles

that offer possible actions to green the investment projects.

AIX's CEO Tim Bennett noted that one of AIX's objectives is to introduce capital market products to support Kazakhstan's economy, which take advantage of the opportunities arising under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

"Signing the GIP emphasises the regional perspective of AIX to support infrastructure and economic development in Kazakhstan and in the region in accordance with environmentally and socially friendly international practices. Also, signing up to the GIP can make AIX market more connected and integrated with the international green investment community. We are happy to be one of the first signatories to this international network," he said.

The global financial institutions that support the GIP include the China Development Bank, Import-

Export Bank of China, Industrial and Commerce Bank of China, Agriculture Bank of China and Silk Road Fund, Credit Agricole-CIB, Standard Chartered Bank, French Foreign Trade Bank (Banque Française du Commerce Extérieur), Al Hilal Bank, Hong Kong Stock Exchange and Natixis Bank.

It was also reported that the China Construction Bank Corporation (CCB) received a licence to conduct financial services, including banking services and capital market operations, through its Astana branch at the AIFC.

Kelimbetov said that the AIFC is keen to take advantage of its location along the New Silk Road and in particular the Belt and Road Initiative by offering an attractive regulatory environment.

"Kazakhstan, where the Belt and Road Initiative was first proposed, is one of the most important countries along the Silk Road. The es-

tablishment of the Astana branch is CCB's foremost pro-active response to the Initiative. Astana Branch will give full play to the advantages of CCB Group to support the bilateral trade and investment cooperation between China and Kazakhstan. The Branch will actively serve the Belt and Road Initiative by providing high standard financial services in order to facilitate interconnection and production capacity between China and Kazakhstan. Furthermore, CCB is committed to build a new financial cooperation platform between China and Central Asia in the AIFC," said CCB Chairman Tian Guoli.

CCB is the world's second largest bank by total assets and is the first fully authorised branch of a foreign bank at the AIFC. The bank has commercial banking branches and subsidiaries in 29 countries and regions.

## Designer converts Karaganda coal into award-winning jewellery



Photo credit: Zeller Instagram Page

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – Olga Zeller, a designer from Karaganda, creates coal jewellery in a variety of designs, from patterns inspired by her own heritage to modern minimalist looks.

Zeller is trained as an economist, but five years ago, she got involved in jewellery manufacturing.

"First I worked with polymer clay. Frankly speaking, I did not think that it would be possible to make a profitable business from a hobby. I thought that I would give cute handmade jewellery to rela-

tives and friends," Zeller told kur.siv.kz.

"As soon as the first buyers appeared, I realised I needed to upgrade my skills," she added.

The entrepreneur began to master new technologies in jewellery design. Flowers were one of the first natural materials she incor-

porated into her pieces. As the summer in central Kazakhstan is very short, the designer uses dried flowers framed in resin and silver, as well as fur, leather, feathers, bones and natural stones in her jewellery.

She's been working with coal for two years and says jewellery from this type of stone is in high demand, and strongly associated with Karaganda. She makes earrings, pendants and bracelets from Karaganda coal. As the designer explains, coal, compared to many stones, is much lighter and cheaper, and it looks as good as black agate.

"Coal is lighter than natural or semi-precious stones. I do not have to search for it as it is sold in any supermarket in Karaganda. Considering that I live in a coal-fired house, I don't have a shortage of raw materials at all," said Zeller.

For her jewellery, the designer chooses anthracite coal, which is a deeply saturated black. In some of her products, she uses it as small black diamonds.

In general, it takes 10 days for Zeller to make one piece of jewellery, though it all depends on the size and particular design of each piece. The designer spends about a week of that time on coal preparation. Zeller is currently at work preparing a collection for a show in Moscow. She won a trip to Moscow through an open city competition in which she topped the best designer in jewellery category. She also won a trip to Altai for the region's Sunny Deer International Competition. In Moscow, she'll present an ethnic style jewellery collection.

The designer's work can be found on her Instagram pages @olga\_zeller and @tulola5.

## Reopening of long-shuttered metals plant brings jobs to East Kazakhstan village

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – After nearly a decade of inactivity, Dinatron-Kazakhstan, formerly the Irtysh Chemical Metallurgical Plant, smelted its first high-purity titanium ingot April 11. The bars weigh more than 150 kilograms, reported the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development press service.

Re-opening the enterprise has created new jobs, which is extremely important for improving the East Kazakhstan's socio-economic situation, particularly Pervomaika village in Shemonaikha District where the plant is located.

Dinatron-Kazakhstan's 10-year development programme includes plans to manufacture 500 tonnes of high-quality titanium and 120 tonnes of niobium products worth \$25 million by 2021. The company's products are in great demand, with orders coming from as far as Japan, said director Viktor Popov.

In addition to producing titanium ingots, an estimated \$100 million will be invested in construction and equipment to build more plants for forging, sheet rolling and pipe rolling by 2024. The plans will also produce tantalum and niobium microcapacitors for radar and

space technology. Opened in 1956, Irtysh Chemical Metallurgical Plant is the only facility in Kazakhstan which produces niobium, tantalum, neodymium, praseodymium, samarium, gadolinium and cerium among other rare metals.

The plant ceased the major part of its production in 2015, leaving a minimum number of staff. The decision resulted in terminating 166 employees, a significant number for the Shemonaikha District.

In December 2017, the Rare Earth Metals Plant bought the Irtysh Chemical Metallurgical Plant for 433.26 million tenge (US\$1.14 billion). The facility terminated production and closed to renovate and modernise its technology.

The design capacity of the reconstructed plant is estimated to produce 150 tonnes of niobium and 645 tonnes of ferriobium ingots per year, as well as employ 430 people.

In January 2018, the regional akimat (administration) announced the plant will also produce tantalum and niobium implants that should allow Kazakhstan to enter the international market. Because of their high biocompatibility, the implants are valuable materials in producing advanced dentistry and orthopaedic equipment.



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# EDITORIAL & OPINION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## June 9 election set to be most competitive in Kazakhstan's history

When the presidential elections were announced last month, analysts and experts began to actively speculate about who would run to become Kazakhstan's head of state. As the campaign has just formally begun, we now have the answer to that question.

A total of seven candidates have been registered by the Central Elections Commission making the upcoming vote the most competitive in the 27 years of Kazakhstan's existence as an independent state.

The candidates include Daniya Yespayeva from the Ak Zhol party. The nomination of Yespayeva is a historic moment for Kazakhstan, as she is the first ever female candidate to run for President in the country. This is a clear demonstration of the progress made by Kazakhstan in ensuring greater gender equality. Of course, Yespayeva is not the first female politician in Kazakhstan. The Senate Chairwoman as well as the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Education and Science, for example, are also female, as are approximately a quarter of the members of Parliament. Nevertheless, it is genuinely inspiring to see a female candidate running for President in Kazakhstan and it should motivate other women in our country to take an active part in politics.

International political experts have also been analysing whether the upcoming election in Kazakhstan will be free and fair. As is well known, incumbent President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev promised that the election will be transparent and to the highest expected standards. This is proving to be the case so far, as demonstrated by the list of candidates. For example, Amirzhan Kossanov, whose nomination was confirmed by the Central Electoral Commission last week, has been in opposition to the government for around two decades. He now has the opportunity to deliver his message to the people of Kazakhstan as part of his election campaign.

Another illustration of Kazakhstan's determination to ensure a free and fair election is the fact that the government has officially invited the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States and numerous other international organisations to observe the June 9 election, as well as many other observers. The Central Election Commission said recently that they expect more than 1,000 international observers from ten international organisations and foreign states to monitor the election. The

international observers will not only monitor the procedures of the electoral process but will also meet with presidential candidates.

In their recently published report following the Needs Assessment Mission, which took place from April 16 to 18 in Kazakhstan, ODIHR noted that "representatives of state institutions stressed their intention to conduct the electoral process transparently, in adherence to international standards for democratic elections and welcomed observation by ODIHR and any potential recommendations to improve the electoral process."

### Kazakhstan has already made substantial progress. The participation of a variety of candidates in the upcoming election, including opposition figures, as well as the country's extensive cooperation with international election observers, certainly demonstrates this.

The last point on recommendations is an important one. Kazakhstan's Constitution identifies free elections as a fundamental principle of our country. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan is a young democracy with a Soviet past, and some commentators have argued that more could have been done to ensure that previous elections reached the highest democratic standards. This is why cooperating with organisations, such as ODIHR and taking on board their recommendations is an important aspect of our country's democratic development. By evaluating and learning from our past election experiences and collaborating with ODIHR and other observers, our country can ensure that the upcoming election will be transparent and fair.

The registration of candidates ended last week, and campaigning began on May 11.

Some voices will likely continue to suggest that more work needs to be done to develop Kazakhstan's democratic processes. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan has undoubtedly already made substantial progress. The participation of a variety of candidates in the upcoming election, including opposition figures, as well as the country's extensive cooperation with international election observers, certainly demonstrates this.

## Pavlodar Region is attracting investment, further developing industry, says region's governor

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

**NUR-SULTAN** – In this exclusive interview, Pavlodar Region Akim (Governor) Bulat Bakauov talks about industrial development, fields attractive for foreign investments, tourism and infrastructure.

What socio-economic issues are on the agenda in your region? What work is planned to improve performance in the coming years?

We have been increasing industrial production in the region for the third year in a row. These figures grew by 4.8 percent in 2018. The region has 16 backbone enterprises, its own fuel, a widely developed energy system that enables to keep creating energy-intensive enterprises and small and medium businesses around them.

Having said that, we decided that today we should follow the path of a cluster development. After launching the production of alloyed aluminium and light alloy wheels with a capacity of 1 million units per year in the Pavlodar Special Economic Zone (Giessenhaus, LLP and Vektor Pavlodar, LLP), we opened an aluminium cluster. We are going to create the production of cast alloys, aluminium profiles, sheets, aluminium foil, wrought alloys and others. These are high value-added products with a great export potential.

The aluminium cluster is not the only one being developed in the region. A petrochemical cluster with enterprises such as Neftekhim LTD LLP, UPNK-PV LLP, KazBitum-Service LLP, Severkhim LLP, has already grown around the Pavlodar Petrochemical Plant LLP.

Ekibastuz that used to be the mining production centre developed a railway cluster. A number of enterprises have been created, such as the Kazakhstan car-building company, Prommashkomplekt LLP and others that have mastered the entire product line for railcars and railway tracks. These are Format Mach Company LLP, Technological Lines LLP, RWS Binding LLP, RWS Wheelset LLP and RWS Concrete LLP. All cluster enterprises will fully provide Kazakhstan Temir Zholy national company with domestic gondola cars and components for railway rolling stock produced using state-of-the-art technology.

Last December, as part of the Industrialisation Day, the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, launched a railway wheel production facility, which will be among the top three manufacturers of solid-rolled wheels in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). There is a strong demand for these products. Over 80 percent of them will be exported to foreign countries.

The region is actively involved in digitisation and is working on a cluster of blockchain technology. The mining data centre of BNK Energy LLP has launched in Ekibastuz. Today, its power consumption capacity is 33 MW. Seven billion tenge (US\$18.4 million) was invested in the project and 16 jobs were created. A Korean company has implemented a mining data centre project in Pavlodar. Its capacity exceeds 20 MW.

How much foreign investment was attracted to the Pavlodar Region in 2017 and 2018? Please tell us about the most significant projects in the construction, manufacturing and agribusiness fields.

The Pavlodar Region attracted 114.5 billion tenge (US\$302 million) of foreign investment in 2017, and 81.4 billion tenge (US\$214.7 million) in 2018. As previously noted, thanks to two projects funded through foreign investment, we started to develop the aluminium cluster. These are the projects for the production of light alloy wheels worth 530 million tenge (US\$1.4 million) with Russian participation and the production of alloyed aluminium worth 4.9 billion tenge (US\$12.9 million) together with



Bulat Bakauov

German investors. The projects will further the development of aluminium production of the fourth and fifth processing stages.

The most significant commissioned construction projects are the following: the launch of the first stage of the production of small concrete articles of Greatbrick LLP worth 800 million tenge (US\$2.1 million) and the modernisation of the production of high-pressure hoses and spare parts for agricultural equipment of Agromir LLP worth 50 million tenge (US\$131,930).

Of note are projects of PTF Company FRESHMILK LLP for the production of freeze-dried mare's milk amounting to 350 million tenge (US\$923,510), Galitskoe LLP for the production of refined sunflower oil and flour-based products worth 200 million tenge (US\$527,720), a creamery construction project of Greenland Invest, together with Chinese investors, amounting to 1.5 billion tenge (US\$3.9 million). We are about to implement the projects of MTS Uspen Agro APC for the construction of an elevator, mills, groats and pasta-making workshops for an agricultural production cooperative worth 335 million tenge (US\$883,931), and also Astana Fresh LLP for opening a baby food production facility worth 29.4 billion tenge (US\$77.5 million).

Could you talk about activities and projects in the field of public-private partnership (PPP)?

The region has 73 PPP projects totalling 54.6 billion tenge (US\$144 million) at various stages of planning and implementation. As of March 26, we concluded contracts for 23 projects worth 12 billion tenge (US\$31.6 million).

In 2017-2019, our health care system concluded 11 PPP contracts, which provided for reconstruction of the premises of Pavlodar City Hospital No. 1 with the installation of a computed tomography scanner for 202.5 million tenge (US\$534,316). CT scanners have been also installed at the Sultanov Regional Hospital (240 million tenge (US\$633,264)) and the Aksu City Hospital (270 million tenge (US\$712,422)). Another CT scanner has been installed as part of a PPP at the Ekibastuz City Hospital. The project's budget is 199 million tenge (US\$525,000). The premises have also been reconstructed here, and the actual amount of the costs of the private partner amounted to 166.8 million tenge (US\$440,118).

Rural outpatient clinics in the villages of Pavlodar and Kenzhekol have referred for a PPP trust management without an option to buy them out. Private partners purchased medical equipment and a car in the village of Pavlodar in the amount of 14.5 million tenge (US\$38,259). Meanwhile, in the village of Kenzhekol, they carried out maintenance works in the amount of 3.5 million tenge (US\$9,235) and purchased medical equipment in the amount of 21.3 million tenge (US\$56,202).

In the field of education, six PPP projects have been concluded to open private kindergartens, the amount of investments is more than 1 billion tenge (US\$2.6 million). The project provides for the placement of the state educational order in private kindergartens for five years. The total coverage will be about 881 children.

There are two PPP projects in the energy sector. One of them is to upgrade and operate street lighting in Ekibastuz in the amount of 746.3 million tenge (US\$1.9 million).

The private partner is Gorekktros. This PPP contract was concluded for seven years in the period up to 2024. As a result, 3,498 pieces of LED lamps and 61 automated outdoor lighting control cabinets have been purchased and installed. The city will also replace the uninsulated wire with self-supporting insulated wire 82.2 km long. As part of this project, we achieved 50 percent savings in electricity consumption, compared to the same period last year.

The second project is to upgrade and operate street lighting in Pavlodar in the amount of more than 1.7 billion tenge (US\$4.5 million). The private partner is Altocom Asia LLP. The PPP contract was concluded for six years in the period up to 2023. The upgrade has been completed, procedures for transferring to communal ownership are underway. As a result, 12,483 LED lamps and 70 outdoor lighting control cabinets have been purchased and installed, and a hardware and software system for controlling street lighting has been introduced.

What work is being done to attract tourists? How many tourists visited the region in 2018?

Being one of the most promising economic sectors, tourism is getting more and more developed not only globally, but also in Kazakhstan. The Pavlodar Region is abundant with attractions. The number of tourists grows every year; therefore, we are actively developing tourism. During the first nine months of the last year, we had 113,664 tourists, which is 3.5 percent more than in the same period in 2017 (109,790 people).

The Bayanaul resort being included in the top 10 tourist destinations of the Touristisation map of Kazakhstan was the hallmark of 2018. The 2019-2025 National Programme for the Development of Inbound and Domestic tourism was drafted. Together with the international consulting company McKinsey, the akimat (administration) of the Pavlodar Region participated in the development of a master plan for the resort.

In order to increase the tourist potential and create a comfortable environment for visiting guests, substantial efforts have been taken in recent years to develop the infrastructure in the amount of about 23 billion tenge (US\$60.6 million), including 19.4 billion tenge (US\$51.1 million) of budget funds invested in the construction of the necessary transport and engineering infrastructure. Private investors ensured the construction of such facilities as a ski resort, an airfield for small aircraft and modern holiday villages.

It is worth noting that major effort has been put into health and medical tourism. In order to develop health tourism in the region, we are working to improve the infrastructure of salt lakes.

An investor seriously landscaped the area of the Maraldy resort: they built a cafe with a dome for 500 seats, expanded the lake beach, and additionally built a large pier, where cafe is based during summertime. Furthermore, an ethnic aul consisting of five yurts has been opened and three log houses for 10 people have been built for the convenience of holidaymakers.

The region has created a map of sacred places of the Irtysh area. As part of the special project Sacred Geography of Kazakhstan, the map of sacred places included 41 sites in the Pavlodar Region, and seven of them became part of the national map of sacred places. These are the Konyr Aulie cave, the grave of Zhassybay Batyr, the Akkelin facility and the Mashkhar Zhussup Kopeyev Mausoleum in the Bayanaul Region, the Akkol-Zhayylma settlement and the Issabek Ishaan Hazrat Mausoleum in Ekibastuz, and the restored Sultanbet Sultan's headquarters in Pavlodar.

The Pavlodar Region took the implementation of the special pro-

ject Tugan Zher seriously. There are several notable projects in this area. The first is the opening of a volunteer centre. Our region initiated many volunteer projects. This is proved by the number of volunteers organising and conducting sports competitions, charity marathons, programmes supporting children with intractable diseases, projects implemented in orphanages and oncology departments. It is the first volunteer centre opened in Kazakhstan. Sponsors financed the renovation of a 105-square-metre house by construction teams of Zhassyl El. Currently, the volunteer centre includes nine organisations.

The second project is the ethnic festival Uly Dala Eli. The festival has already become the hallmark of the region. Over 100 yurts and about 70,000 participants ensure the magnitude of the event. Last year the festival was held on Aug. 3-5.

Another project, Ertis Promenade, was implemented on the famous Pavlodar embankment, a favourite place of all people living in Pavlodar. In 2018, we built an amphitheatre on the lower embankment of the city that last summer became the venue for various cultural events, including concerts of popular groups and performers from Kazakhstan and other countries.

Could you tell us what is being done to improve the transport system in the Pavlodar Region?

First, in order to upgrade the fleet of Bus Depot No. 1 LLP the akimat of Pavlodar plans to purchase 20 new buses and 10 electric buses worth about 2.3 billion tenge (US\$6 million). The oblast (region) centre continues to modernise the tram fleet: since last year, 14 new comfortable cars have been operating in the city, and another 13 new trams are expected to be delivered before the end of this year.

Moreover, in 2019, Pavlodar and Aksu are starting phasing-in the electronic ticketing system across all public transport routes. The Moscow group of companies BPC became the operator in Pavlodar, and BF Group Inc, LLP in Aksu.

The go2bus-pvl.kz website that tracks the movement of buses and trams online has been developed and launched for the convenience of public transport passengers. To ensure transport digitisation, we have developed the SMART BUS system that controls the quality of services within the national routes, the traffic plan and the timetable. Today, GPS trackers are installed in 221 buses out of 283.

With regard to passenger traffic, the direct flight Novosibirsk-Pavlodar-Novosibirsk was introduced for the period from June 2 to Oct. 23. This flight will be operated by the Russian airline S7 Airlines using the Embraer-170 aircraft with a capacity of 78 passengers. The Almaty-Pavlodar-Almaty flight of the FlyArystan low-coaster is launched in May.

Alongside this, we are finalising the construction of an airfield in the village of Bayanaul to develop small aircraft and make the Bayanaul National Park more attractive. To meet the needs of the population in air travel both within and outside the region, we are working on opening the Pavlodar-Bayanaul-Pavlodar flight. The Civil Aviation Committee of the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of Kazakhstan also considers providing national subsidies for the Nur-Sultan-Bayanaul-Nur-Sultan and Karaganda-Bayanaul-Karaganda flights.

As for roads, 11.5 billion tenge (US\$30.3 million) were allocated for repairing local roads in 2019, including 7.5 billion tenge (US\$19.7 million) from the national budget and 4 billion tenge (US\$10.5 million) from the local budget. It is planned to repair 221 km of roads. 40.5 billion tenge (US\$106.8 million) were allocated for national roads in 2019.

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The Astana Times

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# BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## International Finance Corporation investments in Kazakhstan seek to transform stressed assets

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Stressed assets are a strong indicator of the banking system's health and are thus closely followed around the world, including in Kazakhstan, International Logistics Parks (ILP) Group Managing Director Alibek Arystanov told The Astana Times.

"In the United States, investment and insurance funds specialise in identifying banks' stressed assets, buying them out at the cost of previous owners' debts," said Arystanov. "The Japanese stressed asset management system is a classic example of prioritising the confidence of foreign investors and production with high potential."

According to the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which is the World Bank's private-sector arm, investors and investment and insurance funds are ready to invest more than \$100 trillion in stressed assets in the private sector, which is 22 times more than the financing needs of developing countries. As part of its syndicated loan programme, the IFC acts as an intermediary for finding partners for long-term financing of projects in developing countries.

"The IFC created this programme in 2013, when the People's Bank of China allocated \$3 billion of investment in the IFC's projects. Since then, the pro-



Almaty Contract Logistic's warehouse.

gramme's capital has more than doubled because of the inclusion of global investors. In 2017, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority reserved \$1 billion for the programme. These funds will be used to finance projects in more than 100 countries," said Arystanov.

Last year, its fund accumulated a record \$693 million of investment for 26 countries in Asia.

"Kazakhstan is one of the top five countries in the Europe and Central Asia region that the IFC invested in long-term projects to diversify the economy, environment and development of small and medium-sized businesses," said Arystanov, noting that the aim of the investment is to transform stressed assets into sustainable ones.

Stressed assets in Kazakhstan are largely managed by the government, which purchases enterprises with debt through the Fund for Problem Loans and the Kazakh Investment Fund, after which they are restored and put up for sale.

"Stressed asset recovery is also carried out by Kazakhstan's banks, which have formed relevant units

and positions for loan officers in their structures and also participate in the Kazakh National Bank's programmes for improving financial stability. For example, Kaspi Bank has two subsidiaries engaged in stressed assets," said Arystanov, noting that Tsesnabank, Center-Credit Bank and Eurasian Bank reduced their share of stressed assets after placing bonds for tenders for \$157.77 million to \$262.96 million last year.

An example of effective stressed asset management in Kazakhstan is Almaty Contract Logistic, a logistic centre of ILP Group's Global Ecological Group Almaty. A key link in the transnational road connecting the flow of goods from China to Europe, the centre serves more than 500 cars and railway cars daily and guarantees that up to 75 percent of fresh produce, cosmetics and medicine is delivered without compromising quality. It employs more than 400 people, and its clients include Huawei, Medtronic, Armtec and Smeg.

"Ten years ago, logistic projects were a stressed asset. After the 2008 financial crisis, Kazkomertsbank, which was financing the projects' construction, ceased to receive sufficient funding from foreign investors, and projects were frozen until 2011. Having revised its stressed asset management policy, the bank looked for investors in Kazakhstan that could revive the projects and ensure their

sustainable development," said Arystanov.

Almaty Contract Logistic consequently developed its concept for sustainable development and found funds to launch. Its infrastructure was built from an incomplete warehouse that meets international requirements and expanded after the acquisition of neighbouring sites.

Investment for Almaty Contract Logistic's final stage of construction was drawn from the state programme for entrepreneurship support, for which the loan terms required a change of ownership to a public-private partnership. This strategic decision allowed for the launch of Almaty Contract Logistic's first warehouse in 2013, having attracted \$10.52 million in investment, and a second warehouse in 2015 funded by its working capital.

"Almaty Contract Logistic plans to build a network of warehouses for small and medium-sized businesses with an area of 50,000 square metres," added Arystanov on the firm's future.

According to the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, 3,146 enterprises in Kazakhstan went bankrupt last year. The direction of the country's development in the banking sector will depend on whether people choose to transform stressed assets into sustainable ones through investment over bankruptcy, said Arystanov.

## Economic integration: a driving force for sustainable development

Continued from Page A1

Deeper economic integration supported by improved transport infrastructure and trade facilitation measures across the North and Central Asia would support Kazakhstan's 2050 strategy designed to achieve annual sustainable growth and a diverse knowledge economy. It would also deliver the economic diversification necessary for more equitable distribution of wealth in the sub-region.

Today, trade between North and Central Asian countries accounts for only 8 percent of its exports, much less than other parts of Asia and the Pacific. The region's exports are concentrated in low-value added commodities and the foreign direct investment it attracts focused on natural resource exploitation. Many countries' landlocked positions make trading particularly costly, weighing heavily on competitiveness. To overcome these challenges, both hard and soft infrastructure is needed.

Starting with the hard infrastructure, transport in particular, there are firm foundations on which



Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

to build. The UN backed Asian Highway Network has supported the development of efficient road infrastructure, Euro-Asia transport links and improved access to maritime routes. ESCAP support to Dry Ports improves the transport and logistics systems needed for the efficient shipment of sea cargo to inland destinations by road or rail. The Kazakh-Chinese logistics terminal in the port of Lianyungang, the Aktau, Bautino and Kuryk seaports, and the Khorgos-Eastern Gate dry port on the border with China all contribute to deepening regional integration. As does the newly opened Kazakhstan-

Turkmenistan-Iran railway line connecting Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, providing much needed access to the sea.

Yet to make the most of this hard infrastructure, we need to focus on the softer elements as well. We must eliminate non-tariff measures and restrictive rules of origin, which weigh on trade and foreign direct investment. ESCAP is mapping the impact of non-tariff measures on intra-regional trade and helping strengthen governments' capacity to lessen their impact. Automating trade, transit and investment procedures would also help. The electronic exchange of trade data and documents between the North and Central Asia could reduce trade costs by 25 percent. A United Nations treaty to facilitate cross border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific has recently been agreed for this purpose. In North and Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have signed and acceded. I hope that more countries in the region will follow suit to maximise the treaty's benefits.

A sustainable future for coun-

tries in North and Central Asia will depend at least in part on a sustainable approach to transport infrastructure and trade facilitation. More hard infrastructure projects, consistent norms and standards, and harmonised legislative frameworks are needed so that companies can sell into new markets, expand and create jobs.

ESCAP is committed to supporting the intergovernmental work needed for such integration to occur, working with sub-regional organisations such as the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Kazakhstan's position on the Eurasian continent means it is well placed to help drive this agenda forward. I am looking forward to joining forces with Kazakhstan's leadership to deepen economic integration and achieve sustainable development by 2030.

**The author is United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).**

## EBRD, UN Climate Fund loan \$16.7 million to build 30 MW solar plant in eastern Kazakhstan

By Assel Satubaldina

NUR-SULTAN – The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) will loan \$16.7 million to China's Universal Energy to build a 30 MW solar power plant in Zhangiztobe in the East Kazakhstan region.

The agreement was signed during the recent Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing that gathered nearly 5,000 delegates, including 40 foreign leaders.

The financial package includes an EBRD loan up to 4.4 billion tenge (US\$11.7 million) in local currency and up to \$5 million from the GCF, a fund established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by 194 countries, parties to the Convention, in 2010. The fund assists developing countries addressing climate change and reducing carbon emission.

The Zhangiztobe plant is expected to produce approximately 38,900 MW of electricity per year and reduce carbon emissions in the country by 31,650 tonnes per year, thereby contributing to Kazakh-

stan's national emission reduction targets.

China's Universal Energy will develop the project.

"Universal Energy is a company specialised in the investment, development, construction, operation and maintenance of green energy projects. Universal Energy is actively developing a portfolio of solar projects worldwide and in Kazakhstan," said EBRD statement.

The solar power plant is the eighth project within the EBRD and GCF Kazakhstan Renewable Energy Framework. The framework is a \$223 million financial mechanism to finance renewable energy projects in Central Asia, including \$110 million contribution from the GCF.

The framework seeks to increase the share of renewable energy in the Kazakh energy mix by supporting the construction of 8-11 renewable energy projects in Kazakhstan with a 310 MW capacity.

EBRD and GCF also recently partnered in financing the construction of a new 40 MW solar plant in the Karaganda region in central Kazakhstan, also home to Central Asia's largest Saran solar power plant with 100 MW capacity launched in January.

## Plastic bag ban to answer eternal question, 'paper or plastic?'

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan's Ministry of Energy is considering a phased ban on the sale of small-capacity plastic bags under the country's new Environmental Code. It plans to start with public education, then launch a comprehensive and detailed study of the bags' impact and help producers of environment-friendly bags.

According to the ministry's press service, single use plastic bags cause serious harm to the environment and human health. In the first stage, vendors will be banned from providing free plastic bags and a widespread awareness-raising campaign will be launched to educate the population about the bags' harms. The ministry will also support the



production of alternative ecological packaging.

The second stage will be a complete ban on the bags. This restriction will be introduced after a thorough study of the issue.

Most plastic bags are made of polypropylene, a material made of oil and natural gas. Harmful chemicals are released into the atmosphere as the bags are produced and contribute to global climate change. The complete decomposi-

tion of polypropylene takes more than 100 years, and their fragments accumulate harmful substances such as polychlorinated biphenyls and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Since the bags are lightweight, they can also be carried long distances by wind and water, thus polluting distant countryside and bodies of water.

The ministry also reports that by the end of 2018, the number of enterprises engaged in separate collection, sorting and processing of solid household waste increased to 150. There were 115 such companies in 2016. Separate waste collection has been introduced in 51 settlements of the country and sorting in 30 settlements. Some 11.5 percent of the country recycles, marking a steady increase: in 2017 that number was 9 percent; in 2016, 2.6 percent. "We are mov-

ing in the right direction. We agree with this initiative because plastic bags cause irreparable damage to our environment," said Green TAL Director Asset Akhmadiev.

His company is a producer of eco-bags of various types.

"Our organisation is a social project, the main aim of which is the employment of socially vulnerable groups of the population. Today, 32 people work in our company – people with physical disabilities and mental disorders, single mothers from large families," he said.

"We have a wide range of products. We sew bags, backpacks, packages and beach bags. We also manufacture children's furniture from pure wood and cover it with hypoallergenic paints and varnishes. We focus on environmentally friendly products," Akhmadiev explained.



# BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## GreenTal Workshop combines empathy, entrepreneurship to help the socially vulnerable

By Ainur Seidakmetova

NUR-SULTAN – GreenTal Workshop, which opened in 2015 as a social project, employs individuals from socially vulnerable groups. Founder Emin Askerov works to popularise social entrepreneurship ideas in Kazakhstan and shares his experience with students in his social entrepreneurship school.

“I worked at Nazarbayev University. I had a good position, high salary and excellent working conditions. However, I did not enjoy my job. I wanted to develop as a person and contribute more to the community I live in. I am an empathetic person and I always dreamed about starting my own business. I thought that these two things were just incompatible,” he said.

A social worker by profession, Askerov learned about social entrepreneurship in 2014 and realised the business suited his personality. Although he lacked knowledge or background in the field, he left his job the following year and opened Green-

Tal basketry workshop. The business lost 5.5 million tenge (US\$14,315) the first year.

Askerov realised he needed to develop his business side and attended various trainings, took courses at Bishkek School of Social Entrepreneurship and participated in best practice exchange programmes in India, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, the U.K and the U.S.

“We closed down the basketry and opened a sewing shop, carpentry and welding shop. We also provide IT services. Now, we are developing venue decoration services,” he said.

GreenTal currently employs 37 individuals, 29 of whom belong to socially vulnerable groups, such as those who are disabled, orphans, from low-income families, discharged from prison or have mental health issues. The Astana Centre of Mental Health supports the projects by providing the premise for the workshop.

The workshop has two branches in the capital at a children’s home and Astana Addiction Centre. The Nur-Sultan Akimat’s Employment Centre

supports the project by compensating the salaries of those with mental health issues.

“GreenTal is a commercial project. We make a product and sell it on the market. My income from the business is still lower than the salary I earned as an employee, but I get much more satisfaction, because this project helps socially vulnerable people,” he added.

Askerov founded the school of social entrepreneurship in 2017 and visited 13 Kazakh cities with free seminars on the topic. Branches opened recently in Karaganda and Ust-Kamenogorsk.

“Our workshop can employ only 50 people. But if I train 50 people how to start and develop a social project, more people will get an employment opportunity. Chevron recently supported our education project. We received 60 applications and selected 40 of them. We are starting the training sessions soon. Our main purpose is to create a layer of civil society dedicated to the solution of our common social problems,” he said.

“I see a great potential for



social entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan. I meet a lot of people in regions who are ready to en-

gage in social projects. We have methodology and experience and we are ready to share it with

the people who want to develop projects with a social impact,” he added.

## Korean businesses, Kazakh Invest agree to \$113 million in projects

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh Invest and a variety of Korean companies signed memorandums for \$113 million in investment projects during the April 22 Kazakh-Korean Investment Forum in the capital.

The projects cover a number of fields. K2AT will invest in plant construction to desalinate Caspian Sea water, produce organic fertilisers, begin smart farming near the Aral Sea and build a research and development technology park. The projects will create more than 2,000 jobs.

Telecommunications company OKPOS KZ is planning to develop and supply point of sale (POS) systems. MAIN INFO will develop the high-tech market, including artificial intelligence and unmanned vehicles.

Woori Financial Group, a Seoul-based banking and financial services holdings company, will cooperate with Kazakh Invest to create closer commercial ties between the countries and their businesses. Its subsidiary, Woori Bank, is one of South Korea’s largest banks.

“Currently, 42 investment projects involving Korean companies totalling \$4.8 billion are at various stages of development, of which 20 projects worth \$2.4 billion have already been implemented. Among the largest projects of such com-

panies are LG Electronics, Kolon, Dongil Construction, KNOC, Lotte Confectionery and others. Another six projects worth \$2 billion are at the implementation stage and 16 projects worth \$670 million are being developed,” said Kazakh Invest Deputy Chairperson Rustam Issatayev.

Kazakhstan seeks to provide a favourable investment climate with a simplified tax regime, extended package of investment preferences, constantly improving legislation and reducing bureaucracy. The World Bank ranked Kazakhstan 28th out of 190 countries in its 2019 annual Doing Business Report.

The investment forum marked the 10th anniversary of the Kazakh-Korean strategic partnership. South Korean President Moon Jae-in and Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a wide-ranging joint statement between the countries during the former’s April 21-23 state visit to Kazakhstan.

Kazakh Invest, formerly known as Kaznex Invest, operates on the one window principle that provides a full range of services to support investment projects from idea to implementation, as well as in the post-investment period. It acts as a single coordinating centre for the nation’s special economic zones.

## Start-up Eco Poof makes eco-friendly ottomans

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Eco Poof makes orthopaedic ottomans from recycled materials. The company started producing and selling its contoured footstools in Karaganda after winning a start-up contest last year.

“In making our products, we use cardboard and plastic. We transform plastic using a special machine. A regular plastic bottle is turned into tape of a certain width and used as a construction solution for our furniture. From plastic, we create a cushion, with which we give the desired shape to the seat. It acts as an orthopaedic substrate between the chair and the person,” Eco Poof

head Timur Korobeinikov told the website WeProject.

He talked about the idea behind his product.

“We have combined the idea of recycling and creating a useful item. We studied the topic of posture correction. The main thing about an orthopaedic seat is that the angle between the body and the hips should be 90 degrees. In this position, the entire back straightens. Creating an orthopaedic chair does not require any additional time; it is enough to modify a regular chair. Each ottoman is assembled and sewn by hand. We adhere to an individual approach to each product, and we are open to new ideas. We can make a customised ottoman,” he said.

The decision to work with recycled plastic is part of Korobeinikov’s goal to change attitudes towards garbage in the country.

“We believe the materials should be given a second life. And for us, it is more of a personal challenge – to show that a creative approach is needed to work with plastic. It is not necessary to build factories and buy expensive equipment; you just need desire and raw materials. With our project, we want to transform mindsets at the local level, to teach Kazakh people not only to sort garbage but to involve them in production and recycling, to change the paradigm that plastic is garbage into thinking of it as a raw material,” he said.

The Astana Innovations Chal-

lenge allowed the team to kickstart its project.

“In November 2018, our team of four medical students went to the Astana Innovations Challenge start-up competition. In 54 hours, we had to solve one of the tasks. We chose a problem from Coca Cola International about the rational use of packaging waste, such as plastic bottles. We chose furniture as a solution to this problem. We immediately positioned ourselves as a long-term project; we wanted to continue this business. As part of the project, we took third place and purchased equipment using our cash prize,” said Korobeinikov.

Eco Poof products are available on Instagram at @eco\_poof.

## Kazakhstan to utilise aspects of Hungarian water resource management system

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan plans to examine Hungary’s experience in water treatment and loss prevention and incorporate those technologies into its own water management systems. Director of the Department of International Cooperation for the Ministry of National Economy Kairat Torebayev told an April 29 Kazakh-Hungarian business forum in the Kazakh capital.

He also noted that Kazakhstan and Hungary have signed three memorandums on water manage-

ment and are considering expanding cooperation in agriculture.

“Kazakh Minister of National Economy Ruslan Dalenov met with Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Mihai Varga and discussed plans for cooperation in tourism, health and water resources. Water resources are one of the main elements of this business forum,” said Torebayev.

Torebayev added that new water management technologies are gradually being introduced in the country.

“Starting from resource management, let’s say software, the second is reducing water losses, and the third

is generally cleaning and improving water quality. It is implemented at every stage, by small steps, but there is definitely progress,” he added.

“Hungary has experience in the production of agricultural products and machinery, and agricultural companies are interested in establishing cooperation. This is the production of seeds, cattle and so on. Minister Varga has directly called on Hungarian business people to open joint ventures, and the main market will be not only Kazakhstan, but the Central Asian region, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU),” he said.

In conclusion, Torebayev explained why Kazakhstan is interesting for Hungary.

“We are interesting for Hungary as a country that has significant resources. Today, Hungarians face significant competition in agriculture in the EU. For example, Spain and Italy produce their tomatoes and it’s difficult for Hungarians to compete with them. Hungary wants to implement projects for the production of agricultural products using European standards for our market and the EAEU’s market. This will improve the quality of products and the entire market as well,” he said.

## KAZ Minerals Group boosts copper production in first quarter of 2019

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – KAZ Minerals Group increased its overall copper and ores production in the first quarter of 2019, with its Aktogai plant increasing copper and sulfide ore production and Bozshakol, Bozymchak and the Eastern Region plants increasing ore production.

In the first quarter of 2019, the KAZ Minerals Group produced 67,300 tonnes of copper, which is 4 percent more than in the last quarter of 2018, the press service of the company reports. By the end of the year, a further increase in production is expected due to



higher copper content at Bozshakol as well as an increase in processing volumes at the Nikolayev

and Bozshakol plants for the processing of kaolinized ore. The Bozshakol and Aktogai sulphide

ore processing factories in the first quarter reached their target levels of production.

The company is on the way to achieving its copper production target for 2019, which is approximately 300,000 tonnes. KAZ Minerals Board Chairman Andrew Southam told Forbes.kz.

“Aktogai and Bozshakol demonstrated good performance in the winter period, reaching the planned level of production. Record refining volumes and increased extraction rates at Aktogai provided 37,000 tonnes of copper in the first quarter, offsetting the reduced average copper content in the ore and seasonal fluctuations in oxide production. Within nine months of the year, an increase in the production of Bozshakol and the Eastern Region plant is expected. The target range of copper production by our company in 2019 remains at around 300,000 tonnes.”

The company press service also published the copper production levels of Aktogai, Bozshakol, Bozymchagank and the Eastern

Region plants for the first quarter of 2019, comparing them with the last quarter of 2018.

Aktogai produced 36,700 tonnes of copper in the first quarter of 2019, compared with 36,000 tonnes in 2018. Bozshakol produced 23,800 tonnes, compared with 26,600 in the end of 2018. Bozymchak and the Eastern Region combined produced 9,500 tonnes, as opposed to 15,300 the quarter before. Although the growth wasn’t universal, ore production partially made up for it, with Aktogai producing 31,000 tonnes of sulfide ore in the first quarter of 2019 compared with 29,200 the quarter before, and 5,7000 tonnes of oxide ore, compared with 6,800 tonnes in the previous quarter. Bozshakol’s total ore production grew from 7.5 million tonnes in 2018 to 8.9 million tonnes in 2019. Bozymchak and the Eastern Region produced 963,000 tonnes of ore, as opposed to 959,000 tonnes in the previous quarter.

# Nation&Capital

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**Astana Opera presents May programme**

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**SPORTS**

**Astana Pro Team's Jacob Fuglsang wins men's Liège-Bastogne-Liège**

**B7**

## “Taste of Europe” cookbook presented



Talgat Akbergenov

**By Zhanna Shayakhmetova**

NUR-SULTAN – The European Union (EU) delegation to Kazakhstan presented “Taste of Europe” May 2 to mark the Day of Europe celebration in the capital.

The cookbook, featuring traditional recipes from 28 European countries, has recipe modification tips, bright illustrations by Alya Sharipova and historical background of the dishes.

Europe has been a laboratory of amazing culinary experiences for many years, said EU Delegation to Kazakhstan head, Ambassador Sven-Olov Carlsson.

“Europe’s culinary heritage is the best way to understand the richness and uniqueness of cultural diversity. Food is an essential part of life for both European and Ka-

zakh people. It unites us all. The national cuisine is recognised as the intangible cultural heritage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Knowledge of the history and origin of traditional foods, food processing and technology is key to understanding our European roots. These recipes are a small part of our great culinary heritage, but they will help to create the aroma and taste of Europe in your kitchen,” he said.

EU Delegation to Kazakhstan Press Secretary Elnara Bainazar noted the book is a sign of gratitude from all European nations to Kazakhstan for its hospitality and an invitation to learn new things about its European neighbours.

Chef and “Magiya Kuhni” TV show host Talgat Akbergenov shared his impressions about the book.

“Kazakhstan, located in the heart of Eurasia, has always been at the crossroads of different culinary traditions. Our gastronomic culture is always open to new tastes and combinations. ‘Taste of Europe’ is a kind of culinary journey through all 28 countries of the European Union,” he said.

It took approximately six months to release the book.

“All the recipes were provided by the embassies and consulates located in Kazakhstan. A book is the best gift, and we support this idea. The most important thing is that each recipe has been adapted for locals. For example, Finnish cuisine has some exotic ingredients for our country and we replaced the pine shoots with rosemary. The book will be of great interest for a wide audience,” he added.

National food shows the character, habits and traditions of the people, noted KazBrand head Zhanna Kaikenova.

“Food contains a lot of interesting information. For example, it was convenient to make beshbarmak (the national meal of boiled horse meat with pastry noodles and potatoes) for Kazakhs. We also have healthy drinks like kumis (mare’s milk fermented in a special way) and shubat (fermented camel milk), which contain vitamins and are the best to quench our thirst. This event is a unique platform where we can learn more about the European cuisine and talk about our cuisine. This is a cultural interaction,” she said.

The electronic version of the book is available since May 3 on the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan website.

## South African Embassy in Kazakhstan celebrates anniversary of apartheid’s end

**By Aidana Yergaliyeva**

NUR-SULTAN – The South African Embassy in Kazakhstan marked Freedom Day, their national celebration, with an April 26 lecture in the capital by former South African minister Sathyanathan Maharaj. He and Nelson Mandela laid the cornerstone for the country’s first free and just elections.

April 27 represents the end to the unjust system of apartheid, where South Africans lived a segregated life because of their skin colour.

“[This was] the first time that everybody was regarded as equal. No one was higher than anyone because of their skin. It did not matter whether you’re a black, whether you’re white. You are one, you are equal. That is why it is such an important day,” said South African Ambassador to Kazakhstan Keitumetsi Matthews.

Although apartheid was introduced as a legal system in 1948, South Africans had been colonised since 1652. The nation is also celebrating the 25th anniversary of allowing all citizens to vote for and choose their president, a major step towards achieving a more democratic and just system for all.

“These 25 years are very special to our country. They meant that all South Africans whatever their colour, whatever their situation in life now could vote and now could have a say in the country,” said Maharaj.

In 1994, the people chose the Af-



South African Ambassador to Kazakhstan Keitumetsi Matthews and former South African minister Sathyanathan Maharaj.

rican National Congress (ANC) and Mandela, who was imprisoned for 27 years, and he was inaugurated as president on May 10. The decision was the culmination of a long road for citizens fighting for their rights.

“It was a moment which brought peace to our country. Our country had been ravaged by war... Thousands send to exile, others send to detention, others were going to prison in the struggle for freedom. So, today is that moment when we celebrate it and we look at what we have achieved. We look at the mis-

takes we make and we try to build a better future for our people,” said Maharaj.

“It is really a huge change that impacted everybody. All our [political] prisoners were released from prison. They were able to make decisions, become part of government and direct our future,” said Matthews.

“Democracy is a process. It never goes smoothly. It’s like life. You have ups and downs. You have changes. You have to adapt to each new situation,” she added.

Kazakhstan is preparing to determine its next president in a June 9 election. The participating parties have nominated their candidates.

“I think the important thing for Kazakhstan is that it’s stable; the change [of its president] was very smooth. The transition has been perfect for the country. No upheavals, although it was a surprise, but it was done in a very elegant way. I think that the future looks good for you, for Kazakhstan,” said Matthews.

## Astana Pro team, Bulat Utemuratov Foundation team up in Burabike Fest

**By Saltanat Boteu**

NUR-SULTAN – The 2019 Burabike Fest, a charitable sports and music event, will take place Aug. 25-26 at Burabai resort. Guests will be invited to participate in an amateur bike ride (Aug. 24) and professional bicycle race (Aug. 25), open-air performanc-

es, charity auctions and creative workshops while staying at the Rixos Borovoe or tent camp on the hotel grounds.

The Bulat Utemuratov Foundation and Rixos Borovoe are organising the event with the support of the Astana Pro Team and Akmola Region Akimat (administration).

**Continued on Page B2**

## Artist illustrates what lays behind Turkic warriors’ brave, ruthless image

**By Aidana Yergaliyeva**

NUR-SULTAN – Russian designer-artist Alibek Koylakayev’s exhibit, Legends of the Turkic World, which presents psychological insights on well-known Turkic heroes, opened April 25 at the capital’s Kazakh National Museum.

As an ethnic Nogai (a Turkic ethnic group), Koylakayev has always been curious about the history of his people and why they have chosen to immortalise the memory

of ancient warriors through legends and compositions.

“Alibek is a talented artist. He is close to the Turkic peoples with all his soul, although he does not live in our country. He deeply perceives and promotes the history of both the Kazakh and Nogai peoples, which are rooted in a single Turkic people,” said National Museum Director Almaz Nurazkhan at the exhibition’s opening ceremony.

**Continued on Page B3**

## Low-cost FlyArystan launches first flight from Almaty to Nur-Sultan

**By Saltanat Boteu**

NUR-SULTAN – FlyArystan, Kazakhstan’s only low-cost airline, launched its first flight from Almaty to Nur-Sultan May 1 on a 180-seat Airbus A320. The company plans to fly a million passengers by the end of 2019.

The company organised a May 1 presentation at Nur-Sultan Interna-

tional Airport, where guests greeted the plane and watched a welcoming water salute. Participants included Chair of the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund Akhmetzhan Yessimov; President of Air Astana Peter Foster, who launched the airline, and Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Roman Sklyar, reported the company’s press service.

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### THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

#### ASTANA OPERA

**May 15 at 7 p.m.** Astana Piano Passion, semi-finals concert

**May 18 at 6 p.m.** Astana Piano Passion, closing ceremony concert

**May 19 at 7 p.m.** Future and Present of Kazakh Ballet

**May 22 at 7 p.m.** Spartacus, ballet

**May 25 at 6 p.m.** A May Evening of Cello Music

**May 28 at 7 p.m.** Melody of Passion, concert

#### ASTANA ARENA

**May 19 at 7 p.m.** FC Astana - FC Shakhter Karagandy, Qazaqstan Premier League

#### QAZAQSTAN CONCERT HALL

**May 15 at 7 p.m.** Saz and Soul, concert

**May 24 at 8 p.m.** Third Annual Bodybuilding Tournament

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

# Chevron's Zangar project prepares Atyrau Region youth for careers in science, technology

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – The Zangar programme has reached more than 9,600 young people in the Atyrau Region as part of the Chevron youth development programme.

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) launched the project in partnership with the Atyrau regional akimat (administration) in 2015. It prepares youth to succeed in their careers with 21st century skills and training in science, technology, education and mathematics (STEM).

"It is a great pleasure to see how Zangar boosts youth inclusion and civic engagement. The combination of life skills and STEM training is practical and powerful. According to employers across sectors, life skills such as communication, critical thinking and teamwork are critical and in demand. In fact, this often-missing skillset has been identified as one of the major employability needs of young people in Atyrau. STEM skills, which are associated with creativity and problem solving, are also among the skills of the future," IYF Kazakhstan Director Assam Satmukhambetova told The Astana Times.



The foundation creates an environment which supports youth learning and professional skill building and expanding programming for life skills and STEM education.

"Today, more young men and

women than ever before are working to make their way in the world. Zangar's role is to provide them with what it takes to be successful – in work and life. Young people in Kazakhstan have amazing enthusiasm and tremendous

potential; with a solid foundation of skills, support and opportunities, they're sure to soar," she added.

Zangar incorporates IYF's globally-proven Passport to Success (PTS) programme's curriculum.

Eighty-two percent of participants observed self-improvement in personal responsibility, decision making and respecting self and others.

This year, the PTS course included a unit on financial education. It is comprised of 11 lessons designed to support young people to apply core life skills like self-management, problem solving, decision making and resilience, to tackle complex financial issues and respond to new financial opportunities and challenges as they navigate life in effective ways.

"During the series of job interviews, I was able to demonstrate my work-readiness, including presentational and problem-solving skills, workplace protocol and negotiation skills, which I developed during PTS. As a result, I received the only internship offer from the maintenance and turnaround department of one of the leading oil companies in Atyrau," said APEC PetroTechnic graduate Amina Yelemessova.

Zangar has built a STEM ecosystem driven by 37 organisations including educational institutions, not-for-profit associations and government entities working together to promote STEM in education, innovation, industry and community. The STEM compo-

nent of the project covers continuous courses and offers diverse, hands-on activities.

In 2017, IYF launched Fab Lab Atyrau, the first fabrication laboratory in Kazakhstan, creating a space where young people can develop, design and build projects using state-of-the-art tools and equipment. Its successful projects include colour and sound-detecting devices to assist people with impaired sight and hearing and a remote-controlled robot for exploring hazardous environments.

"Fab Lab is a great place to practice knowledge and see how things work," said Diyas Umirbekov, an 11th grade student from Karazhigitov lyceum No. 16, who designed and constructed an electric wheelchair.

Zangar also supports local partners in developing their own capacities, leading to growth and progress. To date, 406 individuals have been trained to deliver the PTS curriculum and STEM courses.

The Public Association Info Centre and Bolashak Engineering took part in the capacity-strengthening trainings on monitoring and evaluation, blog writing, storytelling, grantee orientation and other areas.

## Belarusians, Kazakhs are open, hospitable people, says community leader

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – Belarusians and Kazakhs are open and hospitable people which brings them closer, said Radima Belarusian Cultural Centre's Chair and composer Dmitry Ostankovich. He has taught at the Kazakh National University of Arts in the capital for 17 years, growing a new generation of musicians.

"Hospitality is one of the best traditions of our nation. In this, we are very close in mentality to Kazakhs. Therefore, we celebrate and love all Kazakh holidays with great pleasure and we welcome guests with open hearts. The most beloved ones are Gratitude Day, Nauryz, the Kazakhstan People's Unity Day, the First President's Day and Independence Day," he told assembly.kz.

The centre, opened in the capital in 2013, unites enthusiasts to promote Belarusian culture, preserve traditions and customs and study the country's history and language.

"The main focus of our activity is the creation of conditions for the recognition of Belarusian culture in Kazakhstan and the search for opportunities for the interconnection of Kazakh and Belarusian cultures," said Ostankovich.

The centre features the Vyaselka folklore vocal group that performs Belarusian folk music, Kazakh and Russian songs, the Byaseda Belarusian folk music group's songs and Ostankovich's original songs. The 12-person ensemble is led by artistic director Tamara Batrak and choirmaster Ostankovich.

"The centre's Vyaselka folklore group is a regular participant in a large number of concerts, competitions and festivals. An important direction in its work is the performance of patriotic songs promoting love for the motherland and the high consolidating values of our people," he noted.

As a musician, Ostankovich participates in music festivals and concerts in Belarus and Kazakhstan.

"The most interesting for me was a trip to Minsk to the Belarusians of the World Arts Festival in



Dmitry Ostankovich

2014. Two hundred fifty compatriots from 18 countries of the world took part in the festival. It was a real celebration of the Belarusian culture," he said.

While at the university, he spent 13 years organising the Samal Young Composers Competition that grew to an international level competition.

"Last year, we had the first international competition at the university. It was a real celebration of composing art. A young composer from Germany won the grand prix and a Kazakh student won first place. I am sure that our young composers have a great future," he said.

Ostankovich composes songs for children, such as song cycles on Belarusian poems.

"One of my first compositions was a song for children, 'Apple writes and a pumpkin reads,' on the poems of Grigory Kruzhkov. It was successful and performers and listeners liked it," he said.

"The most famous and significant work I wrote is the Memory Choral of the Beslan Victims for a bayan (chromatic accordion) solo. This is a kind of mournful response to the horrifyingly terrible event that occurred Sept. 1, 2004, at school No. 1 in Beslan," he added referring to the terrorist attacks in this North Caucasian town in Russia that left more than 300 people dead.

## Astana Pro team cyclists, Bulat Utemuratov Foundation team up in Burabike Fest

Continued from Page B1

On the first day, all participants, regardless of age or any restrictions, will be able to take part in the 11-kilometre amateur bicycle race; they may either compete or cycle the route at a leisurely pace. The second day, prepared and professional athletes will participate in 35 and 65-kilometre bike races. The organisers will implement the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system to track the results and identify the winners. Bikers will be able to enjoy the nature of Shortandy-Borovoe resort zone, cycling through forests and around nearby Shortandy Lake.

Two charity auctions are also planned. The first will be held at a dinner for festival participants staying at the Rixos Borovoe; the second day, at the daytime open-air concert. In this way, the organisers hope to attract more bidders.

"Earlier, the initial cost of lots [of items] that were put up for auction was quite high and not everyone could take part in the battle for lots. The division into two auctions will not only raise more funds to help children's medical institutions, but also involve more people in participating in a charity auction. The new format will allow participants to feel more involved in good work and help to develop the spirit of good deeds and involvement," said Rixos Borovoe Marketing Director Leia Khamitova.

The auction lots always attract much attention, according to the foundation's website. For example, they typically include rackets and uniforms with autographs by famous Kazakh and foreign tennis players, master classes and trips to world tournaments provided by the Kazakhstan Tennis Federation, bicycles autographed by famous cyclists provided by Astana Pro Team and Burabike Ambassador and Kazakh athlete Alexander Vinokurov. For several years, gloves autographed by Kazakh boxers Gennady Golovkin and Serik Sapiyev were offered.

The lots also include art objects, gadgets and certificates for premium products from various partner companies. The most expensive lot in the auction's history was paintings of Schuchinsk Orphanage students, which Kazakhstan Tennis Federation President and entrepreneur Bulat Utemuratov bought for 30 million tenge (US\$79,170) in 2016.

Astana Pro Team has participated in the race and provided lots for several years.

"Holding events such as Burabike is very important from the point of view of charity and for the development of the cycling culture and promoting a healthy lifestyle in Kazakhstan. Every year, we see that the charity bike ride gathers more and more participants and our team is happy to support this great initiative. For us, it is always a great pleasure to take part in it, to bring

our racers and to put lots from the Astana team. The funds that are collected here as part of the charity auction are really substantial. Every year, we see the results of these investments and, of course, this is very encouraging. Burabike has become an integral part of our calendar and I would like to express my gratitude to the organisers for such an important social event at the highest level," Vinokurov told the foundation.

This year, the auction has added packages from the festival's sponsors in the hope of increasing the funds raised for charitable purposes. There will be four categories of sponsorship packages ranging from one million tenge (US\$2,639) to 10 million tenge (US\$26,390), which will be available for all companies in Kazakhstan and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Funds are collected through the charity auction, festival participation fees and corporate sponsorship package sales. The money raised will be used to purchase equipment for Kazakh children's medical institutions.

"In 2018, the amount collected at the Burabike amounted to 205 million tenge (US\$540,995), for which two reanimobles, artificial respiration devices, resuscitation system for newborns and other vital equipment for Merke, Timiryazev and Alakol Central District Hospitals, the Zharkent Maternity Hospital and the Agadyr Village's Rural Hos-

pital were purchased. We report on the collected funds and transfer the equipment in the presence of the Kazakh media so that everything is as transparent as possible and the Burabike participants can see their contribution to the common good deed," said Bulat Utemuratov Foundation Director Marat Aitmagambetov.

Burabike Fest, previously known as the Burabike and Charity Tour de Burabai, started in 2013 with 130 participants; last year, it expanded to 2,300. The event has grown from a regional bike ride to a national music and sports festival where people of any age can relax and attend various activities.

"We want this festival to become one of the most popular in Kazakhstan. For the first time this year, we are making it a two-day event, but we plan that in the future it will become a week, so that people can come with their families and rest in Burabai for a whole week. The end of August is one of the most beautiful seasons at the Burabai resort. We invite everyone to take part in the festival; for this, you need to register on the burabike.kz website," Deputy Akim (governor) of the Akmola Region Marat Igali told inform.kz.

Those interested in participating in the competition should register at burabike.kz and pay a participation fee of 7,000 tenge (US\$18.50) until Aug. 1, 10,000 tenge (US\$26.40) from Aug. 1-24 or 15,000 tenge (US\$39.60) the day of the event.



Photo credit: burabike.kz

# CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## Artist illustrates what lays behind Turkic warriors' brave, ruthless image

Continued from Page B1

While Turkic people overly praise the image of Turkic bатыrs (brave warriors) as strong formidable characters, Koylakayev reintroduces the heroes as humans by showing their emotional sides. He has built up their psychological profile through thorough research of Turkic epics, chronicles and other historical heritage.

The way he sees the characters, his moral and ethical interpretation in the paintings transmit his sincere admiration and fill his works with depth. At the same time, the painter raises problems that are beyond the time frame. They show the past drama remains relevant and represents today's unsolved puzzles.

The film "Kultegin," for example, glorifies the ancient Turkic leader, showing him as a



very confident and cold-blooded enemy-killing machine. Koylakayev's painting "Grief," where the warrior sits and mourns his fallen comrades, conveys Kultegin's inner essence and shows the price he paid for victories on the battlefield. Visitors comment on the intensity of expression and the effect of mourning the painter represented.

"The graphics in the work of Alibek Koylakayev have acquired a deep, completely unexpected tone, where the main emotional load is carried by a line that forms spatial relationships, determines the plasticity of the form, reveals accents and creates mood. The composition is dominated by the harmony of tone and lines; the stroke is located in a certain dynamic form, building the exact outlines of the image. The artist leaves the surface of the paper visible, without

destroying the plane of the tinted sheet, to show the depth of the conventional space of the world, where it can become a sign, a symbol of something more than a simple sheet," notes the National Museum website.

Koylakayev was born in Nogaisky district, Dagestan, Russia. He developed an interest in Turkic history during his studies at Krasnodar University of Culture and Arts.

"I know Alibek very well. I was visiting him in his home village in Dagestan. We know that the Nogai people are very close to the Kazakhs; we are like brothers. Nogai history is Kazakh history, Nogai culture is Kazakh culture, Nogai epics are the same as Kazakh epics. These peoples cannot be considered separately," said KVN Youth Public Association President Yessen Yeleuken.

## Four young Kazakh pianists perform at 2019 Astana Piano Passion contest's semi-finals

By Saltanat Botey

NUR-SULTAN – Four young Kazakh pianists, Rasul Abdugulov, Henry Allan Keppel, Aliya Assanova and Bekzat Rakymov, performed at the 2019 Astana Piano Passion International Festival and contest in the capital.

"The Astana Piano Passion contest is one of the unique, bright and prestigious events that take place in Kazakhstan, in our capital. The fact that Denis Matsuev, an outstanding pianist and virtuoso of our time, is the curator

and leader of this contest confirms that. Thanks to this contest, we reveal new talents and promote Kazakh music ... According to the contest's rules, one work of the Kazakh composer must be performed. It is very important for us," said Nur-Sultan Culture and Sports Department Head Bolat Mazhagulov.

The fifth Astana Piano Passion International Festival of classical music and young pianists' contest is taking place May 12-18 in the capital. This year, the contest participants are musicians under 18 years old. The contest's prize fund is \$60,000.

The organiser of the event is the Accordi Di Public Foundation with the support of the Kazakh Culture and Sport Ministry and Nur-Sultan Akimat (city administration).

The 2019 Astana Piano Passion's organising committee received 114 applications to participate from 20 countries, including Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Georgia, Israel, Japan, Mongolia, Poland, South Korea, Romania, Serbia, Taiwan, Ukraine and the United States.

Among them, the contest's

jury selected 30 young pianists to participate in the 2019 Astana Piano Passion semi-finals. Traditionally, the largest number of applications for participation have been from Russia and Kazakhstan.

The contest's jury consists of masters, stars of world classical music, teachers and mentors from seven countries. Among them are the contest's Artistic Director and Honorary Chair and Russia's People's Artist Denis Matsuev, Kazakh composer and public figure Tolegen Mukhamedzhanov, Russian pianist and music teacher Valery Pyasetsky, Chinese pianist Li Ming-Qiang, U.S.-Russian pianist Maxim Mogilevsky, Italian-Russian pianist Boris Petrushansky, German-Kazakh pianist Amir Tebenikhin and Swedish musician and artistic manager Martin Engstrom.

The contest's rehearsals and performances is taking place on the Astana Opera stage. The festival is free except for the grand opening, closing and the artists' gala concerts. Tickets for them are available at the theatre's box office. The festival's detailed programme is available on the Nur-Sultan Culture and Sports Department's website [madeniet-sport-astana.kz](http://madeniet-sport-astana.kz)



## "Muzbalak" to screen at Zlin Film Festival in Czech Republic

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – "Muzbalak," a film by Kazakh artist-animators Turdybek Maidan and Tlek Toleugazy, will participate in the out-of-competition programme at the 59th Panorama International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Zlin, the Czech Republic. The event will run from May 24-June 1.

"The time has come when Kazakh animation dynamically makes its way into the world cinema space. This is our goal. Each of our products must take part in large-scale film festivals. I wish 'Muzbalak' to reach high peaks,"

said Kazakhfilm head Adai Abeldinov, reported the animation studio's press service.

Established in 1961, the Zlin Film Festival is the oldest and largest of its kind in the world. Each year, the festival presents approximately 300 films from more than 50 countries, with screenings held in Zlin, Prague and other Czech cities. The festival, an active member of the European Children's Film Association, was attended by 125,000 children and adults last year.

The plot centres on a man who tamed a golden eagle and their friendship is based on their mutual trust. The film illustrates the ancient

Kazakh tradition of bird hunting and teaches kindness, sympathy and the importance of caring for animals and giving them freedom.

"Muzbalak is a five-year-old golden eagle. Kazakhs give names to these birds depending on their age. We made this film wanting to talk about golden eagles and hunting with birds of prey. We grew up in an environment where it was considered a very beautiful type of hunting," Maidan told [informburo.kz](http://informburo.kz).

The 65-minute movie, created in two and three-dimensional versions, required two years and approximately 40 domestic animators. Kazakh theatre and cinema actors Alma Adilkyzy, Sa-

mat Kordabai, Yergali Tolebayev, Zhanat Tynybayev and Yerzhan Zharylkasynuly voiced the characters and composer Asset Danenov created four soundtracks. The film, created by Kazakhfilm by order of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, was screened in the country in autumn.

Last year, "Muzbalak" won the Best Animated Film prize from the Kulager Cinematographers Union of Kazakhstan and participated in the *Tvoje Kino (Your Cinema)* contest programme for children and youth films at the 17th *Dukh Ognya (Spirit of Fire)* International Festival of Cinematographic Debuts in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia.



## Astana Opera presents May programme

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Astana Opera has introduced its May programme, which includes traditional classical music concerts as well as special events dedicated to holidays.

"From Seville to Naples" (7 p.m., May 3) was a concert of Spanish, French and Italian composers such as de Falla, Rossini, Verdi, Bizet, Massne and Seine. Honoured Workers of Kazakhstan Bibigul Zhanuzak and Azamat Zhelyrguz, Kurmet Order cavalier Aizada Kaponova and international competition laureates Yerulan Kamel and Saltanat Muratbekova performed on the Chamber Hall stage. The piano portion was played by international competition laureate Zhanar Akhmetova.

"Tango Project" (6 p.m., May 5) was presented by the instrumental ensemble "Art Contrast." The group consists of Aigerim Mataeva (piano, France), Maria Orininskaya (violin, Austria), Tatiana Vitsinskaya (mezzo-soprano), Zhibek Sapargaliev (flute), Zhanibek Saparov (guitar), Sapar Kumyskaliyev (bayan) and Adil Satybaldinov (contrabass). The evening was highlighted with a dance performance by Anel Marabayeva and Evgeny Moiseyev. The night included works of Astor Piazzolla, including Ave Maria, Fugata, Study No. 3, The History of Tango, Café 1930, El penultimo, Oblivion, Please, Gypsy Tango, The Same Pain, Escualo, Adios Nonino, La Muerte del Angel and Yo soy Maria; Los Mareados by Juan-Carlos Kobian and Tango by Carlos Gardel as arranged by John Williams for the film "The Scent of a Woman."

Victory Is An Endangered Light, honouring May 9 Victory Day, was presented 3 p.m. in the Chamber Hall. The concert included popular wartime songs and tunes, as well as Kazakh, Russian and Western European classics performed by opera soloists, choir artists and orchestra.

International competition winners Ulpan Abdikarimova (soprano), Rosa Soltykhanova (flute), Manarbek Abaev (clarinet), Dinara Kalabaeva (piano) will take part in Let's Open the Music of the Heart (7 p.m., May 19). The musicians will present a new reading of works by American and European composers, such as Sonata No. 1 for flute and piano by Evizen, Sonatina for flute and piano by Dutyue, Sonata for clarinet and piano by Poulenc, Starry Night, A Beautiful Evening by Debussy, German Songs op.37 L. Spur and Trio for flute, clarinet and piano by Manukyana.

The Great Names: J. Haydn, V.A. Mozart (7 p.m., May 23) will be presented by Honoured Art-

ist of Kazakhstan Jannat Baktai, Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan Saltanat Akhmetova and 10th International Youth Competition winner Talgat Galeev. Akbikie Algi (violin), Ross Clark (trumpet, Wales, United Kingdom), Astana Opera Theatre Children's Studio directed by Altynangym Akhmetova and Astana Opera Chamber Orchestra conducted by Rakhimzhan Baspayev will also be part of the concert. Among the selected pieces are Concerto for piano and orchestra in D major and Symphony No. 104 in D major by Haydn, overture and Constanza from Abduction aria from the opera "Sérillale," duo Zerlina and Don Juan from the opera "Don Juan" and Concerto for violin and orchestra No. 4 in D major, Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 23 in A major and Symphony No. 40 by Mozart.

Victory Is An Endangered Light, honouring May 9 Victory Day, was presented 3 p.m. in the Chamber Hall. The concert included popular wartime songs and tunes, as well as Kazakh, Russian and Western European classics performed by opera soloists, choir artists and orchestra.

Cello Evening (6 p.m., May 25) will showcase talents of Kazakh cellist Sania Durkeeva and her teacher, Swiss cellist and Zurich University of Arts professor Orfeo Mandozzi and the Astana Theatre Chamber Orchestra conducted by Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan maestro Abzal Mukhitdinov.

Melodia de la pasion (Melody of Passion, 7 p.m., May 28) will present well-known chamber works, such as Intermezzo from the opera "Goyeski" by E. Granados – G. Cassadó; Suite for cello and piano by Saint-Saëns; Prologue and Horse Race from the ballet "Anna Karenina" by R. Shchedrin – Pletneva and Etude for Guitar No. 5. Aria E. Villa-Lobos, "Meditacio" by Ma Ruer, "Denneriana" by André-Bloch, "Memoirs" by Cassadó. The pieces will be presented by international competition laureates Botagoz Kaliyeva (cello), Almaz Tokpanov (clarinet), Zhanibek Saparov (guitar) and Elmira Sultan-gazina (piano).

## COUNTRY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## Kazakhstan quadruples construction of student housing, will build dorms for 9,200 students this year

## Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Twenty-nine dormitories with spots for 9,196 students will start operating this year, said Education and Science Vice Minister Bibigul Assyllova at an April 29 press conference after the government meeting. Although the overall number needed is 91,000, the 2019 figure is four times more than previous years.

“This has not happened in the entire history of our country. It was a targeted construction of dormitories, which went on for a long time. A maximum 2,000-2,500 places per year were put into operation. Using the public-private partnership (PPP) mechanism in the implementation of this project has shown its effectiveness,” she said.

The ministry analysed regional needs before starting the project. Of the 91,000 required places,

68,000 are in higher education institutions and 23,000 in colleges. By city, Almaty needs 31,000; the capital, 17,000, and Shymkent, 8,400.

The cost to complete the entire project is 152 billion tenge (US\$397.63 million).

“This year, the Ministry of Education and Science provided one billion tenge (US\$2.61 million) for the project. In subsequent years, we have about 14 billion tenge (US\$36.62 million). Considering that we have a three-year budget cycle, in principle we have all the financial calculations; there is a positive decision of the [national] budget commission. In general, this project is financially secured,” said Assyllova.

The state order cost for one bed is 122 Monthly Calculation Indices (308,050 tenge (US\$805.90)) to construct a facility and 47 MCIs (118,675 tenge or US\$310.50) for reconstruction.

“We were offered projects that are twice as expensive. There are educational institutions that offered us expensive projects. This was explained mainly by the expansion of technical conditions, the presence of separate rooms, etc. This mechanism cannot fully cover such expensive projects. Therefore, there is such a task to reduce unnecessary expensive projects,” she added.

To date, the Committee for Construction and Housing and Public Utilities of the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development has approved three model projects for 120, 180 and 240 places. All projects are posted on the financial centre’s website. The average cost of a dormitory place under the concluded contracts is approximately 800,000-900,000 tenge (US\$2,093-\$2,354).

During the government meeting, Prime Minister Askar Mamin



Photo credit: 24.kz

instructed ensuring timely dormitory construction by developing detailed plans for their commissioning and execution. The plans

will require organising with investors.

Construction should continue through PPP joint efforts. At the

same time, it is important to adhere to the existing mechanism, since there will be no additional funding from the budget, he said.

## New Nazarbayev University INURA-equipped research centre expected to advance interdisciplinary scientific progress

## By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – The NU-Berkeley Strategic Programme for the Study of the Critical State of Matter, Advanced Materials and Energy Sources presented April 26 a new research complex equipped with Innovative Nazarbayev University’s Research Accelerator (INURA).

INURA is a high-current pulsed ion accelerator, developed to be multi-purpose and used in both theoretical and applied research. It provides 10,000 Amperes ion current in 80 nanoseconds, with ion energy of 400 electronvolt (eV).

It is the result of a five-year inter-university effort by researchers from Nazarbayev University (NU), the U.S. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and Russian

National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University (TPU). The Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science has been financing the project.

“There are many of our accelerators there (at the Berkeley Laboratory), but, working with them, we created one that does not match the parameters with those that they have. Therefore, our partners from Berkeley, Tomsk and other cities

can work at the Nazarbayev University accelerator, which will become the basis of international co-operation and progress,” said one of the research project’s team leaders and NU’s Science and Technology School Assistant Professor Alexander Tikhonov.

The accelerators of this type modify a material’s structure and properties. INURA also fabricates new advanced materials that can vary from solid bulk to nano. The Nazarbayev University researchers will use it for plasma and charged particle beams studies.

“Now there are thousand accelerators of different sizes for different purposes in the world, and our accelerator is small but multifunctional,” said Tikhonov. “Using the accelerator, we will receive new materials with unique properties. For example, we are currently working with so-called transparent conductive coatings used in smartphones, computers. We created such coatings based on silver nanowires, that is, made silver thin

films invisible to an eye, covered the glass with them, irradiated with an accelerator, and the result was a coating with good conductivity properties, and most importantly, it would be technologically justified, because the existing technology is so flexible and mechanically less durable.”

The multifunctionality of INURA opens doors to more interdisciplinary projects that can involve researchers from engineering, physics, chemistry and biology. Biologists already have shown interest in irradiating plant seeds to obtain their new beneficial properties at the accelerator.

According to TPU Research Fellow Mikhail Zhuravlev, INURA’s best feature is its flexibility, as older accelerators have limited ranges for material modification. INURA, for example, can generate a bipolar pulse from 0.2 to 2 microseconds. In addition, the accelerator can operate in single-pulse mode. All these features significantly ex-

pand researchers’ capabilities, reported news.tpu.ru.

“We created a truly unique installation, which we developed with the best experts in this field from around the world. This technology has already shown its relevance, both in Kazakhstan and abroad,” said Nazarbayev University President’s advisor Kanat Baigarin, who is also one of the project’s team leaders at NU.

The same day, researchers from the universities involved in the project’s design along with representatives from the Institute of Nuclear Physics, the Eurasian National University and the Kazakh National University organised a seminar. They discussed the first results of experiments with the INURA accelerator, the application of pulsed beams to modify transparent conductive coatings, the synthesis of nanopowders, structural modification of nanomaterials, as well as the study of charge neutralisation of the beam of nanosecond duration of the bulk plasma.



Photo credit: nu.edu.kz

## Government launches system to provide certain documents online

## Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh government recently launched a system which allows citizens to provide employers and government agencies documents via an online system, rather than the citizens having to collect and deliver those documents in person, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security Digital Office reported May 3.

“Within the framework of already existing mechanisms, if information is necessary for a legal entity or a government agency, they can independently obtain a certificate for a given citizen with a one-time password or through the mobile citizens’ database,” according to its official statement.

As a result, Kazakhs are freed from the burden of securing at least two documents – an address reference and certificate of unemployment. Now, if a citizen is required to provide a certificate, the requesting authority can get the information without the person’s direct intervention. A citizen can give consent for a requesting authority to receive his or her personal data via short message services (SMS).

“We have a certificate stating that

a person is listed as unemployed. As part of this initiative, we set a goal to exclude it. It (the certificate) is provided for a number of institutions, such as schools, banks, courts, etc. In all directions, we will work out relevant changes this year in order to eliminate the need to obtain a certificate of this status,” said Vice Minister of Labour and Social Protection Nariman Mukushev.

The digital office started the supporting digital development, said Defence and Aerospace Industry Minister Askar Zhumagaliyev, who suggested the project in mid-April.

“Recently, I asked the managers of the personnel services of several companies for what purpose they were asking people for references. They say, just in case; then, you can find a person if he (or she) moves and the information in his personal leaflet becomes obsolete. How will the address certificate that was brought to you at the same time as the completed personal leaflet help in this case? It’s also outdated... At the same time, the labour code has no requirements to provide this information. It turns out that because of this ‘just in case,’ a person has to spend his time getting a certificate,” he wrote on his Facebook page Jan. 28.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## New website makes volunteering easier



Photo credit: The qazvolunteer.kz Facebook page.

### Staff Report

**NUR-SULTAN** – The Kazakh Ministry of Information and Social Development and National Volunteer Network presented April 29 in the capital the qazvolunteer.kz website for the development of the Kazakh volunteer movement. The website seeks to coordinate communications among more than 200 volunteer organisations and 50,000 volunteers simplifying their communication.

“Currently, more than 200 volunteer organisations are actively working and more than 50,000 people are involved in the volunteer movement. In the regions, in 2018, as a part of the state social order, 25 projects aimed at increasing the capacity and training of volunteers and engaging volunteers and volunteer organisations in social projects and events were implemented,” said the ministry’s Committee on Civil Society Affairs Chair Aliya Galimova.

The website facilitates interaction among volunteers as well as between volunteers and volunteer organisations. It also provides informational support for volunteer projects, programmes and actions.

“The goal of this project is to simplify the interaction between those who need help and those who are ready to provide it. Through the website, one can find volunteers for its project, as well as become a volunteer,” reported the project’s Facebook page.

The project also seeks to develop the volunteer movement and culture in Kazakhstan.

“We are doing our best to make it easy and convenient for volunteers and organisations to cooperate. We hope this will help Kazakh people to take a step towards regular volunteering and charity,” said National Volunteer Network’s Executive Director Tatyana Mironyuk on the project’s Facebook page.

The website will also help volunteers and organisations implement

initiatives and make information about their activities accessible to the public.

The website offers information on international volunteering, volunteering best practices and past and future events in the country.

Users must register on the website as a volunteer, an initiative group or an organisation, after which they will have a personal page and access to all projects on the website. Organisations will also be able to advertise for volunteers.

A volunteer’s personal page shows detailed information about volunteers, such as location, free time, basic skills and feedback on their activity. They also can upload appreciation letters and certificates.

The website forms volunteers’ ratings based on the results of their activities. The events’ organisers will rate volunteers. Those with the best performance will have priority in selecting events.

“Currently, more than 200 volunteer organisations are actively working and more than 50,000 people are involved in the volunteer movement.”

Volunteer organisations also have their personal pages that describe their activities in detail. Volunteers are able to subscribe to receive updates from an organisation as well as review their work and rate them.

## NU’s Eurasian Forum of Higher Education Leaders to focus on preparing graduates for changing futures



### By Nazira Kozhanova

**NUR-SULTAN** – The Eurasian Forum of Higher Education Leaders will be held at Nazarbayev University in Nur-Sultan June 6 and 7. The theme of this year’s forum is “Future Ready Graduates.”

“We believe that, together with our participants and speakers, we will find an answer to the question of what the future graduates should be. We will discuss the qualities and skills that young professionals need to have,” said Loretta O’Donnell, vice provost of Nazarbayev University.

This year’s event will focus on the readiness of higher education institutions to prepare students for the changing nature of work environments and their capacity to develop future leaders and good citizens.

Today, institutions are challenged to maximise the value

they bring to students, which increasingly implies an internationalisation of learning experiences, opportunities to participate in research, lifelong learning channels and a strong portfolio of trusted partnerships with leading industry players, to name a few elements.

Sessions at the forum will focus on these elements and their interplay with local and international job markets, as well as how they are shaping learning environments. Forum participants will include top managers of universities in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Asia, Europe and the United States, as well as representatives of national and international companies. Participants will discuss the changing labour market and new challenges facing higher education. Additionally, the forum will focus on lifelong education, the importance of educating future leaders in terms of civil society and the formation

of an industrial-academic ecosystem.

More than 30 forum speakers from eight countries, including Kazakhstan, Russia, Sri Lanka, the United States, Singapore, the United Kingdom, China and Thailand, will address the forum. Among the speakers are Tan Eng Chye, president of the National University of Singapore, Tian Xu, vice president of China’s Westlake University, Kenn Ross, managing director of the Minerva Project, Emin Askarov, a social entrepreneur, and Leila Akhmetova, a student at Nazarbayev University and head of the organising committee of the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations international conference.

The forum has been held annually at Nazarbayev University for the last eight years. The theme of the forum last year was “Innovating Higher Education in the Age of Disruption.”

## EU, UNICEF support Kazakhstan’s approaches to juvenile justice reforms

### By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

**NUR-SULTAN** – The European Union (EU) delegation in Kazakhstan and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the country’s justice system for every child, according to a statement at the April 30 Justice for Children: Improving Approaches and Services meeting in the capital.

The law “On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts on Issues Related to the Activities of Organisations Involved in the Protection of the Rights of the Child,” adopted in April, is one of the new important mechanisms for the country in implementing its policies.

UNICEF hopes the new legislation will improve the mechanisms of children’s support, maintenance and rehabilitation in difficult life situations and those in contact with the law, noted UNICEF representative in Kazakhstan Yury Oksamitny.

“There is a need to continue developing the system of protecting the rights of children by strengthening professional and highly professional services for children in difficult life situations. It is important to observe the principles stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child,” he said.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s ratification. The four core principles are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child. Children should grow up in a family environment and atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

Adopting the law is aimed at

ensuring better protection of children, said the head of the EU mission in Kazakhstan section on cooperation Johannes Stenbaek Madsen. It extends the mandate of the national preventive mechanism against torture and optimises functions of child protection organisations.

“We believe that the norms laid down in the new legislation will provide children in conflict with the law more support and assistance in their rehabilitation, rein-

tegration and emphasising their right to assume a constructive role in society. As a development partner, the EU is pleased to see that the law was adopted with support of the UNICEF’s joint action that was completed last year,” he said.

The EU and UNICEF have worked on justice for children at multiple levels in the last four years from enhancing the capacity of specialists working with children in conflict with the law and strengthening national poli-

cies and legislation to building knowledge, gathering evidence and developing innovative services.

The EU, UNICEF and their partners have provided psychological support and created child-friendly spaces in court, police and probation offices and introduced community-based services in three Kazakh regions to address trauma and secondary victimisation of young victims, witnesses and offenders.

The European diplomat also spoke about the recommendations to support further improvements of a comprehensive child friendly justice system for Kazakh children in conflict with the law.

“It is important to develop solid legislation on justice for children aligned with international child rights standards and reflecting the principles of the best interests of the child. It should be made certain that professionals working with children are skilled and have the opportunity to build their capacity because they stand on the front lines of children’s rights and they can make a genuine difference for children on a daily basis. It’s important to continue development of the services where the best interest of a child is given primary consideration in every position taken,” he said.

In the past 10 years, many initiatives have been implemented in juvenile justice, UNICEF Child Protection Officer Meiramgul Alybekova said.

“Last year, UNICEF organised the assessment of the juvenile justice reforms to see those changes,” she said in an interview for this story. “The system is significantly improving. Earlier, approximately 7,000 children were involved in crimes. According to the latest statistics, this number now reaches approximately 3,000 children. This means that work is being done with children, socioeconomic conditions of life are improving and effective prevention of crimes is being carried out. Previously, children were deprived of their liberty. Now, we turn from the punitive approach to reintegration. It is important to keep children in the same environment, but to carry out high-quality work. Children should not be isolated from society. In terms of the international standards, it is not recommended to deprive

them of their liberty, because this approach does not lead to the awareness and understanding of guilt.”

Nineteen juvenile courts have been established in the country, where certified experts work with children, judges and juvenile inspectors. Centres of temporary isolation, adaptation and rehabilitation were transformed into centres for minors’ adaptation.

The EU and UNICEF implemented the joint programme on strengthening justice for children and protecting their rights in 2014-2018. The project reached children ages 14-18 in the East Kazakhstan region, those 10-18 in the Kyzylorda region and provided services for children who are victims of crime in the Mangistau region.

“The support centre for children has a mission to conduct work with the child, social workers, psychologists, lawyers and teachers. We demonstrated how the coordination and interaction of all interested parties provides quality services for children, restores good family relationships and improves school performance in order to prevent them from having to deal with justice and juvenile inspectors. It is essential to open such centres throughout the country. It is important for us to protect the rights of every child across the region,” said Alybekova.

She added the new law provides the basis for developing comprehensive services for children in difficult life situations on the basis of child support centres.

Approximately 50 representatives of central and local government bodies, Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) deputies, representatives of international and non-governmental organisations and institutions providing social services to children attended the event.



Photo credit: unicef.org.

# TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

## Tourism professionals seek out new attractions among nation's eastern wilds



The 2018 Almaty Travel Fest participants.

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh Tourism national company plans to take travel industry representatives and travel writers on four scouting exhibitions in 2019 to identify new tourist attractions, said its Deputy Chair Timur Duisengaliyev during the recent Almaty Travel Fest.

The first tour, the Vostochniy (Eastern) Transit international expedition, will follow the path of the famous geographer, Pyotr Semyonov-Tian-Shansky.

“We want to try to travel in time, visiting the wilds of the East Kazakhstan region and the Almaty region, as well as the territory of Kyrgyzstan,” Duisengaliyev said at the April 19 event, reported in-form.kz.

The second expedition will follow the path of Chinese monk Xuanzang. The route, known as Silk Road – the Way of Dialogue, passes through China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and India.

“In the seventh century, Monk Xuanzang went from China to India to learn Buddhist wisdom and returned home spiritualised, with new practices. This historical path is popular among pilgrims all over the world – from Europeans to representatives of Asian culture,” he noted.

The other two scouting expeditions will be 13-day horseback riding expeditions starting from the capital and Almaty.

“These are, in fact, full-scale professional horseback riding expeditions. One of them starts from Nur-Sultan and passes through the territory of Saryarka. The second

one (starts) from Almaty and will pass through the Almaty region. There is an opinion that foreign tourists do not position Kazakhstan's citizens as people of a nomadic civilisation. For them, the countries with a nomadic culture are Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia, but Kazakhstan is the country of the Great Steppe. The horse was domesticated in Kazakhstan. The first chariots also appeared here,” said the deputy chair.

Duisengaliyev stressed that Kazakhstan should show the world its ecotourism, nomadic and mountain tourism.

“As you know, last year we visited the most beautiful places of the Almaty Region, East Kazakhstan and Turkestan regions. We admired the beauties of the Tien Shan and Dzhungarian Alatau mountain ranges. The mountains of Dzhungarian Alatau are [like] Klondike, where there are untrodden places. Saryarka (the Kazakh Uplands) is a sacred place. Our main task is to promote these routes. Mountain tourism can be developed in Sairam-Ogem National Park and the south of Kazakhstan. These routes are not for professionals; these are of a softer format that are meant for everyone,” he said.

The 2019 Almaty Travel Fest united travel lovers, professional travellers, travel photographers, travel bloggers and journalists, outdoor enthusiasts and industry representatives. Speakers presented their trip topics and stories and answered questions from the audience. The festival, held annually since 2017, was organised by the Qazaq Geography National Public Association and ITECA.

## Kazakhstan wants tourists to come play, not just work

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Central Asian countries working together to promote regional tourism would help increase the number of travellers who visit Kazakhstan for pleasure rather than business, said Director of the Kazakhstan Tourist Association Rashida Shaikenova at an April 10 press conference.

Approximately 8.5 million people visited Kazakhstan last year, mainly for business, according to data from Kazakh Tourism. In 2017, the latest year for which statistics are available, only 1.2 percent of visitors listed tourism as the purpose of their visit.

The association believes that promoting eco- and ethno-tourism in cooperation with other Central Asian nations and developing more programmes that would offer cross-nation tours would help increase the number of pleasure travellers.

Flights to the region can be long and expensive so it would help entice pleasure travellers if they were



able to visit multiple countries at once.

“We must meet these needs. The market is moving towards partnership with Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and sometimes Turkmenistan. We have developed 28 cross-cutting tours in Central Asia, with the inclusion of elements of rural and eco-tourism,” Shaikenova said.

Shaikenova also said it is important to better train travel industry

professionals to use digitised tools to provide tourist services. Poorly managed digitisation tools contribute to limiting the flow of pleasure travellers, she said.

“The tourist manager today is an orchestra-person, who needs to use several programmes. Such an employee must be technologically armed to the teeth... Also, he should not lose the ability to direct sales and work with the consumer,” she said.

Shaikenova also said Kazakhstan's issuance of electronic visas could be improved to make the process easier for travellers. “The system of payment through banks was not brought to mind, and the system itself freezes, can't be fully operational,” said Shaikenova.

The association recently proposed to the Kazakh Parliament measures it believes will help support the tourism industry and attract more visitors.

## Low-cost FlyArystan launches first flight from Almaty to Nur-Sultan

Continued from Page B1

In his welcoming speech, Yesimov stressed the importance of the new airline for Kazakh aviation and developing the country's regions.

“The emergence of a new player in the airline market will contribute to improving the quality of services for passengers. The initiative to create this low-cost airline was supported by Elbasy (Leader of the Nation, the constitutional title accorded to former President Nursultan Nazarbayev). FlyArystan's services and pricing are aimed at the availability of air transportation services for a wide range of people and increasing mobility between regions. The first ticket sales aroused great interest. This brand needs to be kept. Expansion of geography and flight intensity will positively affect the social development of the regions,” he said.

Because of the affordable prices, citizens will be able to travel more often. The company also plans to

have bases abroad and anticipates an increase in tourism.

“We expect a significant increase in passenger traffic on both domestic and international routes of Kazakhstan, because over time we plan to be based in other countries. In the meantime, we are ready to provide affordable flights throughout Kazakhstan and we hope that FlyArystan will make a significant contribution to the development of the regional economy,” said Foster.

Sklyar noted Kazakhstan should not ignore international tendencies, because “today, low-cost air-

lines are most actively developing with the advantage of low costs for passengers,” as reported sputniknews.kz.

Kazakhstan currently has air links with 27 countries on 97 international routes, a number it plans to increase. Last year, approximately eight million passengers were transported, 6 percent more than the previous year, he added.

The company opened ticket sales March 29 for the Almaty-Taraz-Almaty and Almaty-Uralsk-Almaty destinations. It later added Almaty to Karaganda, the capital, Pavlodar and Shymkent routes.



To date, FlyArystan has sold 45,000 tickets, 85 percent of which are fares without luggage. By the end of 2019, the company plans to cover all regions of Kazakhstan.

Initially, flights will operate on four Airbus 320 aircraft with an average age of six years. The company is searching for the second base airport for two of the four planes, as they all currently fly from Almaty. By 2021, the company plans to increase the fleet to 15 aircraft.

“We have announced a competition among local airports for the next FlyArystan airline base. Those who give the best commercial offer have every chance to become the second base airport,” said FlyArystan Director of Sales and Marketing Zhanar Zhailaouva.

FlyArystan is a subsidiary of Air Astana based in Almaty, which has a four-star ranking for airline service quality. Air Astana has received the Skytrax World Airline Best Airline of Central Asia and India award for several years.

## Kamystybas Lake emerges as an eco and medical tourism destination

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – The Kyzylorda Region has long been associated with one of the region's main products, Syr Marzhan rice, and the birthplace of Korkyt Ata, the Turkic songwriter and composer from the ninth century.

But now the region is becoming

more attractive as a tourism destination because Kamystybas Lake, has become an ecological and medical tourism destination.

Kamystybas Lake, which locals also call Kambash Lake, is located in the Kyzylorda region's Aral district, 80 kilometres from Aral city. The Aral district has a system of lakes, the largest of which is Kamystybas Lake (51 kilometres

long and 10 kilometres wide). The lake is formed by the Syr Darya River.

The local climate is favourable for recreation. The lake is a unique reservoir with rich flora and fauna. The coastline is a natural beach of coarse sand. It has gently sloping soft bottom, clear and transparent water, the temperature of which is comfortable from May to Septem-

ber. The water is believed to have healing qualities.

In the summer, the lake is always crowded. Last year, more than 89,000 people visited the lake. Vacationers come from Ak-tobe, Shymkent, Almaty, Turkestan and Baikonur. The lake also attracts visitors from Turkey, Russia and Belarus. The Western Europe – Western China highway is

passing next to the lake and helps bring international tourists.

The Kyzylorda authorities are planning to make Kamystybas Lake an ecotourism centre. In 2017, it allocated 4 million tenge (US\$10,488) from the local budget and installed a 1,350-metre water pipeline.

Five-six years ago, visitors could rent only yurts. Now, the coastline offers many houses suitable for vacationing.

“In the region, great attention is paid to the development of domestic tourism... Kamystybas Lake attracts more tourists every year. Therefore, all conditions are created for quality recreation for visitors. We support entrepreneurs and try to help them in (developing) infrastructure. Special attention is paid to the cleanliness of the lake and its territory,” Regional Business and Tourism Department Deputy Head Bagdat Aliyev told bnews.kz.

The lake's fishing industry is also developing.

“According to scientists, Kamystybas Lake appeared before the Aral Sea. Thanks to the reservoir, local residents have the opportunity to fish. They get fish and sell it in the city. Every angler has their own equipment. The water at the lake is salty, so the fish is very tasty. Demand for fish products is very high,” said Kamystybas Ag-

ricultural Cooperative Chair Aldabergen Issayev.

Medical tourism is also developing in the region. The Zhana-korgan health resort is located at the foot of the Karatau Mountain near the Syr Darya River's flow and is open all year. It is 200 kilometres away from Kyzylorda, 100 kilometres from the historic city of Turkestan and two kilometres away from the Zhana-korgan railway station.

The resort provides accommodation in a five-story building with 380 beds. It has standard, junior suite and suite rooms with bathrooms, televisions and refrigerators. Accommodation, meals and treatment are included.

The healing properties of clay and salt water at the resort help fight many illnesses, such as the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue, peripheral nervous system, gynaecological and urological diseases. Doctors monitor visitors' health around-the-clock.

The resort has its own large area for walks and a pier at the Syr Darya River. For leisure activities, it has a gym, table tennis, summer dance floor and library.

The owners of the resort receive regular government assistance. As the number of newcomers increases every year, with the support of the government, they plan to open another resort this year.



Photo credit: Al-maps.kz.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

# Astana Pro Team's Jacob Fuglsang wins men's Liège-Bastogne-Liège

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Jacob Fuglsang, 34, closed the spring classic season by taking the Astana Pro Team's blue jersey to his first monumental victory April 28 at the men's Liège-Bastogne-Liège. The 256-kilometre trek through the Belgian Ardennes is one of the world's oldest and most prestigious one-day bike races.

With 13 kilometres remaining, Fuglsang's well-timed attack on the last climb of the Roche-aux-Faucons distance threw his rivals off, allowing him to build a 20-second advantage.

Fuglsang won the race in 6 hours, 37 minutes and 37 seconds. German Bora-Hansgrohe's two cyclists, Davide Formolo and Maximilian Schachmann, came in second and third, finishing with an



I gave everything I had during my attack. At some point, I looked around and saw no one behind. Then, I believed that's all in and I continued to work 100 percent," said Fuglsang, reported olympic.kz.

The race day's rainy weather, with a temperature that did not rise above 8 degrees Celsius, made it especially difficult for the athletes. Fuglsang almost crashed on a wet descent in the final five kilometres, but managed to stay ahead.

"That slide was a scary moment, but it gave me a bit of adrenaline for the last part," he told bbc.com. "It's an amazing feeling."

"Everyone understands that the conditions today were extreme. It poured rain for hours and the temperature dropped to three degrees. Sometimes, you just shiver from the cold," said Schachmann.

Liège-Bastogne-Liège is known

for its sometimes extreme weather conditions. In the 1980 race, cyclists had to compete during a snowfall. France's Bernard Eno, who won the competition, froze some of his fingers and needed several weeks to restore mobility.

Fuglsang showed consistently high results at this season's Ardennes Week, finishing on the podium in all three Ardennes Classics. He took the bronze in the April 21 Amstel Gold Race and the silver in the April 24 Fleche Wallonne. The gold complements his awards collection.

The Liège-Bastogne-Liège, often called the La Doyenne (Old Lady), has been drawing cyclists since 1892. The race was initially limited to amateurs, with professionals joining two years later.

This season, Liège-Bastogne-Liège set a new finish. The mid-section was tougher with the ad-

dition of the Côtes de Wanne and Stockeu and Haute-Léevée making a return. The final 10 kilometres featured a fast, sweeping downhill section before a flat run to the finish line.

The route previously culminated in an uncategorised rise into Anse, which Fuglsang said suited him better.

At first, the Old Lady began and ended in the town of Spa. In 1908, the start and finish were moved to Liège, where they remained until 1992. Organisers again moved the end of the race to the city of Anse, not far from Liège, in an effort to complicate the final stretch by adding another mountain. This season, for the first time in almost three decades, the finish returned to the centre of Liège.

Belgian cyclist Eddie Merckx became famous for winning La Doyenne five times.

# Golovkin returns to ring June 8 at Madison Square Garden against Rolls

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh professional boxer Gennady Golovkin (GGG) will meet Canadian Steve Rolls at New York City's Madison Square Garden June 8 to kick off his six-fight deal with subscription video streaming service DAZN, reported DAZN. The 12-round fight will be at a contract weight of 164 pounds.

Golovkin, 37, with a 38-1-1 (34 by knockout) record, is a former unified middleweight world champion with World Boxing Association, World Boxing Council, International Boxing Federation and International Boxing Organisation titles. The undefeated Rolls, 35, has 19 wins (10 by knockout) and was on the 2009 and 2010 Canadian National Boxing Teams.

"I am very excited to be returning to the ring and bringing the 'Big Drama Show' back to Madison Square Garden. The Garden's fans are fantastic," said Golovkin to talkSPORT. "I promise to bring the best of me to everyone who will be watching me in an all-action fight with Steve Rolls."

In April, American professional boxer and "The Contender" winner Brandon Adams chose to fight American professional boxer Jermall Charlo over GGG Promotions' offer to face Golovkin.

"Golovkin was originally supposed to fight Brandon Adams and that fight fell through," Rolls told Boxing World Weekly. "A few weeks ago, I got a call from my manager who said 'Hey man, I have some life-changing news for you – how would you like

to fight Triple G?' and, right away, I jumped at the opportunity."

As part of his deal with DAZN, Golovkin will fight twice a year for three years exclusively on the platform. The June 8 fight and consequent bouts will be available to subscribers at no extra charge in all its markets, including Kazakhstan. GGG Promotions will also present two shows per year on DAZN in 2020 and 2021.

"Gennady Golovkin is a generational talent with international appeal," said DAZN Group Executive Chairperson John Skipper in March. "We're confident he will bring his passionate fans to the platform as we produce tentpole events with his team over the next several years."

Golovkin's upcoming fight will be his first in nine months following his majority-decision loss in September to current two-belt champion Canelo Alvarez.

"The third fight between Gennady and Canelo is a fight that fans want to see," said Skipper on Golovkin's potential third bout with DAZN fighter Canelo Alvarez at a March 11 press conference in Los Angeles. "We are focused right now on the May 4 fight with Canelo and Danny Jacobs. Danny Jacobs also happens to be a DAZN fighter. We're focused on the fight Gennady will have in June, which we also expect to be a difficult fight."

"It was difficult," added Golovkin on his disputed loss to Alvarez. "I gained a lot of knowledge and experience from that fight and it will only help me (as I go forward)."

Tickets for the June 8 fight will go on sale April 27 at www.ticketmaster.com.

# Athletes win gold, silver, bronze on Asian Boxing Championship's final day

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh athletes won two gold, two silver and six bronze medals on the final day of the 2019 Asian Boxing Championship in Bangkok, Thailand.

Several male athletes qualified for the final round. Zakir Safiullin (60 kilograms) bagged a silver medal, losing to Tsendbaatar Erdenebat (Mongolia); Tursynbai Kulakhmet (75 kilograms) won gold in his fight with Ashish Kumar (India); Bek Nurmaganbet (81 kilograms) took the gold

against John Marvin (Philippines) and Kamshybek Kunkabayev (91+ kilograms) received silver in his fight with Bakhodir Zhalolov (Uzbekistan).

Temirtas Zhussupov (49 kilograms), who took the bronze despite being unable to participate in the semi-finals due to a face injury, was one of the tournament's major surprises. As Kazakhstan's five-time champion, he was one of the frontrunners in his category, reported the SportsKz website.

First-time participant 19-year-old Sanatali Toltayev (64 kilograms) also secured a bronze medal, losing

to Bakhodir Usmonov (Tajikistan). Vasily Levit (91+ kilograms) received the bronze after losing in the semi-finals to Kim Hyeongkyu (South Korea), who subsequently won gold in the final.

Anvar Muzaparov (52 kilograms) did not qualify for the semi-finals due to an injury, losing to Azat Usenaliyev (Kyrgyzstan).

None of Kazakhstan's women boxers were able to qualify for the final round, losing their semi-finals fights and receiving four bronze medals. Milana Safronova (64 kilograms) lost to Dan Dou (China), Dariiga Shakimova (69 kilo-

grammes) lost to Nien-Chin Chen from (Taiwan), Fariza Sholtay (81 kilograms) lost to Pooja Rani (India) and Lyazzat Kungebayeva (81+ kilograms) lost to Yang Xiaoli (China).

The Asian Boxing Championship is the region's most important amateur boxing competition. This year's championship introduced the Bout Review Process for contentious decisions, which aims to streamline judging by providing athletes and their coaches with an opportunity to dispute decisions using slow-motion video technology.

# Tursynbayeva to appear as 'black raven' next year

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh figure skater Elizabet Tursynbayeva will appear next year in her short programme as a black raven to the music of Camille Saent-Saëns' "Dance Macabre," the skater recently announced on her Instagram account.

"Dance Macabre" (Dance of Death in French) is dedicated to the legend that every Halloween calls for the dead to dance as the death of the fiddle. South Korean Yuna Kim, Kazakh Denis Tan and Russian Sergei Voronov have previously used the piece for their short programmes.

Tursynbayeva's choreography coach Daniil Gleikhengauz posted

a video on the skater's Instagram account April 1 of her completing a triple Axel during practice. The jump, with a base value of eight points, is considered to be the most difficult allowed in female skaters' short programmes; it is followed by the triple Lutz (5.9 points).

The triple Axel is difficult for skaters to land, as it technically involves three and a half rotations compared to the three rotations of other triple jumps. During the 2018 competition season, only Japanese skater Rika Kihira and Russian Elizaveta Tuktamysheva were able to make the jump.

Earlier this year, Tursynbayeva became the first woman to successfully land a quadruple jump, doing a quad-Salchow in her 2018 World

Championship free skate. The jump, coupled with a clean skate in her free programme, earned her a silver medal, second only to 2018 Olympic Champion Alina Zagitova. The gold medalist skated both programmes cleanly and did the difficult Lutz-loop jump combination, while Tursynbayeva made a mistake in her short programme. Tursynbayeva's placement has granted Kazakhstan three quotas in next year's women's World Championship in Montreal, Canada.

Last season, Tursynbayeva changed coaches from Canadian Brian Orser to Russian Eteri Tutberidze. She had previously trained with Tutberidze, but was forced to switch when Russia temporarily banned state-employed coaches from coach-

ing foreign skaters before the 2014 Olympics. According to Tursynbayeva's International Skating Union (ISU) interview, the change has allowed her to climb in ranking from 11th place at the 2017 World Championship to second place at the 2018 World Championship.

Kihira will challenge Tursynbayeva's technical advantage next season, as the former can do a triple Axel and plans to include a quad-Salchow in her free skate. She will also be pursued by Russian junior (soon to become senior) skaters Anna Scherbakova and Alexandra Trusova, who have both performed the quad-Salchow and quad-Lutz in junior competitions. Trusova has also completed a quad-toe loop.

# Kazakhstan hosts IIHF 2019...

Continued from Page A1

South Koreans at the start of the tournament beat Hungary (5-1) and Slovenia (5-3), but then lost to Kazakhstan (1-4) and Lithuania (1-2), making the last match of the tournament a mere formality.

"We are very happy, congratulations to all Kazakhstan that the team is finally back to the top division. I liked this game. It was the best game we had in this tournament. We had many opportunities and a very good start but still the problem that we didn't capitalise on our chances. We want to be better in this aspect," said Kazakhstan head coach Andrei Skabelka.

Kazakhstan and Belarus ended their May 4 game 3-2 in overtime. Thanks to the overtime extra point Belarus also knew it will enter the top-two teams.

"I'm happy about the first win in history against Belarus. We wanted this result and we wanted to beat them finally," added Skabelka.

"We know what is the main aim – that we can take gold.

We started very well with a lot of energy and scored two goals but then we conceded a foolish goal. Belarus scored the second goal in enthusiasm and took the initiative. But then we realised that we can't lose, got more inspired and then we won," said

Kazakh team forward Nikita Mikhailis.

The Group A game organisers offered affordable prices for fans. The cheapest tickets for a game with the Kazakh national team cost 700 tenge (\$1.80); for other games, prices began at 400 tenge (\$1.10).

The Group B matches were held April 28-May 4 in Tallinn, Estonia.

Four months ago, the Kazakh national team played at the 2019 IIHF World Junior Championship in Victoria, Canada. Finishing ninth, the squad showed its best performance in recent years.

**GGG vs. ROLLS**

**SATURDAY JUNE 8**

**GGG'S RETURN TO THE RING**  
LIVE ON DAZN IN THE US



WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

# Architect's Instagram account captures disappearing history of capital

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Temirtas Iskakov runs an increasingly popular Instagram account that aims to showcase the capital's history through historic buildings, some of which eventually will be gone. The project is particularly important, as the city is considered one of the fastest changing capitals in the world.

"After moving to Astana (now Nur-Sultan), I started hearing people saying that Astana has no soul and no history, which intrigued me to find it. Of course, Astana has a soul; it's just hard to find it behind the walls of siding or ceramic granite that cover it," he said.

The account, fading.tse, posts pictures of buildings (both architectural memorials and those representing a certain era), followed by short notes on their history. His project has gained traction rapidly, attracting more than a thousand followers in less than a month and users thanking him for preserving bits and pieces of the city's past.

Iskakov was born in Omsk, Rus-



Mosaic on an Orken business centre wall.

sia but moved to Ekibastuz with his family in fifth grade. He was always infatuated with history, receiving first place in the Kazakhstan Olympiad in national history

in 2008. Iskakov initially moved to the capital when he started his undergraduate degree in architecture. His education, a Master of Arts in Architecture, informs his project,

allowing him to see details others may not.

"Even though I don't exactly delve deeply into and analyse architectural movements and elements in my posts, as I try to keep them engaging and accessible, my education has certainly helped me to see some details that might escape other people's attention. For example, I'm excited about Soviet monumental art, so I wrote about a mosaic that is located on the Orken business centre wall," he said.

He started documenting buildings slated to be demolished on his mobile phone years ago, but approximately two months ago decided to share his photos and thoughts online after seeing the Beisekbayeva Street buildings he photographed had been razed.

"I'm not necessarily against this process – I understand that, to some extent, this process of urbanisation is natural for the capital and some people actually do want their old buildings to be demolished (while taking pictures yesterday, one woman asked me if I'm with the akimat (local administration) and how

soon their building will be demolished). However, I feel there is a need to document the buildings where many people's childhood and youth took place, so these memories do not disappear in the future," he said.

Iskakov relates this point to his project's rapid boost in popularity. "I certainly do feel like there is a need for this project, especially among native Astana residents and those who have memories from this city. I love that people share their impressions in the comments, adding more facts," he said.

He finds photography is his primary medium of communication, which is why he chose Instagram as his platform.

"I'm trying to convey an atmosphere of these places so photography is my main objective and captions, while also important, are of secondary importance. I start my search for buildings to take pictures of by talking to the old-timers, then I do my research from open sources – historical records, academic articles, directorates," he said.

His favourite object is the hospi-

tal on Mambetova Street for those with handicaps.

"This building is a former house of Moiseev, a merchant who built it for himself from 1914-1918, but never got to live in it. Then, the Soviet government used it as a hospital. This building uses beautiful masonry that is rare for buildings built back then and even though a part of the façade is covered, you can still enjoy it," he said.

Iskakov plans to continue depicting historic buildings and engage others who care about the capital's history.

"My objectives are threefold: first, I want to continue taking pictures of architectural monuments. Second, I want to take pictures of buildings that are soon to be demolished, although it's a difficult task, given how fast this process is. Third, my long-term goal is to create a community of people who care about history and heritage, to popularise the city's history. Currently, I'm working on a project for a website that will systematise and gather information on city history in one place, as well as a series of talks," he said.

# It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Astana Comic Con!

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – The first Comic Con in Central Asia will gather creators and fans of the vast comic book universe in the capital's EXPO 2017 Congress Centre May 31-June 2, reports the city akimat (administration). "Comic Con is an annual pop culture festival adored worldwide. These will be three fun days of plunging into the universe of comic books and computer and board games, meeting your heroes and major announcements of the coolest movie and television series premieres," reads the official website of Comic Con Astana.

In 1964, the New York Comic Con set the ball rolling for multi-day, commercially-driven events for comic book fans that now fill convention centres worldwide and feature cosplay, panel discussions and new content releases.

Comic Con Astana will be no exception, having registered the Comic Con trademark with the National Institute of Intellectual Property and promising the participation of Cartoon Network, HBO, Marvel, Nickelodeon, Sony Pictures Television and Wargaming. The comic book convention will coincide with International Children's Day June 1, and approximately 70,000 people from

Kazakhstan and abroad are expected to attend. The convention's partners are Nur-Sultan Akimat, Astana Convention Bureau and Geek Market.

"We are pleased to invite creative people from all over Kazakhstan to participate," said Astana Convention Bureau's Astana Events Department Chief Manager Bekskultan Abdrakhmanov.

Illustrators, scriptwriters, comic book creators, publishing houses, film studios, computer game developers and cosplayers may send their portfolio and a cover letter to info@comicconastana.com to participate in the event, and tickets to attend are on sale at www.comicconastana.com.

In addition to Astana Comic Con, Nur-Sultan will host several international events throughout the year to boost tourism, such as the route development forum Routes Silk Road and the eighth United Nations World Tourism Organization Global Summit on Urban Tourism July 15-17 and Oct. 9-12, respectively.

Nur-Sultan regularly hosts the Astana Economic Forum and Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and notably held EXPO 2017, the grounds of which are used by the Astana International Financial Centre and Astana Hub and for events such as Astana Comic Con.

# Hydroponic greenhouses supply Almaty, Nur-Sultan with fresh pesto

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Hydroponic greenhouses that started as a hobby are now in the fresh pesto business. The project supplies shops in Almaty and the capital and is meeting the cities' growing demand for the basil, nut and garlic sauce.

The ShöpShop brand (Shöp meaning grass in Kazakh) was launched by Daniyar Takishev, Yerzhan Toltayev and Rauan Userkul, none of whom had any farming experience but saw how scarce and expensive fresh greens are during Kazakhstan's winter months.

In 2016, the trio built their first greenhouse using a 40-foot maritime container and instructions from the Internet. The next year, they constructed a 300-square meter greenhouse in the Kulager region of Almaty and the MSU mathematics alumni decided to change their career direction.

"Each one of us had hit a ceiling in our work and we wanted to do our own thing, to be independent. We decided to grow greens using a hydroponics system. It's a responsible usage of water and rational usage of soil and electric energy. We love all that is good for people," Toltayev told Forbes KZ.

Despite its benefits, hydroponics is not common in Kazakhstan, he said to Vecher KZ.

"Hydroponics allows us to grow up to four times more produce in the same area as conventional greenhouses. In Kazakhstan, not many people are aware of it and

there is a lack of trust towards it," he noted.

The growers eventually decided to use their basil to make pesto based on an 1863 Italian recipe they found online. They wanted to manufacture a product without any preservatives or artificial flavours.

"In Kazakhstan, pesto is not a mass product, but when people try our sauce at fairs, they love it. Those who buy imported sauce, they say they can taste the difference," he added.

Fellow MSU alum Arman Tapashev, an economist from Kostanai, and Bolat Tynymbayev, an IT consultant from Koshetau, are the businesspersons behind the greenhouse in the capital. The project was initially proposed as a fresh greens business, but transporting product was difficult. The trio changed its plan and opened the ShöpShop franchise.

"Pesto sauce has already become popular in Almaty and many people in Astana come to the stores and ask for product that was made in Kazakhstan. Our sauce is made of fresh basil using a traditional recipe and contains no preservatives or artificial flavours. There are no analogues to this sauce in Astana," Tapashev told WeProject, referring to the previous name of the Kazakh capital.

Pesto is available through @theshopshopkz and @theshopshop\_astana Instagram accounts and is occasionally sold at food fairs. The Almaty branch has also started selling its goods at Bekker, Carefood and Gastromarket supermarkets.

# Nur-Sultan launches effort to attract another year of record foreign direct investment, says city administration



By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – The Nur-Sultan Akimat (city administration) aims to build last year's record amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) this year, reports its press service.

Nur-Sultan attracted more than three trillion tenge (US\$7.91 billion) in FDI last year, a record amount for the city.

"Investment growth was achieved through construction

[last year]," said Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Bakhyt Sultanov at an April 22 government meeting. "This year, with a slowdown in construction in the first quarter, there has been a decline in investment because investment in construction and installation constitutes an average of 70 to 80 percent (of total FDI in the capital). We analysed investment for previous years, collected forecasts for 2019 and formed a plan that will allow us to repeat last year's achievement by the year's end – to

reach investment of three trillion tenge (US\$7.91 billion)."

The plan involves building on the city's strengths in attracting investment. For example, Astana Invest works to promptly solve problems faced by investors through a single-window system, and the Astana International Financial Centre operates within a special legal regime based on English common law principles, which regulates legal relationships and is aimed at the development of the financial market. Astana Invest will

open a front office on the AIFC's territory, and the city akimat recently developed a road map of cooperation in attracting investment with the AIFC.

"We also have more than 200 projects worth three trillion tenge (US\$7.91 billion), of which 45 are projects with foreign investors and transnational companies. This year, an investment of 120 billion tenge (US\$316.54 million) is planned for these projects," said Sultanov.

The akim noted the need to expand the territory of the capital's special economic zones to 8,000 hectares.

"There are potential investors for these zones, including 10 large companies for the construction of multi-residential complexes worth 430 billion tenge (US\$1.13 billion). Attracting investment of 100 billion tenge (US\$263.78 million) this year will only be possible through these projects," he said.

"Air accessibility is a key factor in positioning Nur-Sultan as a leading financial centre in the region. Regular direct flights to and from financial capitals will increase the inflow of foreign investors and tourists. According to the instructions of Elbasy (Leader of the Nation, the constitutional title accorded to former President Nur-sultan Nazarbayev), it is important to establish regular direct flights with the United States, Japan, Europe, the Middle East and Asia," he added.

