



Nationwide clean-up effort nets more than 15,000 tonnes of garbage

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – A one-day, nation-wide volunteer effort to clean parks, ponds, riverbanks and coastal regions on July 27 collected 15,044 tonnes of garbage across 4,071 hectares of land, Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Magzum Mirzagaliyev announced July 28 via Twitter.

Approximately 197,000 people participated in the clean-up that rallied under the Twitter hashtags #Birge #TazaQazaqstan (#Together #CleanKazakhstan).

“I sincerely thank everyone who participated in the #Birge #TazaQazaqstan environmental clean-up campaign! The action should not be a one-off. I urge everyone to follow this tradition further to inculcate a culture of separate garbage collection to their compatriots,” said the minister.

The Karaganda Region collected the most trash at 4,110 tonnes, followed by the Kyzylorda Region at 4,106 and the Akmola Region at 1,885.

Mirzagaliyev launched an earlier and similar clean-up July 20 at the Koyandy reservoir. More than 1,200 people collected more than 10 tonnes of garbage that day. Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin also took part in the event.

“Last week this campaign was initiated by our government, now it is a large-scale national campaign #Birge #TazaQazaqstan. I think it is a very wonderful start,” said Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altay Kulginov, reports the capital akimat (administration) press service.



Photo credit: astana.gov.kz

More than 5,000 Nur-Sultan residents collected more than 16 tonnes of garbage on the shores of Lake Maibalyk, the coastal territory of the Vyacheslav reservoir and along the banks of the Karasu and Yessil rivers.

“Despite the fact that today is a day off, many people have come to support the eco-campaign and help clean up debris from the territories. Thank you for not being indifferent. We need to protect our nature. We love to relax in the fresh air; likewise, we have to love to clean up after ourselves. Cleanliness must begin with oneself,”

said Kulginov during the July 27 clean-up in Nur-Sultan.

Among participants were representatives of state and public organisations, students, volunteers, public figures, government members and the capital akimat employees.

“It’s great that most people take part in the clean-up event. Especially that there are many young people. This shows our unity and solidarity,” said Minister of Labour and Social Protection Berdibek Saparbayev.

“This gives an opportunity to unite, do one thing. I think this is

great! More of these campaigns together we will keep the cleanliness and ecology of our city. We’ll start here, then more and more,” said participant Chingiz Albekov.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev also supported the campaign.

“We strongly support the eco-challenge movement that has spread throughout the country at the initiative of the government and civil society. Turn the country into a territory of cleanliness. Birge – Taza Kazakhstan! Well done volunteers!” Tokayev said July 25 via Twitter.

President seeks more jobs, aid to most vulnerable, better conditions for business

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev reviewed July 15 Kazakhstan’s 2019 socio-economic development efforts as he chaired the expanded session of the Government, the first under his presidency. He directed government agencies to increase incomes, create jobs, improve land use, and work on better investment climate, among other actions.

“Increasing the income of the population is our main job. (There is a) growth of 6 percent, but you cannot stop there. Sanctions, protectionism also influence the development of our country. International experts talk about the unstable situation in the world. Therefore, we should consider the creation of new jobs as a priority.

During the years of industrialisation, more than 1,200 enterprises were commissioned, new jobs were created, new productions appeared, which were not there before. However, the external and internal competitiveness of Kazakhstan enterprises remains low,” Tokayev said.

Salaries in numerous sectors in Kazakhstan have increased since the beginning of the year, including a 30 percent increase for public sector workers.

The President also urged officials to move forward on his June 26 decree providing immediate debt relief to some of the country’s most vulnerable groups.

“This work should be kept under constant control by the government, the Administration of the President. We announced this action, and I repeat: this action is of

a one-time nature,” said Tokayev. “But what we have announced to all the people must be completed on time and efficiently.”

The effort under the decree will be in two parts. The first is to verify the population segment that should receive the support. Kazakh National Bank and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection completed the work in July.

The second part is signing preliminary contracts between second-tier banks and microfinance organisations and the Problem Loan Fund. This work started in late July and will be completed before the end of the month, according to Kazakh National Bank Chair Yerbolat Dossayev.

As for the situation in Arys, the state allocated the Turkestan Region funds to repair the town following the recent explosion at

a nearby weapons depot which caused the evacuation of a town of 40,000. Tokayev demanded from the Ministry of Defence to complete the work on the transfer of military warehouses further away from the living areas as soon as possible. To avoid such incidents in the future, the President instructed the new specially established commission to strictly punish “all those guilty” in the incident by providing submissions to the Presidential Administration and the Security Council. These will include all those officials, including civil servants, who irresponsibly gave permission for construction in the immediate vicinity of high-risk facilities.

Tokayev also spoke of the need for reforms in public administration.

Continued on Page A2

New Kazakh-Uzbek highway expected to boost freight traffic seven-fold

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin and his Uzbek counterpart Abdulla Aripov opened Beineu-Akzhigit international highway July 17 in the Mangystau Region on the border with Uzbekistan. The highway will boost freight traffic from 1,000 to 7,000 vehicles per day and their speed from 50 to 100 kilometres per hour.

The route will provide shorter and more unimpeded access of Uzbek goods to Russia and the countries of the Caucasus through

Kazakh seaports and highways. It is a part of the Tashkent – Beineu – Atyrau – Astrakhan international transit and transport corridor that opens access to the Caspian Region and European countries.

The 85-kilometre road starts on the border with Uzbekistan, then travels through Beineu village. An important transport infrastructure facility allows cargo traffic to pass from Kuryk international seaport in Aktau to other countries.

“The successful implementation of this project under the Nurlı Zhol state programme will give a new impulse to the Silk Road trade flows and the development of our

entire region,” said Aripov. “This highway is of paramount importance for further activation of trade and economic relations between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.”

The international highway will develop Central Asia’s transport infrastructure, increase trade volumes and unlock transit potential, noted Mamin in his speech.

“This project was implemented on direct instruction of First President – Elbasy (Leader of the Nation, the constitutional title accorded to the First President of Kazakhstan) Nursultan Nazarbayev. The opening of this road symbolises an intensive development of

our strategic partnership, as determined by Nursultan Nazarbayev and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev,” he said.

“Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are strategic partners. We are doing everything necessary for the rapprochement of our countries, for the rapprochement of our fraternal peoples. I want to emphasise that in recent years, relations between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have reached a qualitatively new level and have acquired a steady positive dynamic,” he added.

Continued on Page A3

Tokayev establishes National Council to strengthen public’s engagement in reform agenda

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev established July 17 the National Council of Public Trust to make government more responsive to the people.

The National Council is an advisory body to the President and will make public policy recommendations after broad discussion with representatives of the public, political parties and civil society.

The council includes 44 public figures, civil society activists, human rights activists and journalists.

Tokayev will chair the council. Presidential Administration Head Krymbek Kusherbayev is deputy chair, while Presidential Advisor Yerlan Karin is the secretary of the council.

Among the members are candidates from the June 9 presidential election Dania Yespaeva, Toleutai Rakhimbekov and Zhambyl Akhmetbekov. The council also includes public figures such as political scientist and BTS Digital Chair Sayasat Nurbek, Kazakhstan Media Alliance CEO Armanzhan Baitassov, lawyer Ayman Omarova, activist Mukhtar Taizhan, journalist Mikhail Dorofeyev, as well as political scientists Aidos Sarym, Oraz Dzhandosov, Daniyar

Ashimbaev, Andrei Chebotarev and Rasul Zhumaly, among others.

The National Council also includes commissioners for human rights in Kazakhstan, for children’s rights and the ombudsman for the protection of entrepreneurs. A full list of members can be found on the Akorda (presidential residence) website.

“We can say (they are) leaders of public opinion. That is, according to the composition of the National Council, we see that these are all the people that have been very active in Kazakh platforms in recent years. It can be in social networks, platforms for dialogue, expert communities. That is, people with a very active civic stand. The National Council of Public Trust is a kind of permanent dialogue platform,” Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies International Studies Department Head Assel Nazarbetova told 24.kz.

The council selected its members “taking into account how long they were engaged in the actualisation of certain problems,” said Karin at a July 17 press briefing.

“We have a lot of so-called situational leaders who appear today, raise some questions, and tomorrow they disappear abruptly from the informational, social and political field. We cannot rely on them,” Karin added.

Continued on Page A2

Kazpost delivers cutting-edge services after transformation

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Kazpost, which began updating all of its services and processes five years ago, has seen a tremendous spurt in development. Kazpost Chair Saken Sarsenov spoke with The Astana Times about the company’s achievements in e-commerce, privatisation in 2020, using drones to reach remote villages and efforts to reduce the ecological impact of its vehicles.

“Yes, it really was the old postal system, the old infrastructure with the Soviet processes. (Until five years ago), nothing had changed. (In updating the work of the postal service), we moved in two directions – we changed the processes themselves, then automatised and digitised (them),” he said.

Several years ago, parcels trav-

elled 16 days to reach certain localities, but Kazpost has reduced maximum delivery time within the country to four-six days. The expedited distribution is the result of entirely revised activities, such as a new sorting line with round-the-clock processing and a capacity of 6,500 departures per hour, new fulfilment centres in the capital, Almaty and Aktobe, increase in air transport deliveries and automatising processes like receiving, sorting and issuing parcels.

“For example, starting this year, when our operators accept a package, they no longer manually enter the data of all customers each time; the information is automatically self-filled. This reduced the time to receiving packages and correspondences by 40 percent,” he said.

Continued on Page A5

Volunteers preserve, revive Qoi-Tobet Kazakh aboriginal shepherd dogs

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – Bauyrzhan Khimbash, an animal enthusiast from the Atyrau Region, has been volunteering to preserve and revive Kazakh aboriginal shepherd dogs for 15 years with the help of like-minded people. The work is important for the country from economic, environmental and cultural perspectives, he told The Astana Times.

“Many years ago, I thought about the discrepancy between what I saw in life and what was called Tobet (the Kazakh term for big dogs) in

magazines, newspapers and the Internet. The type of big dogs, which was rapidly gaining popularity and partly promoted by enthusiasts, didn’t fit in with the past (ones)... I had never seen such breeds before and none of the aksakals (elderly people) remembered,” he said.

Khimbash started to study the subject, but couldn’t find specialists who were familiar with the specific breed. As a result, he started travelling to distant villages in the region and, at the same time, looked for experts with scientific backgrounds.

Continued on Page B5

INSIDE

NATION

Government adopts action plan on social welfare **A2**

Shymkent becomes 31st city to join EBRD Green Cities programme **A2**

ECONOMY

Government develops economy of simple things in regions **A4**

Kazakhstan to develop state programme to better manage municipal solid waste **A4**

EDITORIAL&OPINION

Strong communities, regions are key to nation’s success and development **A6**

SARSEN BAYEV: Kazakhstan and India move toward new horizons of cooperation **A6**

BUSINESS

KazUAV joins Terra Drone Corporation network to provide innovative drone services **A7**

Citi continues to support AIFC’s work, invest in Kazakhstan, says Citi executive **A8**

NATION&CAPITAL

Children’s book series introduces Central Asia to readers of all ages, backgrounds **B1**

Burkhan-Bulak waterfall, country’s highest, attracts tourists with untouched nature, fascinating views **B6**

President seeks more jobs...



Photo credit: akorda.kz

Continued from Page A1

“We must understand that the world and, with it, our society have changed. Former approaches, tools rapidly lose their effectiveness. Reforms, new solutions to old problems are needed. In order to increase the efficiency of the state apparatus and restart its interaction with society, I instruct the Presidential Administration, together with the government, to develop a concept for the development of public administration. This is the most important issue. Therefore, next year we will consider its draft at a government meeting, and possibly at a meeting of the National Council,” he said.

The President further stressed the need to create better conditions for business development and reduce unreasonable state control.

“It is necessary to fully support the domestic business, the so-called national bourgeoisie. Those who

hinder its development through unreasonable checks, extortion, raiding, must be severely punished. I believe it is finally time to criminalise the actions of state bodies and their representatives aimed at undermining business. To provide in the legislation strict measures up to criminal prosecution,” he said.

The President also called all administrative bodies to establish a feedback system with the population.

“In each central and local executive body there should be permanently functioning platforms for feedback with the population,” said Tokayev. “Particular attention should be paid to work with social networks; each public servant should be active in social networks on supervised issues. We have to restore the trust of citizens, convincing them with numbers, facts, actions, promptly reacting to criticism. Therefore, a transition to the

concept of a state that listens is necessary.”

Tokayev criticised the work of akims (regional governors and city mayors) in attracting investors. According to him, akims behave “in a princely manner” in meetings with entrepreneurs and investors rather than keeping “an exclusively business relations”. He advised akims to read Lee Kuan Yew’s book “From Third World to First,” where he talks about his personal experience in attracting investors to Singapore.

“(Akims) sit at the head of the table, seat them [visitors] at a distance of two, three, four meters, behave like leaders of some principalities. As if you are not interested in attracting investments, but they are interested,” he said.

Tokayev also addressed a recent Ministry of Agriculture inventory of agricultural land that revealed 16.5 million hectares of unused land in the country. Tokayev instructed the gov-

ernment to conduct an audit of all agricultural land and to digitise the land registry system by the end of 2020.

“Land is the main factor of production. Without efficiency and transparency, we cannot develop our rural areas. We understand that this is a difficult job, here you need a harmonious interaction of the ministries of agriculture and digital development,” said the President.

Tokayev also instructed to strengthen the responsibility for the poor-quality and ineffective planning of projects funded with budget money such as the light rail transport’s (LRT’s) project in Nur-Sultan.

“Instead of creating a convenient, understandable, practical transport for the population, an expensive type of transport was proposed (by) LRT. The opinions of specialists, the architectural community, as I understand it, were not taken into account. According to the akimat, the projected flow will be 146,000 people per day. Predicted flow! Currently, along a similar route from the airport to the new station, passenger traffic is only 2,000 people daily. How are you going to increase passenger traffic 70 times? I do not understand,” Tokayev said.

These projects create a risk and “entail a constant receipt of subsidies and a burden on the state as a whole.”

Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin also addressed the government meeting, speaking on economic growth and the country’s labour market.

From the beginning of 2019, there has been acceleration in economic growth from 2.9 percent to 4.1 percent, said Mamin. The main sources of economic growth have been industry, construction, transport, trade and agriculture. Investments in fixed assets have increased 11.7 percent.

“The main priority of our work is the creation of new jobs, attracting investment in fixed assets. By 2025, it is planned to increase the volume

of investments by 20 percent annually in fixed assets and increase its level to 30 percent of the country’s GDP (gross domestic product),” said Mamin.

The Kazakh government plans to increase labour productivity at least 33 percent and increase non-oil exports to \$38 billion by 2025.

In the agro-industrial complex, the government has plans to increase the production of high quality domestic products and reduce imports by two times. They will continue measures to increase export of agro industrial goods from \$2.4 billion to \$5 billion per year.

Mamin said, starting from 2020, corporate income tax from small and medium businesses will be transferred to the revenue base of local budgets.

“Therefore, regions that are actively attracting investment and developing entrepreneurship will receive additional taxes to local budgets,” he added.

The Kazakh labour market is expected to add 2.1 million citizens over the next five years, said Mamin, and thus, “creating jobs through investment is paramount for the government. Measures will be taken to systematically modernise the national labour market.”

He also said there is great potential for economic development in the service sector, in particular in tourism, e-commerce, transport and logistics. The new State Programme for the Development of Tourism by 2025 will attract 600 billion tenge (US\$1.57 billion) in investment to the industry and create 200,000 jobs, including in related industries. The share of tourism in GDP is expected to grow to 8 percent by 2025.

The development of transport and logistics by increasing transit, trade and logistics capacities and improving local and national roads will create about 150,000 new jobs and increase the industry’s share to 10 percent of GDP, he said.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev appointed July 30 Yerlan Aitakhanov Akim (Mayor) of Shymkent. Aitakhanov was born Dec. 10, 1971 in the Shymken Region. He served prior to his new post in different positions in Kazakhstan banks, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy national railway company and the Transport Committee of the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructural Development. Aitakhanov also served as Deputy Akim of the South Kazakhstan Region.

Nur-Sultan will host the third International Renewable Energy Summit Sept. 25 as part of Kazakhstan Energy Week Forum. The event will gather more than 300 delegates to discuss renewable energy sources and the best ideas for building a green future for the country. “The project also solves the strategic task of attracting international developers, investors and technology suppliers in the field of renewable energy sources, as well as leading experts from around the world to communicate and exchange experience in Kazakhstan. A special presentation of start-up projects in the field of renewable energy to potential investors will take place,” reads the release.

BI Group Holding will build a Hampton by Hilton hotel in Turkestan, reported Forbes.kz. The hotel will offer 120 standard rooms, a restaurant and commercial spaces. The average room cost will be 15,500 tenge (US\$41) per day. The hotel will be in the historic centre. The main tourist and cultural attractions of the city will be within walking distance. A wedding palace will be built next to the hotel. BI Group Holding CEO Aidyn Rakhimbayev and Hilton President for Europe, the Middle East and Africa Simon Vincent have agreed to develop a network of hotels under the Hampton by Hilton brand in Central Asia. It is expected the network will produce more than 1,000 rooms within five years.

The EFES Kazakhstan company keeps its leading position with more than 51.9 percent of the domestic beer market share. The company’s market share in the total sales volume in Kazakhstan increased 1.6 percent compared with the same period last year. “Over the past period, the company signed import contracts with the AB InBev international brewing corporation. The first import supplies to Kazakhstan were implemented. The company initiates the campaigns on sustainable development and development of human resources to increase its leading position in the beer market. The volunteer, leadership and employee motivation programmes were launched,” said the company’s spokesperson.

The MOST Business Incubator completed July 23 its ninth session of the acceleration programme. Five teams attracted more than 26 million tenge (US\$68,000) of investments from May to July. The jury selected 10 best start-ups to take part in the Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC) at the local level. In the case of selection at the international level, the start-ups will have the opportunity to get access to online trainings and consultations and prepare for the super-final in Riyadh Nov. 12. “This year, more than 100 start-up entrepreneurs from nine regions applied to the programme and only 47 of these were able to qualify. Twenty teams failed to demonstrate the necessary progress,” said MOST Business Incubator Director Alim Khamitov at a press conference.

The number of tourists increased by 50 percent over the past three years in the Naurzum State Nature Reserve in the Kostanai Region, reported Kazinform. Up to 1,000 people visit the reserve annually. The management of the conservation area believes agreements with travel agencies will attract more tourists. Two main routes through relict pine forest were developed. “The amateur ornithologists are especially interested in this area. For example, they come to see the black skylark, a symbol of our region and the central Kazakhstan. Family tourism and weekend tours are also popular. It is also planned to equip a beach,” said Deputy Director of Naurzum State Nature Reserve Kanat Batyrkhanuly.

Government adopts action plan on social welfare

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh government adopted July 23 an action plan to complete the instructions given by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at a July 15 extended government meeting.

The instructions reflect the promises made during Tokayev’s presidential campaign to improve social welfare, raise salaries and expand communication between the government and civil society, among other issues.

The government’s project office will oversee implementation of the instructions.

Social security

According to Deputy Prime Minister Gulshara Abdykalikova, the government proposes four measures to ensure control over targeted social assistance. First, there will be automated control over the compulsory signing of a contract to receive targeted social assistance. Second, the authorities will assess family well-being through social maps. Third, monitoring groups will visit the regions. Fourth, the government will organise hearings of regional commissions to eliminate violations.

The authorities of Aktobe introduced July 1 a social services resource to improve the support system for people with disabilities, she noted. Starting from August, the website will offer technical rehabilitation equipment directly from providers. The rest of the country would be able to use it Jan. 1.

As for equal working conditions and wages of foreign companies’ employees, the government has been developing a draft law to consolidate duties and responsibilities of employers to create equal working conditions for workers and introduce a modern labour protection management system.

“To implement these tasks, the action plan is being developed to prevent conflicts in enterprises attracting foreign labour. Inspections to several enterprises have been scheduled. Following the results,

comprehensive proposals on improvement of legislative acts will be developed,” said Abdykalikova.

Education system

Tokayev has also instructed to adopt the law On the Status of the Teacher before the end of this year. It provides material and non-material incentives for teachers and a set of measures to increase the prestige of the teacher and protect teacher rights, said Abdykalikova.

Another pressing issue is the elimination of three-shift schools and schools whose premises are in emergency conditions. To address this, the government proposes a new method to finance construction and repair works of school

In preparation for the insurance, a pilot project will begin Sept. 1 in the Karaganda Region. The project will test the provision of some medical services from the insurance package, status identification of insured persons and separate accounting of funds.

buildings from 2020. The funds to the regions will be distributed depending on per capita rate and the number of school age children. In addition, schools will be built using public-private partnerships.

The action plan also considers “changing the timing of competitions for grant and programme-targeted funding, updating the composition of national scientific councils, increasing the requirements for their members, making changes to the rules of the state scientific and technical expertise,” said the deputy prime minister. The action plan also will continue

efforts to reform school and vocational education.

All of these activities will be reflected in the draft State Programme for the Development of Education and Science for 2020-2025.

Healthcare system

The 2020-2025 State Programme for the Development of Healthcare provides for a set of measures to increase medical workers’ salaries.

The government will also work to improve the perception of healthcare work as a profession and working conditions in the draft of the new code On the Health of the People and the Healthcare System. The draft code will be submitted to the parliament in September.

“In order to study the qualitative implementation of the Compulsory Social Health Insurance system, in August, an audit on the regions’ readiness to introduce the insurance will be conducted. The questions of fully updating the status, citizens’ attachment to polyclinics and technical readiness of medical organisations will be studied,” said Abdykalikova.

In preparation for the insurance, a pilot project will begin Sept. 1 in the Karaganda Region. The project will test the provision of some medical services from the insurance package, status identification of insured persons and separate accounting of funds.

Transition to “a state that listens”

According to the deputy prime minister, there are three main problems in informing the public: first, inefficient use of communication channels; second, the formal approach of government agencies to highlighting their work; and third, insufficient involvement of the population in decision-making processes.

The government proposes to inform the public through online tools such as direct call-in shows with the heads of state bodies, social media accounts, online advisor and virtual reception of the Kazakh President.

Shymkent becomes 31st city to join EBRD Green Cities programme

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Shymkent recently became the 31st city to join the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development’s (EBRD) \$1.11 billion Green Cities urban sustainability programme, reports mfa.gov.kz.

The programme aims to preserve environmental resources, use resources sustainably, mitigate and adapt to climate change risks and ensure environmental policies contribute to social and economic well-being. It has mobilised more than \$278 million for this cause to date, reports Ebrdgreencities.com.

Joining the programme gives Shymkent access to EBRD financial support for projects on building a better and more sustainable future for cities and their residents.

The bank will identify, prioritise and connect Shymkent’s environmental challenges with sustainable infrastructure investments and policy measures by supporting the development and implementation of a Green City Action

Plan, among other measures. Projects on energy-saving lamps and sewage treatment that would meet the fast-growing city’s needs, were discussed at a July 22 meeting in London during which the then Shymkent Akim (Mayor) Gabidulla Abdrakhimov officially joined the city into the EBRD programme. If the sewage treatment plant were implemented in Shymkent, it would serve as a pilot project for implementation in other major Kazakh cities.

Abdrakhimov also invited the bank’s representatives to visit Shymkent to continue discussion on co-operation and explore the city and its high-potential tourism, light and food industries. He also met with Kazakh Ambassador to the United Kingdom Erlan Idrissov during his visit to the United Kingdom to discuss a project on a new university in Shymkent with a U.K. partner that will train students in information technology, architecture, design and hospitality management.

Other cities in the EBRD programme include Amman, Minsk, Belgrade, Dushanbe, Sarajevo and Ulaanbaatar, among others.

Tokayev establishes...

Continued from Page A1

According to him, the council “is very balanced, includes representatives of all major socio-political groups in the country. Here [there are] representatives of the ‘old’ opposition, representatives of the new protest movement, civil society activists, prominent human rights activists who have been involved in the protection of human rights for many years, youth activists and leaders, and also representatives of the regions and leading Kazakhstan experts.”

The council membership is a community service and its members will not be paid.

The members will form working groups to discuss issues and proposals and send recommendations directly to the President. The final for-

mat of the council’s activities is still being established.

“Working groups will be formed in different directions... What directions these will be will be clear at the end of the first meeting (in August),” said Karin. The council will meet three times per year.

“Representatives of public councils under local authorities will also be invited to meetings of the National Council. This will allow us to consider the issues under discussion both on a national scale and in the context of the vision of individual regions,” he said.

By the decision of the chair, the National Council may also include representatives of public councils at the national and local levels, as well as other persons.

Tokayev promised to form the Council during his June 12 inauguration address.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan participated in the international Operation Spider Web July 8-12 as part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO's) Anti-Drug Strategy Programme for 2018-2023. The operation had, for the first time, the largest format of its kind within the organisation. It was initiated by Kazakhstan's First President Nursultan Nazarbayev and gained the support of the SCO member states at the SCO Summit in the Kazakh capital in 2017. The goal is to address and cut off the channels used to sell and distribute drugs and psychoactive substances, adopt measures to prevent the use of Internet and online payment systems in the drug trade and increase the effectiveness of the countries' efforts in fighting illegal drug trafficking. The preliminary data showed 6,422 kg of narcotic drugs have been withdrawn from illegal turnover since the operation was launched.

Kazakhstan has traded \$78.1 billion with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) since 2015, including \$19.1 billion last year and \$6.1 billion from January-April. The overwhelming majority, 91.8 percent, is with Russia. Kazakhstan's external trade volume reached \$93.5 billion in 2018, 21.3 percent of which is with the EAEU. The key factors boosting mutual trade include the measures taken in 2018 to create joint labour, services and medicine markets within the union.

Kazakhstan ranked 79th in the Global Innovation Index, published annually by the World Intellectual Property Organisation, moving down five spots this year. The nation is also the third most innovative economy in Central and Southern Asia. The ranking noted Central Asian countries have started prioritising innovation activities and policies. Switzerland was named the most innovative country during the report's release in New Delhi, followed by Sweden, the United States, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. India jumped five places to 52nd, the most significant improvement among countries since 2018. Innovation has been thriving particularly in Asia, the report said, but trade tensions put the growth at risk.

Kazakhstan introduced its first voluntary national review on sustainable development during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at United Nations headquarters in New York. The forum is the UN's central platform to discuss and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The recent UN Development Programme Rapid Integrated Assessment showed the sustainable development targets are 80 percent incorporated in Kazakh government programmes and strategies. The Kazakh delegation noted the country's progress in education, entrepreneurship development, access to financial services and funds, poverty reduction and modernising the judicial system. The challenges relate to the poverty rate gap between urban and rural areas, increased greenhouse emissions and transition to a diversified economy.

The Kazakh government signed an agreement with Valmont Industries, the world's leading providers of agricultural engineered products and infrastructure and irrigation equipment services. The document envisions creating a network of farms to transfer advanced technologies in irrigation, efficient use of water resources, feed production, education and farmer training. Advanced irrigation installations will be set up at demonstration sites in the Akmola and Turkmen regions. The agreement signed among Valmont Industries, Global Beef (the United States) and Kusto Group (Kazakhstan) also involves a joint venture to build a modern irrigation plant in Kazakhstan with a capacity of at least 1,000 systems per year and investments reaching \$50 million.

New EU strategy on Central Asia identifies challenges, optimises opportunities, says EU envoy

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – The new Central Asia Strategy, devised by the European Union (EU) addresses new realities of Central Asian countries and encourages cooperative solutions, Head of the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan Ambassador Sven-Olov Carlsson recently told The Astana Times in an exclusive interview.

“The Central Asia Strategy aims to forge a stronger, modern and non-exclusive partnership with the countries of Central Asia, taking into account new geopolitical realities as well as evolving needs and capacities of our Central Asian partners. It builds upon the lessons learnt from EU engagement in the region, identifies both challenges and new opportunities for cooperation and aims at supporting the development of the region into a sustainable, resilient, prosperous and more closely interconnected economic and political space,” Carlsson said.

Carlsson also identified three priorities of the policy. The first priority is Partnering for Resilience, meaning that the EU partners with Central Asian countries in anticipating and addressing the challenges affecting their socio-economic goals and security to enhance their ability to embrace reform and modernisation.

The second priority is Partnering for Prosperity, which aims to unlock the region's growth potential by fostering the development of a competitive private sector and pro-



Sven-Olov Carlsson

moting a sound and open investment environment.

The final priority is Working Better Together that presumes the EU will work together with Central Asia to strengthen the architecture of the partnership, intensifying political dialogue and opening space for civil society participation.

Kazakhstan played an important part in shaping the new strategy by sharing proposals with the EU, said Carlsson.

“Let me in this context mention the most valuable contribution of Kazakhstan in shaping the new strategy. In June last year, the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs shared a substantive paper highlighting the importance of synergy of regional and bilateral approaches. The eight priorities defined by our Kazakh partners, including development of human potential through education, promotion of rule of law, development of private entrepreneurship, new technologies, connectivity, green economy, environmental protection and security cooperation, including assistance to Afghanistan's rehabilitation and stabilisation are very

well reflected in the new strategy and already represent a quite ambitious priority list to which I can fully subscribe,” Carlsson said.

He shared his excitement about a new EU programme that provides Afghan women with scholarships to study in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

“First of all, the action is the first example of a trilateral cooperation programme between the European Union, Afghanistan, and Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan). This is in line with the new EU Strategy for Central Asia and its main objective to foster cross-border cooperation both within Central Asia but and between the five Central Asian countries and the wider region. Secondly, we expect the project to empower Afghan women who will be able to benefit from tailor-made programmes in three priority sectors, agriculture, mining and statistics, thus improving their skills and their chances of finding employment. Thirdly, we attach great importance to the spill-over effect of such a project, which originally was designed as an education project but which we expect to contribute to economic development and ensuring peace and stability in the region. Overall, we believe that the EU's strategic approach and long-term vision, together with the know-how of UNDP and UN Women – which are our implementing partners – together with the Kazakh and Uzbek expertise and experience in the specific fields of education is a recipe for the success of this programme,” said Carlsson.

Carlsson has noted that despite the best efforts of Central Asian countries, regional cooperation has not yet reached its potential, as the initial priority was given to national consolidation.

“Over the past two decades, regional cooperation in Central Asia has not reached its potential. The common history and shared cultural heritage of the five countries have not yet been translated into a joint perception of the region as a room for common political action. This reality is, however, not surprising, since all five countries have for obvious reasons during the first years of independence been giving priority to national consolidation with focus on statehood, sovereignty and establishment of necessary institutions and safe borders,” Carlsson said.

However, the situation regarding regional cooperation is changing, as the countries are increasingly trying to tackle common problems together, as illustrated by the first informal meeting of Central Asian leaders in March 2018. The EU would like to support and strengthen this new wave of regional cooperation in Central Asia.

“Yet in the past two years, there are important indications that the picture is rapidly changing. The new momentum in regional cooperation, illustrated by the first informal Summit of Central Asian leaders of March 2018 in Astana, has also enhanced the relevance of the EU's experience in crafting cooperative solutions to common challenges. We can only welcome these ‘new winds blowing’ in Cen-

tral Asia conducive to strengthening regional cooperation. This is a time of opportunities, and today we see that aspirations can truly turn into reality. The EU is here because we believe in the potential of this region, and, most importantly, the potential of the people of this region. This is the core of our new strategy on Central Asia, and we are determined to invest in the new opportunities and growing potential for cooperation within and with the region as a whole,” Carlsson said.

The EU programmes would address finding cooperative solutions on the regional level.

“EU-Central Asia dialogues and EU-funded multi-country programmes will contribute to promoting cooperative solutions at the regional level in areas such as the environment, water management, climate change and sustainable energy; education; the rule of law; sustainable connectivity; drugs policy; security and the prevention of radicalisation; border management and intra-regional trade facilitation,” Carlsson said.

One project would be the first EU-Central Asia Economic Forum that was agreed upon during the recent EU-CA ministerial meeting in Bishkek. Carlsson proposed three themes for the upcoming forum.

“As concrete topics for the first EU-Central Asia Economic Forum, I would suggest three important themes: export facilitation, possibly with particular focus on the agricultural sector, investment promotion and intraregional trade,” said Carlsson.

EU, UNDP to help Afghan women study in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – The European Union (EU) will provide two million euro (\$2.2 million) for 50 Afghan women to support economic empowerment through education and training in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as part of a project to be administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

UN Women will also organise summer schools on entrepreneurship and networking contributing to the women's post-study

employment, reported the EU in Kazakhstan press service.

“I believe the Afghan people need to feel and see that the international community unites and supports the reconciliation process in the country. That's why the EU has decided to work very closely with the Central Asian countries to support projects that can help connect the neighbouring countries and countries of the region, in particular the connectivity projects and projects aimed at education and employment, in particular Afghan women,” said EU High Representative and

Vice-President Federica Mogherini.

UNDP Regional Director in Europe and Central Asia Mirjana Spoljaric Egger noted technical cooperation and knowledge exchange among countries can play a huge role in boosting development.

“This collaboration will create new opportunities for cross-regional collaboration and growth,” she said.

According to the 2018 UNDP Human Development Report, 11 percent of all adult Afghan women have reached at least a

secondary level of education and only 19.5 percent are employed, compared to 37 percent and 87 percent for men, respectively. In 2016-2017, more than half of the Afghan population was living below the poverty line.

“We cannot build the future we want and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without the full participation of women. Investing in women and girls is one of the best investments a country can make in its future,” said Yakup Beris, UNDP Resident Representative in Kazakhstan.

Applications for bachelor's, master's and technical programmes in agriculture, applied statistics and mining are available July 22-Aug. 9. The grant covers the cost of tuition, housing, travel and a monthly stipend. Scholarship holders will take a one-year English language course from October 2019-May 2020.

The main selection criteria are knowledge of English (not lower than elementary level) and successfully completing interviews with members of the commission.

New Kazakh-Uzbek highway...

Continued from Page A1

Bilateral trade, which reached \$3 billion in 2018, has grown 25 percent since the beginning of the year.

Mamin noted it was symbolic that the project launched as part of The Year of Kazakhstan in Uzbekistan. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev attended the ceremony's opening event and his April visit to Uzbekistan provided additional impetus in developing bilateral cooperation.

During his trip to Aktau, Mamin reviewed innovative industrial enterprises in the region. He checked a project on recultivating the Koshkar-Ata uranium-containing chemical waste storage facility and renewable energy facilities.

The region has begun construction of solar and wind power plants with a total capacity of 50.6MW. Local authorities expect the 147.6MW renewable energy sources will operate by 2021.

Mamin also visited the construction sites of the 800-bed hotel complex on the Caspian Sea coast and 9,500-square metre cultural centre honouring contemporary Kazakh writer Abish Kekilbayev. The projects will be commissioned by the end of 2020.



Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Askar Mamin (C), Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov (right of centre) with officials and builders at the opening ceremony of the Beineu – Akzhigit international highway on July 17.

While at the Caspian desalination plant, Mamin examined a report on its second stage of modernisation, which will allow producing 40,000 cubic metres of drinking water per day for the resi-

dents of Karakiyanski, Munayli and Tupkaragan districts.

He surveyed new oil field production and service facilities at Schlumberger Aktau Megabase. The company currently covers the

needs of most Kazakh customers.

Mamin also visited the Caspi Bitumen, CITIC Kazakhstan and KazMunayGas joint venture, which produces high quality road bitumen. The company, which manu-

factured 37 percent of all Kazakh road bitumen in 2018, can process up to one million tonnes of tarry oil and produce up to 520,000 tonnes of various-grade bitumen per annum.

Photo credit: primeminister.kz

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

Government develops economy of simple things in regions

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh government discussed progress in developing the economy of simple things in the regions at a July 9 government meeting. As of July 4, the project office for the development of the economy of simple things and concessional lending programme runs more than 1,500 projects worth more than 1 trillion tenge (US\$2.60 billion).

Of these, banks approved 92 projects for 41 billion tenge (US\$106.6 million) and took 166 projects worth more than 280 billion tenge (US\$728.1 million) under consideration. Among the approved projects, 29 will create

new industries and 63 will expand existing production, reported Deputy Prime Minister Zhenis Kassymbek.

“The implementation of these approved projects will create about 2,000 jobs and increase tax revenues by 6.6 billion tenge (US\$17.16 million),” said the deputy prime minister.

“Developing the economy of simple things, we solve the problems of SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) development and employment, creating new jobs,” said Prime Minister Askar Mamin. “All this has a positive effect on the development of the economy.”

The government will monitor business participation in the pro-

gramme through credit advisory services established in all 17 regions, as well as deputy region akims (governors) as co-chairs in the regional project offices. The government decree on the second package of amendments was adopted June 28.

“The adoption of this resolution will allow supporting about 440 business projects in the amount of 162 billion tenge (US\$421.3 million). The implementation of these projects is expected to create more than 5,000 jobs and ensure an increase in tax payments amounting to 3.5 billion tenge (US\$9.10 million),” said Kassymbek.

The Kazakh government also changed concessional financing conditions after considering pro-

posals from business community and government agencies to develop economy of simple projects, said Mamin. The government reduced interest rates to 6 percent, introduced a grace period for loan repayment and included 45 new types of products. These changes should expand the circle of companies that receive concessional financing.

In addition, Mamin instructed the government to examine allocating funds to increase subsidies to replenish working capital of projects in the agro-industrial complex.

The prime minister is also calling upon regional akimats (administrations) and holding managers to get involved in increasing the

share of local content in the procurement of goods and services of the economy of simple things.

“The programme of developing the economy of simple things is an important tool to develop entrepreneurship and provide employment. All projects are implemented in the regions,” said Mamin.

Developing the economy of simple things addresses instructions from Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on the diversification of the economy that he gave during business trips to regions. This also addresses instructions from First Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s Oct. 5 state-of-the-nation address to increase domestic production of consumer goods.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

As of June, the number of small companies operating in Kazakhstan had increased 7.9 percent in the last 12 months to 158,700. The figure represents 37 percent of all registered small companies. More than 40 percent of all active small companies are in Almaty (37,200, a 13-percent increase year-on-year (yoy)) and Nur-Sultan (26,500, a 10.7-percent increase yoy), followed by the East Kazakhstan Region (9,900, a 2.9-percent increase yoy). Almost one-quarter of the companies are involved in motor vehicle and motorcycle trade and repair (37,700, a 7.4-percent increase per year). A number of companies are in construction (16,100, a 17.4-percent increase per year) and education (15,400, a 4.8-percent increase percent per year).

Retail trade volume reached 4.9 trillion tenge (US\$12.73 billion) from January-June, with a 5.4-percent real growth year-on-year (yoy). Food products accounted for 1.6 trillion tenge (US\$4.16 billion), or 32.5 percent, with a 5.8-percent sales increase yoy. The largest share, 31.5 percent, was in Almaty, followed by Nur-Sultan and the East Kazakhstan Region at 12 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively. Based on company size, individual entrepreneurs comprise 44.2 percent of retail trade with sales of 2.2 trillion tenge (US\$5.7 billion). Small enterprise retail sales were 1.4 trillion tenge (US\$3.64 billion), or 29 percent.

Art and leisure received 54.5 billion tenge (US\$141.61 million) in investments in the first half of the year, 32.6 percent more than in 2018, reported finprom.kz. The largest bulk of capital investments came to the East Kazakhstan Region (16.8 billion tenge or US\$43.65 million), Almaty (11.4 billion tenge or US\$29.62 million) and Nur-Sultan (7.1 billion tenge or US\$18.45 million). In service volume, theatrical activities accounted for 4.7 billion tenge (US\$12.21 million), a 5.5-percent decrease year-on-year (yoy). Concert activity accounted for 3.4 billion tenge (US\$8.83 million), a 34.4-percent increase yoy; art services were one billion tenge (US\$2.6 million), a 74-percent increase yoy.

The cash in circulation in June, 2.23 trillion tenge (US\$5.8 billion), decreased 0.6 percent compared to May and 1.3 percent since December, reported the Kazakh National Bank. The monetary aggregate M1, which includes cash and liquid tenge deposits, decreased 4.4 percent last month to 5.51 trillion tenge (US\$14.32 billion) and 1.7 percent since the beginning of 2019. The M2 indicator, which includes cash, all tenge and liquid foreign currency deposits, decreased 3.9 percent to 14.55 trillion tenge (US\$37.80 billion), but has an overall increase of 0.6 percent since the beginning of the year. Money supply decreased 1 percent to 19.54 trillion tenge (US\$50.77 billion), with a 6.1-percent decrease since the beginning of the year. The monetary base, or the money of the National Bank of Kazakhstan, decreased 4.1 percent in June to 6.35 trillion tenge (US\$16.5 billion) and 4.6 percent since December. In narrow terms, the monetary base decreased 5.1 percent to 5.24 trillion tenge (US\$16.5 billion) and 12.6 percent since the beginning of the year.

Gambling and betting services have reduced to a minimum since 2010, shrinking to 3.1 billion tenge (US\$8.06 million) from January-March, reported finprom.kz. The physical volume index of services rendered prior to 2018 reached 53.3 percent; the volume rendered last year was slightly more than 5.4 billion tenge (US\$14.03 million). The vast majority, or 86 percent of all services, are generated in two recreation areas, Kapshagai and Burabai resorts, providing the largest volume of services to the Almaty and Akmola regions, respectively. The Almaty Region accounts for 2.3 billion tenge (US\$5.98 million), a 31.1-percent decrease compared to last year; the Akmola Region, 426.7 million tenge (US\$1.11 million), a 4.8-percent increase for the year.

Kazakhstan to develop state programme to better manage municipal solid waste

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, government agencies and organisations are developing a state programme to better manage municipal solid waste (MSW), reports the Nur-Sultan Akimat (city administration) press service.

State and local government funds as well as private investment will be used to develop the waste management industry and the government will encourage people to separate waste.

The state policy on waste management is defined in the Concept on Transition towards Green Economy until 2050 and aims to introduce separate waste collection and develop a waste recycling sector through public-private partnerships. The concept was developed by the former Kazakh Ministry of Environmental



Kazakh Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Magzum Mirzagaliyev (C) and Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altay Kulginov (R).

Protection and the United Nations Development Programme to address environmental concerns by increasing resource use efficiency and modernising existing

infrastructure. Kazakhstan will prioritise optimising resource use, increasing the efficiency of environmental protection activity and establishing green infrastruc-

ture until 2020, after which it will begin transforming the national economy, implementing renewable energy technology and developing rational water use until 2030. In 2030-2050, the country will transition to using natural resources according to renewability and sustainability.

Kazakhstan produced 4.3 million tonnes of municipal solid waste in 2018, approximately 100,000 fewer tonnes than in 2017. Its share of municipal solid waste recycling was 11.5 percent in 2018, 9 percent in 2017 and 2.6 percent in 2016. It is expected to increase with the ban on dumping paper, plastics, cardboard and glass waste into landfill that came into force Jan. 1 and the ban on construction and food waste scheduled for 2021. Since 2016, the government has also prohibited disposing scrap metal, mercury lamps and batteries, waste oils and liquids and electronic product waste in landfills.

Separate waste collection has been implemented in 51 cities and districts, and sorting has been implemented at 30 sites, where more than 1,000 jobs have been created.

Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altay Kulginov and Kazakh Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Magzum Mirzagaliyev visited July 8 a recycling plant in Nur-Sultan, which is the city’s only plant that sorts MSW through secondary raw material extraction, receiving up to 950 tonnes of MSW from 65 waste collection companies daily.

Researchers at Nazarbayev University’s (NU) School of Engineering and National Laboratory Astana’s Laboratory of Green Energy and the Environment found that 30 percent of municipal solid waste in the capital has the potential to be recycled and another 10 percent has the potential to be sorted to derive solid fuel for the city’s energy needs, reports the NU press service.



CELEBRATING GROWTH AND PROGRESS.

A quarter of a century ago, Chevron recognized the potential in Kazakhstan. Together, with our partners, we've invested billions in the Kazakhstani economy. Created tens of thousands of jobs. And we've become the country's largest oil producer. In fact, Tengiz Field is now among the top producing oil fields in the world. That's taking potential and turning it into progress. Today and for many years to come.

Learn more at chevron.com/worldwide/kazakhstan



Ministers adopt roadmap to double investment by 2025

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – The Coordination Council adopted a roadmap to attract investment to Kazakhstan at the July 10 council meeting chaired by Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin. The task for the Ministry of National Economy is to increase the annual gross inflow of foreign direct investment from \$24 billion in 2018 to \$34 billion by 2025.

The recently established council seeks to increase investment in fixed assets up to 30 percent of Kazakhstan’s gross domestic products (GDP).

“The development of the economy is directly related to attracting investment. It is necessary to look for new niches, create mechanisms to attract investments and provide all measures of support. The main task is to increase the volume of investment in the economy by two times,” said Mamin.

The council approved legislative and institutional measures that support more public-private partnerships (PPPs) to make it the main tool to attract investments in transport and logistics, energy, tourism, infrastructure modernisation of public utilities, healthcare and education, among others.

An important driver of economic diversification will be the focus of investment on projects that provide vertical integration of existing enterprises, the prime minister’s press service reported.

The government hopes attracting investment across industries will increase the technological complexity of the country’s export base.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) to attract investments and to achieve the target ratio of invest-

ment to GDP will be developed for central and local executive bodies.

Mamin instructed central gov-

An important driver of economic diversification will be the focus of investment on projects that provide vertical integration of existing enterprises.

ernment agencies, regional akims (governors) and holding companies to intensify work with national and foreign investors, as well as international financial organisations to attract investments to the country’s economy and search for new large-scale projects.

The council also considered developing a network of wholesale distribution centres to expand the logistics capacity in Kazakhstan by 2023. The plan is to create a network of eight regional distribution centres in Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Shymkent, Aktobe, Semey, Kokshetau, Atyrau and Aktau. The centres will make early product purchases from farmers and create stored capacities with the sale of products in retail chains at reduced prices during the off-season from December to April.

The project will ensure price stability and eliminate the seasonal speculative mark-up on socially important food products. The total socio-economic effect of the project from one invested tenge (US\$0.003) will be over 30 tenge (US\$0.08).

BUSINESS
NEWS IN BRIEF

Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund, which will acquire another 50-percent share in Inter RAO’s Ekibastuz-2 Power Station, will own all its shares by year’s end, reported Sk.kz. The price cannot be disclosed until the transaction is completed and closing the transaction will depend on conditions such as approval by management boards and obtained consent of creditor banks. Inter RAO decided to withdraw from the power station because it intends to focus on its key market, Russia, where it will launch a modernisation programme for generating equipment. After the transaction, the company will no longer have assets in Kazakhstan.

Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin and U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan William Moser met July 23 to discuss investment, oil industry and agro-industrial cooperation. Last year, trade turnover between the countries increased 37.3 percent to \$2.2 billion and U.S. investment inflow to Kazakhstan increased 44.7 percent to a record-setting \$5.3 billion. Mamin noted the newly established Coordinating Council and Foreign Direct Investment Fund will attract greater investment in Kazakhstan by creating better business conditions for U.S. business partners.

QazAvtoJol will implement the road traffic safety project Vision Zero to eliminate many traffic fatalities and severe injuries, said company board chairperson Ulan Alipov at a July press conference. The strategy emphasises life and health cannot be exchanged for other benefits over emphasising conventional cost-benefit comparisons, in which a monetary value is placed on life and health to decide how much money is spent on reducing road risks. QazAvtoJol will also automate and digitise its construction and installation processes and transfer executive documentation to an electronic format as part of its support for the Kazakh Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development’s anti-corruption initiative Adaldyk Alany.

A national roadmap is being developed to promote exporting Kazakh goods and services, said First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Alikhan Smailov at a July government meeting. It will focus on building new trade contracts in Central Asia and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), negotiating a greater reflection of Kazakhstan’s interests in EAEU’s strategic documents, eliminating barriers for Kazakh goods in EAEU markets and strengthening the country’s representation in the Eurasian Economic Commission’s working bodies.

AsiaCredit Bank, Capital Bank Kazakhstan and Tengri Bank will merge into a single bank after obtaining the necessary regulatory approval from institutions such as the National Bank of Kazakhstan, reported the AsiaCredit Bank press service. The merger will strengthen the reorganised bank’s financial position and increase liquidity with a larger size, viable business model and improved quality of assets. The bank will maintain its flexible and client-oriented development policy and plans to support small and medium-sized businesses and state programmes aimed at improving social welfare and the business environment.

The Aktobe Region seeks to attract 620 billion tenge (US\$1.61 billion) this year, said Akim (Governor) Ondasyn Urazalin at a July meeting with local and foreign investors. The region attracted 210 billion tenge (US\$545.95 million) in investment in the first half of the year.

iKOMEK109, the city monitoring centre, passed the International Project Management Association’s (IPMA) certification for project management, becoming the world’s 25th organisation certified in IPMA Delta, reported the Nur-Sultan Akimat (city administration) press service. The assessment was completed by IPMA Delta assessors Sergey Bushuyev and Svetlana Murzabekova and co-assessors Maira Hussainova and Rakhatullo Saidullayev, who noted the centre’s quick results, effective communication system and ability to transfer best practices.

AIFC develops regulations for loan- and investment-based crowdfunding platforms

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – The Astana Financial Services Authority (AFSA), the financial regulator of the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), introduced the first regulatory framework for loan- and investment-based crowdfunding platforms, reported the AIFC press service.

“This new framework is one of AFSA’s ongoing commitments to promote innovation in the financial sector consistent with the latest industry developments and best practices of leading financial centres, while safeguarding investor protection and market integrity,” the press service said.

The centre developed a flexible and risk-oriented regulatory framework to protect crowdfunding investors and clients. It includes two market activities for operating a loan-based or equity-based crowdfunding platform and establishing prudential and conduct standards for platform operators including requirements on anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing, fundraising limits, appropriate systems and controls, risk disclosure, conflict of interest and due diligence of firms using crowdfunding services.

“The small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have proved to be important contributors to national prosperity, economic growth and employment and crowdfunding can become a viable vehicle for bolstering financing options for SMEs and start-ups. By creating this framework, AIFC marks another step towards building a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region,” said AFSA Chief FinTech Officer Asylbek Davletov.

The project was developed with the support of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

“EBRD has been committed to the AIFC since its inception. The distinctive feature of FinTech companies engaged in crowdfunding is that they employ digital platforms to directly connect

those looking for financing with potential investors. Of course, this also entails a number of risks and concerns for investors and the purpose of the new crowdfunding rules is to provide appropriate safeguards concerning investor protections. We hope this will enable crowdfunding to become an important source of non-bank financing in support of job creation, economic growth and competitiveness,” said EBRD chief counsel Jelena Madir, the project’s operational leader.

Crowdfunding is an innovative opportunity for SMEs and start-ups to obtain capital through small loans and equity investments from large numbers of investors through an internet-based platform.

Crowdfunding is an innovative opportunity for SMEs and start-ups to obtain capital through small loans and equity investments from large numbers of investors through an internet-based platform. It represents an increasingly important alternative to non-bank funding sources and will play an important role in the economic growth of Kazakhstan and the wider region.

Earlier, AIFC and EBRD signed a memorandum for further cooperation to develop a supportive regulatory framework for the Kazakh green finance system and acceleration programme for issuing green bonds on the Astana International Exchange (AIX). The parties agreed to conduct joint activities regarding the green bond market, policy papers and recommendations for green finance regulation.

Kazakhstan signs agreements on Abai, Dunga oil fields

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan recently signed agreements on the Abai and Dunga oil fields with foreign oil and gas companies, reports Primeminister.kz.

Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin met July 4 with President of Total Exploration and Production Arnaud Breuillac to discuss cooperation in the oil and gas sector. They discussed oil and gas production, technology transfer, renewable energy and the North Caspian Project in Kazakhstan, with Mamin emphasising the importance of social projects and job creation.

Following the meeting, Kazakh Minister of Energy Kanat Bozumbayev, Total Vice President of Exploration and Production for the Southern Europe and Caspian Region Bernard Clément, Oman Oil Company Joint Ventures Director of Exploration and Production Abdulwa-

hab Al Bulushi and Partex Oil and Gas Board Member Fernando Alves signed an agreement on the Dunga oil field in the Mangystau Region, which has an estimated 106 million barrels of total proven reserves.

The terms of the production sharing agreement for the Dunga field, signed in 1994, will be extended for 15 years from 2024 to 2039, which will allow production of an additional nine million tonnes of oil. The launch of the \$300 million third phase of the field’s development will increase the production capacity from 600,000 tonnes to 850,000 tonnes of oil per year and create 400 jobs in the region at the peak of construction activity, reports Total.com. Kazakhstan’s share within the product sharing agreement will increase from 40 percent to 60 percent by 2025. Companies will be obliged to partially supply extracted oil to Kazakhstan’s market and finance social infrastructure

projects with at least \$1 million per year.

Also, Kazakh First Vice Minister of Energy Makhambet Dosmukhambetov, KazMunayGas Deputy Chairman of the Management Board for Geology and Exploration Kurman-gazy Iskaziyeu and Eni Executive Vice President for the Central Asian Region Luca Vignati signed a protocol of direct negotiations to grant the subsoil use right for the exploration and production of hydrocarbons within joint operations in the Abai field. The field is in the northern part of Kazakhstan’s sector of the Caspian Sea, approximately 50 kilometres from the coast in a water depth of less than 10 metres. It is estimated to have significant potential for hydrocarbon resources, reports Eni.com. The 700-kilometre two-dimensional seismic exploration and drilling of a 2,500-metre exploration well in the field will cost more than 14 billion tenge (US\$36.4 million).

PPPs contracts worth \$3 billion concluded in first half of 2019

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Five hundred and sixty-five public-private partnership (PPP) contracts worth 1.29 trillion tenge (US\$3.35 billion) were concluded in Kazakhstan in the first half of 2019. Nine of the projects were national and the rest were local, said Vice Minister of National Economy Madi Takiyev at a July 22 government meeting.

The development of PPP, a long-term cooperative arrangement between two or more public and private sectors, kicked off in Kazakhstan with the adoption of the 2006 law On Concession and gained momentum with the adoption of the 2015 law On Public-Private Partnership. An additional 620 PPP projects worth 1.89 trillion tenge (US\$4.91 billion) are under development.

“The majority of the projects fall under education, healthcare, housing and communal services, culture and sports,” said Takiyev.

The Ministry of Education and

Science is developing PPP mechanisms to increase the number of summer camps from 236 to 1,000 to meet the needs of approximately 500,000 children. Two hundred and nineteen kindergartens operate under a PPP mechanism, providing 29,000 spots for children. PPP projects on student dormitory construction in Karaganda and the North and West Kazakhstan Regions are also under way as part of the 2016-2019 State Programme for Education and Science Development.

The Ministry of Healthcare is developing PPP projects to purchase medical equipment for cancer treatment. Twenty-one PPP contracts on school canteen management were concluded in the Akmola Region to meet children’s nutrition needs, and similar projects are under way in the Turkestan and East and North Kazakhstan Regions. Forty-eight PPP contracts on new sports facilities were also concluded. For example, former production areas will be rented out as sports facilities for youth.

Takiyev added that PPP projects on urban greening were implemented in Almaty and will be reproduced in Atyrau.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev instructed the government to develop PPP projects in agriculture, energy, industry and infrastructure that will ensure a return on investment through paid services rather than the national budget.

To attract more investment and decrease public expenditure, the Ministry of National Economy introduced three categories for PPP projects. One hundred and fifty-four projects fall under Category I, receiving full reimbursement on investment from the national budget. Two hundred and sixty-five projects fall under Category II, receiving partial reimbursement on investment from the national budget and paid services. One hundred and thirty-seven projects fall under Category III, receiving reimbursement on investment from paid services and none from the national budget.

Kazpost delivers cutting-edge services after five-year transformation

Continued from Page A1

Along with developing as a company, Kazpost installed a complete infrastructure to develop other businesses in the country.

“Development of e-commerce is one of our priority tasks. Recently, the export procedures were eased. The new law significantly simplified forming international customary documents. The ‘window’ for sale of Kazakh products is open,” said Sarsenov.

To date, the company has opened four e-commerce centres in the capital, Almaty, Karaganda and Shymkent. All small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are trained in the basics of e-commerce and procedures for operating in world markets.

Approximately 1,500 SME representatives were trained in 2018 and this year, the number has risen to more than 2,000. Kazpost offers continued support to all entrepreneurs after training.

The centres provide services for 57 online stores, such as offering advice on ways to promote their shops including by creating websites, selling on social media platforms and renting contact centres, as well as facilities for receiving, storing, sorting and delivering goods.

Privatising in 2020

Kazpost is among the companies to be partially privatised in 2020.



Saken Sarsenov

Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund is currently its only shareholder.

“Since the beginning of 2019, our shareholder has already held a number of investment roundtables, including in Dubai and Beijing, with the goal of promoting portfolio companies... We will continue to present the assets and strengths of the company,” said Sarsenov.

“Another step towards privatisation is improving the corporate governance rating. According to the results of an independent external assessment in 2018, the rating of Kazpost’s corporate governance rose to the level of BB. The company is successfully implementing a plan to improve corporate governance and plans in 2020 to improve it to the level of BBB. We believe such a level is an indicator of readiness for privatisation and maturity

of corporate governance processes in a company,” he added.

Kazpost is developing new projects to improve its investment attractiveness and profitability. One project is enhancing transit and bonded warehouses, as transit and e-commerce growth potential are attractive to investors.

“We will actively develop both domestic and cross-border e-commerce and support the development of SMEs by offering to work with us on the franchise model. I am confident the successful implementation of these initiatives will have a positive impact on the privatisation process,” he said.

Drones deliver parcels to remote villages

Although many people were originally ready to criticise the idea of using drones for postal service, the unmanned aircraft have been demonstrating good results. In 2017, Kazpost used drones to launch a correspondence provision project to remote rural offices.

“We are very pleased with the results,” said Sarsenov. “There are mountainous rural areas (where the distance) from the regional centre to a village is 40 kilometres, while driving to it on a serpentine route is 150-170 kilometres. Also, it happens in winter in severe weather conditions, when the rivers freeze and roads get blocked

and no land vehicle can drive to that destination.”

Two years ago, drones transported 1,150 kilogrammes of correspondence, travelling 16,000 kilometres in 460 hours. In 2018, the figures increased nearly 13 times. In the past year, Kazpost transported 16 tonnes of periodicals; the drones spent the same 460 hours in flight yet covered more than 74,000 kilometres.

The company uses drones to deliver correspondence to 150 locations in the Almaty, East Kazakhstan, Karaganda, Kostanai, Turkestan and Zhambyl regions. This year, delivering periodicals by drones will be available in all areas.

“This means, for example, that readers in remote villages receive newspapers on the day they are released and not late. They don’t have to wait until the land transport arrives. The advantage of drones is high mobility, independent of the quality of roads, and low energy consumption. But I want to note that they do not replace the work of postal employees,” he said.

Addressing environmental impact

Drones run on electricity, making them an eco-friendlier means of delivery than gasoline-powered vehicles. As one of the biggest delivery services in the country, Kazpost is aware of the impact of each delivery on the environment.

“Kazpost, in its part, is doing everything possible to reduce emissions, while maintaining the availability of services. In particular, we have significantly reduced the use of non-ecological fuel such as coal to heat (Kazpost) branches. In addition, on ‘the last mile,’ we transferred delivery to an ecological type of fuel for our transport fleet, which affected the reduction of emissions and the reduction in the use of gasoline and diesel. In addition, we gave bikes to postmen, from which there is absolutely no harm to the environment,” said Sarsenov.

For regular deliveries within Kazakhstan, Kazpost tries to maximise the transport load in order to reduce the cost of fuel per package. International parcels and express deliveries, however, require airplanes that emit nearly 90 kilogrammes of carbon dioxide per hour of flight.

“But airplanes, with every age, also become more economical and aviation fuel is also trying to be less harmful. At the same time, emissions are not so significant. The last mile is much more affected by how a department works. In these directions, Kazpost is constantly progressing,” he noted.

The company is continuing to carefully study the possibilities to reduce future environmental impact.

“It is likely that with the development of technology, their availability and economic efficiency, we will use autonomous and all-electric machines, robots and drones to deliver over ‘the last mile’ and solar energy for the rest of our needs. I believe green technology has a future and it is only a matter of time,” he added.

EDITORIAL&OPINION

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

Strong communities, regions are key to nation’s success and development

Anyone who travels widely in Kazakhstan quickly realises that our country is not only large but also incredibly diverse. The steppe may seem endless around our capital but there are many other types of landscapes within our borders, each with their own beauty and appeal.

But it won’t be long, too, before travellers notice that this diversity goes beyond geology, climate and, of course, the people who have made Kazakhstan their home. There can be differences as well in development between regions as well as urban and rural areas. Not all parts of our nation have as yet shared equally in the country’s new prosperity.

This is a challenge, of course, not just for Kazakhstan. It is an almost universal problem. All but the smallest countries – no matter how mature or successful their economies – are struggling with the impact of imbalances in growth and opportunity on their societies. And the bigger a country and the more rapid its economic progress, the greater the possibility for those imbalances to become entrenched if not mitigated by determined action.

Such imbalances and the inequality that follows can be acutely damaging at an individual, community and national level. It can lead to individual frustration and force people to leave their homes to seek a better life for their families. In the worst cases, the communities they leave behind can be trapped in a spiral of decline.

There is a serious negative impact, too, on national prospects. Just as successful countries maximise the potential of all their citizens, so too do nations need to maximise the potential of all of their regions to become successful. It is in everyone’s interests, no matter where they live or work, to see increased effort and investment to tackle regional disparities.

This effort is exactly what is happening in Kazakhstan. The remarkable economic progress over the last two decades has, of course, transformed living standards and public services right across the country. But there has been a recognition, too, that not every region or community has automati-

cally shared equally in rising prosperity and opportunity.

We have seen, in recent years, a major commitment to addressing these challenges with a focus on the problems holding regions and communities back. There have been concerted efforts, for example, to improve transport connections and energy and water supplies so all parts of the country link into Kazakhstan’s modern, growing economy. These have also been coupled with major regional investment in housing, in schools and other public services to bring their provision up to the highest national standards.

There has been major investment, too, in agriculture, which is seen as one of the major drivers of economic growth in the future. The aim is to harness science and technology to increase production in a way which is environmentally sustainable. Continued success in this important sphere will help meet future food needs, boost exports, provide the platform for new industries while creating well-paid and secure jobs in more rural areas.

These programmes and investment are delivering concrete improvements in the country’s urban and rural areas. New industrial zones, for example, are being established in Shymkent, the nation’s third city, which will be serviced by a modern airport terminal and railway station. At the same time, the roll-out of broadband is being accelerated to rural areas. Over 200 additional villages in the Kyzylorda, Pavlodar, Turkestan and Zhambyl regions as well as many more schools, hospitals and town halls will be connected over the summer.

What is already clear is that there will no let-up in this drive under the new administration. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in his inaugural address, stressed his determination to ensure sustained, dynamic economic growth throughout the entire country. This will be helped by continued devolving of responsibility to the regional and local level. It is a recognition that strong communities and regions are the essential foundation for a strong Kazakhstan in the coming decades.

Astana Process has contributed to search for peace in Syria, says former UN envoy

By Elya Altynsarina

Swedish diplomat Staffan de Mistura served as UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Syria from July 2014 to November 2018. The Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs publication Diplomatic Herald recently spoke with de Mistura about peacemaking, the Syrian crisis and the Astana Process. That interview, edited for space and style, is reprinted here.

What attracted you to the work of conflict mediation?

The job of an international conflicts mediator is a very complicated one, since often the two opposing sides, while claiming to aim for a political solution, in fact, want a military outcome consistent with their own agenda. While this is true in most conflicts, this should not deter the mediator from trying hard to find a sustainable political solution.

As a child, I wanted to become a fire fighter, then a medical doctor... Finally, I settled for being a “doctor of countries.”

Doctors cannot afford the luxury of frustration, since sometimes there is no obvious cure to a disease. The same often applies to a mediator. However, he or she can, like a doctor, still prolong the life of the patient, reduce the pain and provide hope, while creatively searching all the time for a cure, which may be around the corner.

What are some of the key challenges you have faced as a mediator and how have you solved them?

For an international mediator nowadays, the main challenges are the profound lack of trust between the fighting sides, the multipolar complexity of current conflicts, which in cases like Syria can include up to 15 countries and entities, and divisions among members of the Security Council.

Hence, in order to try to overcome all these challenges the best is to exercise patience, perseverance and constructive



Staffan de Mistura

creativity, always bearing in mind that the main priority is and should always be saving the lives of the civilian population.

The conflict in Syria is among the 21st century’s bloodiest and most complex challenges for the international community to address. What parting words did you have for your successor, Geir Pedersen?

Indeed, the Syrian conflict has been defined by most observers as the worst in the 21st century with almost 500,000 victims, five million refugees, six million displaced people and massive destruction of urban centres, hospitals and schools. In addition, thousands of people were detained, abducted and disappeared. Therefore, no one should expect a miraculous quick fix from a mediator in such a complicated situation.

Each international mediator has his/her style and approach to the search for a solution, also depending on the volatile circumstances of a very volatile conflict like the Syrian one. Therefore, apart from a very in-depth briefing on what so far has been done in order to mitigate the devastating effects of the conflict and the avenues pursued in order to find a politically sustainable and inclusive solution, my only advice to my very experienced suc-

cessor Geir Pedersen was to be patient, perseverant and indeed creative.

In your opinion, has the Astana Process, conducted in support of the main Geneva platform, justified its mission?

The Astana initiative was meant to facilitate the dialogue between the sides and those who support them in order to produce some meaningful de-escalation areas and hence reduce the suffering of the civilians.

Such de-escalation areas did last for a period of an average of six months and did produce relief for the people during that period. By doing so, the Astana Process did indeed support the attempts by the Geneva UN-led political process aimed at pursuing the implementation of Resolution 2254.

What is your opinion about the organisational level of this dialogue platform?

I can say that the Astana Process is distinguished by the high international level of organisation. This moment is also very important to gather the (Syrian) government and armed opposition together with the three guarantor countries and some observers in order to discuss concretely, in an atmosphere conducive to potential agreements, important issues such as the sustainability of lifesaving de-escalation areas and the fate of detainees and missing people.

How do you value the contribution of the First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to the launch of the Astana Process?

Actually, the role and viewpoint of political leaders strongly impact global security. In this regard, I would say that launching the Astana de-escalation initiative by the First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has been crucially important and indeed extremely effective.

I would like to express the hope that President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who is a very seasoned diplomat and politician, will keep the country’s intention to contribute to peace-making and peace-keeping globally.

Kazakhstan and India move toward new horizons of cooperation

By Bulat Sarsenbayev

As is well-known, India is the most populous democracy and the sixth largest economy in the world with a GDP of 2.69 trillion. U.S. analysts predict India, currently the world’s sixth largest economy, could become the third largest by 2025.

The Indian Government is implementing programmes to stimulate economic development, including improving public administration and national legislation as well as the business and investment climate. Many of the initiatives are similar to Kazakh programmes.

India is at the forefront in financial resources, innovation and scientific and technical development. The country is also a huge export market for foreign goods, as well as a major investor and supplier of advanced technologies, primarily in IT.

India is one of Kazakhstan’s key political and economic partners in the region.

Relations between our peoples have ancient roots dating back to when Saka tribes from the territory of modern Kazakhstan established a powerful empire in India.

Some sources attribute the Sak origin to the spiritual teacher and founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, who had the title “Shakyamuni” (Sakyamuni), meaning “the wisest among Shakya (Saka).”

An important person in Indian history is the famous Kazakh statesman of the Middle Ages, the scholar-historian Mohammed Haidar Dulati. In 2018, the Kazakh Embassy in Delhi, with the sup-



port of the Archaeological Survey of India, reconstructed his grave in Srinagar city, in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. A placard with information in Urdu and English was installed near the grave.

A significant role in consolidating the Delhi Sultanate established at the beginning of the 13th century was played by the Turkic military-feudal nobility, which originated from Central Asia. The Delhi Sultanate lasted 320 years and was the largest state in North India. One of its founders was Qutb al-Din Aibak, representative of the Mamluk dynasty. Most sources mention Turkestan, a sacred region in Kazakhstan, as his homeland.

Today, Kazakhstan and India are multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multilingual, and secular societies.

Our shared roots are also seen in our languages. Many common words share meanings in the modern Kazakh and Hindi languages. The joint statement signed following Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 2015 visit to Kazakhstan was called “Tez Kadam,” which in both languages means “Quick Step.”

Indian-Kazakh political con-

tacts were established during First Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s 1992 trip to India. It was Nazarbayev’s first foreign visit as President after our independence.

In 2009, Kazakhstan and India signed the Declaration on Strategic Partnership.

Today, Nur-Sultan and Delhi share similar positions on regional and global cooperation and work closely within international and multilateral platforms.

Our cooperation has ensured a high level of trust. An example includes the fact that Kazakhstan’s first participation in a UN peace-keeping mission was deployed in 2018 to Lebanon as part of an Indian battalion.

Until 2015, the Indian population wasn’t fully aware of Kazakhstan’s economic opportunities. Modi’s 2015 official visit and top-level negotiations spurred economic cooperation.

Additional impetus came during the Indian Prime Minister’s 2017 visit to Kazakhstan for the SCO Summit and the opening of EXPO 2017. Today, cooperation is rapidly developing with a focus on economic diplomacy.

Kazakhstan is India’s main trading partner in Central Asia. Kazakh-Indian trade exceeds India’s combined trade with other countries in our region.

Bilateral trade in 2018 reached \$1.2 billion. Since 2017, trade has increased 26.5 percent. Compared to 2015, this figure has more than doubled.

For the first three months of this year, bilateral trade was 35.9 percent higher than the same period last year.

I am convinced we can expand trade. To do so, we must improve delivery methods between our countries. Therefore, the embassy is making every effort to use the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway (with further destinations at the ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar) and then the sea route to India. The reduced time and cost could double or triple trade.

According to the Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan, approximately 560 entities with Indian capital are registered in Kazakhstan. More than 200 Indian companies registered in the past two-three years.

Work to expand trade and economic cooperation is carried out jointly with the Kazakh-Indian Business Council. Tengri Bank in Almaty, of which Punjab National Bank is the shareholder, assists Indian companies in Kazakhstan.

Regarding attracting investments, the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies are building a vertically integrated scheme to attract foreign investors, starting with embassies abroad. This aligns with the new task of the foreign ministry and our embassies to implement economic diplomacy.

Our embassy in India has hired officers responsible for attracting investments and we recently opened a representative office of the Kazakh Invest national company in Delhi.

Our efforts are bringing results. At the end of 2018, the transnational company Chaudhary Group acquired the assets of a noodle production plant in the Turkestan region and are seeking partners in

Kazakhstan and 10 regional countries.

Together with Kazakh Invest, we are cooperating with Farn2U, a major Indian farming company interested in developing gardening in Kazakhstan. The Refex group of companies is also expected to soon finalise an agreement on rare earth metals processing and the acquisition of the Drozhilovsky deposit. Additionally, the large energy company NTPC is ready to enter the Kazakh market to implement an alternative energy project with a capacity of over 100 MW.

These are just a selection of projects we are working on.

The embassy also assisted an Indian business delegation’s participation in the Astana Economic Forum. The delegation met with Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin, Ministers of Industry and Infrastructure Development, as well as Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry, the heads of the National Bank, the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), as well as other business and political organisations.

Agreements totalling approximately \$300 million and two memorandums were signed.

The embassy is also pursuing cooperation in finance, banking and FinTech. In April, presentations on what the AIFC can offer were organised in Delhi and Mumbai.

Great prospects also exist for IT cooperation with India. The launching of telecommunications equipment production by Tejas at the Astana IT hub and cooperation with leading Indian IT company Infosys are being discussed. The

space and military sectors could also become priority cooperation areas.

Significant support in expanding this cooperation is provided by the Honorary Kazakh Consulates in India, which operate in Mumbai, Chennai and Gandhinagar. Additional honorary consulates are planned.

In recent years, the numbers of Indian citizens visiting Kazakhstan and Kazakhs traveling to India have increased. Soon we expect Indian low-cost air carriers SpiceJet and IndiGo to launch more flights between Delhi and Almaty and Mumbai and Almaty.

Indian citizens transiting through Nur-Sultan and Almaty can now stay in Kazakhstan visa-free for 72 hours. Kazakh citizens can also obtain electronic visas to visit India.

In 2018, the embassy issued more than 25,000 visas to Indian citizens, which is four times more than in 2014.

In November-December 2019, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is expected to visit India, which will expand cooperation.

The positive state of Kazakh-Indian relations demonstrates that we have chosen the right path for cooperation.

It is a great honour for me as a diplomat representing Kazakhstan in India, a country with one sixth of the global population and deep historical roots and rich culture, to work and live alongside hard-working, sincere and kind-hearted people, and to develop friendship and cooperation between our countries.

The author is the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to India.

THE ASTANA TIMES

Editor-in-Chief: Roman Vassilenko
13 Dostyk Street, Office 427
Astana, 010000
Telephone/Facsimile: +7 7172 78 00 08

Publisher: Svezhaya Pressa LLP
News and Editorial: yuatkhanov@astanatimes.com
Advertising: +7 727 252 08 82
Inquiries: info@astanatimes.com
KazPost Subscription Index: 64572

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

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

ORDER: 1279

PRINT RUN: 6,000

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

KazUAV joins Terra Drone Corporation network to provide innovative drone services

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Japan-based Terra Drone Corporation's recent investment in KazUAV means the Kazakh drone company will join a global network of more than 25 companies to provide cutting-edge and cost-effective drone services in Kazakhstan, reports Terra-drone.net.

"With 3 percent of the world's total oil reserves in Kazakhstan, the production of oil and gas in the country is witnessing a year-on-year increase. As a leading provider of drone-based solutions for the oil and gas in-



L-R: Yuhei Nagai, Dmitriy Ivanov, Eugeniy Garkushin, Ruslan Vitvitski and Alexander Borovkov.

dustry, the time is ripe for Terra Drone to gain a footing in Central Asia with this investment," said Terra Drone Corporation Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Toru Tokushige July 18 to Terra-drone.net.

Established in 2016, Terra Drone Corporation leverages advances in unmanned hardware, lidar and photogrammetric surveying methods and drone data processing techniques powered by machine learning and artificial intelligence technologies to provide drone services for oil and gas, utilities, renewables, mining, construction and geographic information system (GIS) sectors

throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania and South America.

Also established in 2016, KazUAV provides mapping and GIS services to construction and agricultural sectors and surveillance drone services to Kazakhstan's special forces and in emergencies like wildfires and floods. For example, KazUAV mapped six airports in the country over a surveyed area of four million hectares for the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

"The goal to become the top drone company in the world is incredibly complex and ambitious. We are very pleased that, having assessed our results and

potential, Terra Drone chose KazUAV as its partner in Kazakhstan. Thanks to this step, all advanced foreign technologies will be available to our customers in surveying, power generation, construction, oil and gas and other areas. Kazakhstan will now become part of the global unmanned aircraft community as one of the youngest but largest markets," said KazUAV CEO Eugeniy Garkushin.

KazUAV will adopt technologies from the Terra Drone group to provide drone-based services in Kazakhstan, such as power line inspection and vegetation management for the energy sector; open-pit and underground mapping services for the mining sector; and onshore and offshore infrastructure inspections, tanks inspections and nondestructive testing for the oil and gas industry. It will also sell drones and sensors to local customers.

Mobile virtual network operator Izi enters market



By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Izi, a new MVNO (mobile virtual network operator) that provides its services exclusively online, has entered the Kazakh market, reported Forbes.kz. The operator is using a KaR-Tel company licence.

Izi, which launched the beta version of its services June 27, offers an alternative to conventional customer support (service offices and call centres). The service provides a website and app with live chat aimed at solving customers' problems remotely. The beta version has a limited number of services, according to a company representative.

"Izi already has the most important

services that 99 percent of customers use, but the list of services will rapidly expand," he told the website.

SIM card delivery is currently available in Almaty. After receiving their cards, customers can activate them and choose a service pack through the website or app. Service packs are fully customisable and, unlike the majority of Kazakh mobile operators, have no expiration dates. Price points for the released data plans are \$4.18 for 10 GB and \$7.83 for 30 GB.

The KaR-Tel license also represents Beeline, a more conventional mobile operator, and Izi is designed using the company's existing network.

KaR-Tel attempted to launch a

less conventional mobile operator in Kazakhstan in 2011. Dos (Friend in Kazakh), a low-cost service designed to compete with similar low-cost operator Tele2, lasted only 18 months.

Izi's competitors are sceptical about the project's perspectives, reported Kursiv.kz. Timur Turlov, a member of the Kcell board of directors, expressed uncertainty about whether the current state of the market is favourable for launching the new product via direct sales.

"Izi started in one of the most expensive marketing channels – direct sales... At the same time, the market is already at the minimal price possible; the connection is cheap, the mobile operators have low margins and the price competition decreased," he said.

Prime Source company CEO Evgeny Scherbinin, however, noted the project offers synergy opportunities for the financial industry.

"Today, 90 percent of the client's interactions are not in the infrastructure of financial organisations, but in mobile applications and on the Internet. It pushes banks to look for options for cooperation with marketplaces, social networks, aggregators and providers of various services. The most complete, operational, reliable source of customer information is the cellular operator," he said.

Astana International Financial Centre, Bank CenterCredit to develop open financial platform

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – The Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) and Bank CenterCredit (BCC) signed July 24 a memorandum of understanding to jointly develop the BCC open financial platform based on OpenAPI (application program interface) technologies.

"We are ready for productive cooperation with Bank CenterCredit in the development of OpenAPI technology. It will expand the capabilities of market participants in the creation of new innovative products. It is important to acquaint the financial sector players with this technology, since its application will have a great impact on the market," said AIFC Chief Development Officer Kairat Kaliyev on the opportunities API technologies provide to the financial sector.

The technology will allow potential partners to integrate with the bank and create new innovative services, Kaliyev said.

The memorandum signed by the AIFC and BCC contains provisions on the interaction of structures in the use of the platform by the AIFC participants, the development of innovative laboratories, the provision of mentoring support to financial



technology (fintech) startups participating in acceleration and incubation programmes and joint workshops.

"We highly appreciate the cooperation with the Astana International Financial Centre. The development of open financial platforms is one of the priority areas for the development of BCC," said Ruslan Vladimirov, deputy chairman of the BCC board.

An open API, often referred to as a public API, is a publicly available application programming interface that provides developers with programmatic access to a proprietary software application

or web service, Readwrite reports. APIs are sets of requirements that govern how one application can communicate and interact with another.

The AIFC, launched last year, seeks to become the leading financial centre in the region. The AIFC focuses on enhancing growth through its main strategic pillars, including capital markets, asset management, fintech, Islamic finance, banking and insurance.

BCC was established September 19, 1988 and is one of the first and largest commercial banks in Kazakhstan.

Established retailer Wildberries to assist emerging entrepreneurs

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Wildberries General Director Tatyana Bakalchuk and Kazakh Invest Deputy Chairman of the Board Ruslan Issatayev signed a memorandum July 9 launching electronic expertise centres to support Kazakh entrepreneurs willing to export their goods.

The document details opening three centres in the capital, Almaty and Shymkent, with the first launching in the capital by the end of the year.

The centres will assist Kazakh entrepreneurs in increasing their sales volume, creating new jobs and starting new brands. Issatayev noted Wildberries employees have particular areas of expertise which could also help entrepreneurs in expanding their businesses online.

"Kazakh businesspeople already participate in online sales of clothing, accessories, cosmetics, products for car enthusiasts, books and children's products. The launch of such a project (electronic expertise centres) will primarily allow small and medium-sized businesses to obtain the necessary knowledge and tools for successful online trading, as well as expand the range of products exported online," he said, as reported by Profit.kz.

The centres will be operated by Wildberries specialists who will provide educational services, facilities (photo studios) and logistics assistance by submitting goods directly to the centres with the option of subsequent redirection to the company's storage facilities.

"The online store has been working in the country since 2014

and we are waiting for suppliers from Kazakhstan. Today, Wildberries already sells clothes, accessories, cosmetics, goods for motorists, books and children's goods. The potential for the development of our partnership is significant; high-quality goods are created in this country, so we would like to create new sales, to create new business places and even to create new brands," said Bakalchuk.

The Russia-based company's turnover increased by 74 percent to 46 billion rubles (US\$733 million) in the second quarter of this year compared to the same period last year. Sales in the first half of 2019 grew 79 percent to 85 billion rubles (US\$1.354 billion), compared with the first half of 2018. The number of clients increased 85 percent during the same period.

TENGRI BANK

AN ASSOCIATE OF PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK INDIA

0.9%*

FROM

EXPRESS LOAN

up to 5 000 000 tenge

*AERR – from 20.4 %

3434 FREE

www.tengribank.kz

@tengribank

The license issued by the National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 14.12.2017, №1.2.53/43

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

Citi continues to support AIFC’s work, invest in Kazakhstan, says Citi executive

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – Citi has been supporting the Astana International Financial Centre’s (AIFC) work and plans to continue cooperating, said Julie Monaco, head of Citi Global Public Sector and the only female on the AIFC Managing Council, in an interview with The Astana Times.

Doing business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions, the company provides financial services to governments and assists them to finance themselves, digitise, mitigate risks and become more efficient.

“We do risk mitigation, help governments protect themselves against volatility and foreign exchange interest rates and commodity prices and protect their fiscal budgets though various risk mitigation tools. We also help governments that are privatising, which is

a big agenda here in Kazakhstan,” she said.

The company is one of the largest foreign investors and the only multinational bank with an operating licence in Kazakhstan. In 26 years of working in the country it has helped the government and corporate clients raise over \$30 billion of capital in the international markets.

“In Kazakhstan we are a major provider of settlement and clearing services. We also supported our local clients overseas, underwriting bonds and extending transactional services,” she said.

The company invests its efforts in developing capital markets as alternative to traditional bank financing.

“That obviously is what AIFC is all about – how to create a framework. We are very excited about what AIFC is doing; we think it is the right thing, because for economic growth and development to happen it is really important that



Julie Monaco

economies have something beyond traditional bank lending as a way to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign capital and provide an engine for growth for local companies. It allows entrepreneurs, fintech companies and new emerging technological companies to find new sources of funding so that they can create in-

novation and help with the government’s agenda,” she noted.

“To do that, you have to have a robust capital market, liquidity and financing. AIFC has made huge strides in the last year in getting infrastructure in place to support that,” she added. “Kazakhstan has a significant source of unique minerals and creating [exchange-traded funds] ETFs that are tied to those minerals would be a very unique investment class. The other is FinTech. Kazakhstan potentially is well positioned to provide FinTech solutions not just for Kazakhstan, but for the all the countries in the area.”

Because of the investment conditions created by AIFC and the geography of the country, “it’s a good investment environment and it’s only getting better,” she noted. “I think that Kazakhstan has an economic story that is compelling for foreign investments, or it

wouldn’t have already attracted so much FDI,” she said. “Kazakhstan can be a gateway for the economic opportunity that surrounds it.”

Monaco has been a member of the AIFC Advisory Council since the beginning of this year. She has 34 years of experience in the financial services industry and has been recognised internationally. She was on the 2018 American Banker’s list of 25 Most Powerful Women in Banking and Finance for the ninth year among many other titles and awards in the industry.

“The institutions that I worked for and especially Citi have been very supportive and committed to equality, making sure that it is an inclusive culture and that people recognise unconscious biases and try to overcome them,” she said. “My success is not mine... it is the culture and company that surround me that have enabled me to be successful.”

Monaco emphasised that “diversity of thought and of management approach makes a better team.”

“Often when I am the only woman in a meeting room, I don’t really notice that... I could be with bankers or other professionals. I think it’s important to have diversity and it’s not just for the sake of having women; it is more about what we’ve discovered about diversity. When we have diversity, we have different approaches and ways of thinking... It makes a team stronger,” she said.

Monaco serves on the Corporate and Investment Bank’s Diversity Committee and is an active member of the Citi Women’s Network.

“Women often focus on what their gaps are... So, what I say to women is stop selling yourself short; take a chance, push yourself out of your comfort zone. You can do more than what you think you can do,” she said.

EBRD financing for Women in Business programme reaches \$561 million

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development’s (EBRD) Women in Business programme has provided \$561 million in credit lines to more than 60,000 women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in 18 countries.

Launched in 2015, the programme offers a unique combination of financing together with technical assistance and access to know-how, including mentoring and networking opportunities as well as training and business advice in operational efficiency, strategy and financial management. EBRD also provides the online self-diagnostic tool Business Lens, which helps women entrepreneurs identify the strengths and opportunities within their businesses.

EBRD Managing Director of Financial Institutions Francis Malige noted promoting women’s inclusion in business is vital to realising the full economic potential of any country.

“It is unique in its combination of finance and advisory [assistance], but what really makes it stand out is the impact it is making in empowering women and unleashing their potential,” he said.

Creating a favourable business environment for women entrepreneurs is also a priority.

“In the EBRD regions, women entrepreneurs often continue to face legal and cultural barriers when they wish to go into business. Our comprehensive Women in Business programme has been helping address these issues in an impressive range from fashion designers to furniture producers and from retailers to construction companies. We are proud and pleased to contribute to the creation of high-performing and inclusive business environments in the economies where we work,” said EBRD Director for SME Financial Products Ines Rocha.

EBRD and six partner financial institutions – Amur Credit, Bank Kassa Nova, Bank Centre Credit, ForteBank, Microfinance organisation MFO KMF and Shinhan Bank – provided 21,281 sub-loans worth 28.9 billion tenge (US\$76 million) to women-led enterprises in Kazakhstan.

The bank also supports women entrepreneurs outside the country’s major cities in accessing finance.

“A significant gender gap in entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan instigated an integrated and creative approach to closing it. The EBRD became the trendsetter not only in proactively promoting women entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan, but also in providing mentoring as a service under Women in Business. Mentoring was not always seen as a valuable learning resource,

particularly amongst women entrepreneurs. Offering consulting and business coaching services, we helped women-led businesses to solve specific problems such as promoting the company on the Internet or improving the efficiency of their management systems. With the help of mentoring, we created the opportunity not only to discuss strategic development issues with the business leaders from Kazakhstan and abroad, but also tips on work-life balance and personal development,” reads the release.

Approximately 58 percent of the beneficiary women-led enterprises within advisory projects created new jobs and 73 percent of them have achieved turnover growth. Close to 250 women entrepreneurs joined the mentoring programme and 97 percent benefitted from their mentors’ knowledge and experience.

Nearly 400 women entrepreneurs took part in the workshops to develop skills in key areas of management ranging from leadership to information and communications technology (ICT) and financial management.

EBRD initiated the WECON Conferences to connect women in business with their role model entrepreneurs, strengthening their business linkages and providing the inspiration and motivation for the next success stories. Since

2018, more than 800 women entrepreneurs in 13 different regions have attended the conferences.

Recently, EBRD launched the Women in Microbusiness programme for 350 women entrepreneurs from 14 Kazakh regions to improve their access to efficient business tools and modernise how they do business.

Fifteen women-led enterprises are also participating in the Fast Track accelerated programme to learn the world’s best practices for promoting women’s entrepreneurship, choose from different types of consulting services and business coaching and expand their business contacts.

EBRD helped Smart Imperium, a Montessori kindergarten, to develop a network of branches in Almaty and Almaty Region and increase its revenue by 360 percent. The enterprise was able to launch Montessori primary schools for the first time in Kazakhstan with the help of the bank’s advisory services.

The bank also assisted AGF Group with automating its process to produce home textiles, developing a brand and creating a marketing strategy to open retail stores. Sales turnover was 150 million tenge (US\$391,132) per year prior to EBRD support; in 2018, it reached four billion tenge (US\$10 million). The enterprise has become an IKEA supplier.

Meat processing plant opens in Akmola Region

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – KazBeef Group opened a meat processing plant July 11 in Schuchinsk in the Akmola Region, reported the Kazakh Invest press service.

The company is the country’s only producer of marbled beef using U.S. technologies, with a full production cycle of high-quality meat products from feed cultivation to packaging finished products. Dozens of small farms near the plant supply meat.

KazBeef’s meat has a unique taste due to using wheat as fattening feed for 180 days. The food is main difference from meat produced in Argentina or Brazil, which mainly use herbal feed.

“I think Kazakhstan should become the leader in the region for the production of all types of meat. We have the potential so that the Kazakh agro-industry should occupy half of the country’s economy. The agro-industry should become more important than the oil and gas industry, because it is renewable. New technologies are also of great importance. It is important that the agro-industry is environmentally friendly,” said Kusto Group Board of Directors Chairperson Yerkin Tatishev.

The reconstructed plant has increased capacity from 2,000 to 6,000 tonnes of product per year. De-boning and packaging equipment was installed and Skin Pack, a process to vacuum seal steak in portions, was launched in June. Meat grading equipment

and a second deboning line have subsequently been installed and a Metro Cash and Carry distribution centre with the capacity to store up to 1,000 tonnes of product was built.

Opening the facility is an important milestone for KazBeef, noted General Director Beibit Yerubayev.

“Now, 70 percent of meat on the domestic market is supplied from bazaars and subsidiary farms. We want to change the situation by giving better quality for a good price. Food safety is a priority for us. The consumer should purchase meat without the use of hormones and antibiotics. Our products are certified by the GFSI international food safety system. This certificate is recognised worldwide and we will be able to export our products. We are proud to open the plant and at the same time, we are ready to share our experience with other entrepreneurs of the country,” he said.

Fifty people presently work at the plant, but the number of jobs may increase three-fold. The company has 120,000 hectares of area with more than 5,000 head of Angus and Hereford kept on a beef cattle pedigree reproducer farm in the Akmola region. The company is also engaged in wheat feeding 5,000 head of cattle in the Zerenda District.

The feedlot, which will be launched at the end of July, will accommodate up to 15,000 head and provide more than 6,000 tonnes of high-quality marbled beef annually.

Ferroalloy production plant opens in Karaganda

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – A ferroalloy production plant opened July 24 in Karaganda. Kazakh Prime-Minister Askar Mamin took part in the opening ceremony.

The plant’s primary product is a high-quality ferrosilicon (FeSi75), which is the key element in steel production and alloying. At the first production stage, the plant is set to produce 180,000 tonnes of fully export-oriented ferrosilicon per year, gradually increasing up to 240,000 tonnes per year.

A key feature of the plant is in minimising the negative environmental impact of ferrosilicon production, as the plant uses gas cleaning systems and electric energy.

The main share of ferrosilicon will be exported to Russia, Turkey, South Korea, the United States and the countries of the European Union.

At the construction stage of the



plant, more than 1,500 new jobs were created. While operating, the plant will provide 350 jobs at the first stage and up to 550 jobs at the second stage.

The plant’s second stage of production will allow Kazakhstan to be listed among the top five largest producers of ferrosilicon.

The total cost of the project by

the YDD Corporation is more than \$94 million. The project was funded by Kazakh private funds and European investors, with the attraction of debt financing from the Kazakh Development Bank within the framework of the Kazakh State Programme of Industrial and Innovative Development.

Mamin took part in the plant

opening, highlighting the key role the Karaganda Region plays in developing Kazakh production.

“In the Karaganda Region, work to diversify the industry, modernise the backbone enterprises and attract investment continues”, Mamin said.

He stressed that 93 percent of all attracted investments are private, half of which are foreign. Overall, there are 35 new large-scale investment projects, worth over \$1 trillion, which are being implemented in the region, with 17 of them with foreign investors’ participation. The region’s investment growth in the first half of 2019 was 72 percent.

During his trip to the Karaganda Region, Mamin visited the cathode copper plant, the processing and enrichment of lead-silver ore plant and the mining and processing complex. Mamin also inspected the SES Saran solar power station, launched in January, and the reconstructed northern and eastern bypass of the Karaganda city road.



Photo credit: Press service of Kazakh Invest.

PEOPLE

Top female boxer, promoter of the sport is among 100 New Faces

B2

CULTURE

Astana Opera Ballet performs in Lithuania

B3

SPORTS

Children get medals at Winners Games for cancer survivors

B7

Children’s book series introduces Central Asia to readers of all ages, backgrounds

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Author Marina Abrams is introducing Central Asia to people of all ages in the English and Russian-language illustrated book “Orange and Blue: The World of Barzu.” The story of a boy from the mountains and his family features a folkloric narrative and an educational section, all of which foster curiosity and discussion among children and parents alike.

With few books about Central Asia available for children, “a region with more than 100 ethnic groups, the land of the Great Silk Road, where Alexander the Great left his footprints,” it is a breath of both fresh and familiar air for Central Asians, said Abrams in an exclusive interview with The Astana Times.

“Far, far past the horizon there is a marvellous land of deserts and steppes, of swift rivers flowing past age-old cities and of blue lakes glistening beneath towering mountains. This is the ancient land of Central Asia!” the book begins. The visual narrative is just as engaging as its written word, with illustrations that are “simplified, almost cartoonish, yet ethnographically accurate images of life in Tajikistan,” noted Abrams.

“(Tajik illustrator) Farrukh Negmatzade is a very talented artist who, over the years, developed a very unique style,” she said. “We



Marina Abrams

studied photographs from the region and I also used pictures that I took during my visits to craftsmen. And, of course, both of us were born in the region and shared our vision of childhood in Central Asia.”

Abrams recalled her early days in Soviet times, when books were difficult to buy.

“Each book was a treasure,” she said. “We read tales and stories from all 15 Soviet republics. My

favourite was a collection of Kazakh folk tales, ‘Kanbak-Shal.’”

Approaching the book as if she knew little about the region helped her rediscover things that were familiar. More than two years of research led her to new places and acquaintances.

“I barraged my friends in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with hundreds of questions, corresponded with experts and historians and

flew to the region, where I personally visited tanoor workshops, went to museums and read through a lot of historical and ethnographic literature,” she said. “Also, I crowdsourced information through 10 Facebook groups, where people provided things like more than 250 names of bread and recipes and where I consulted for very specific pieces of information.”

Continued on Page B2

We are different, but abroad we are all Kazakhs, says Kurdish community leader

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – The Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK) and ethno cultural centres across the country play a significant role for the nation, said the capital’s Barbang Kurd ethnocultural centre head Shamo Fatoyev. They represent and praise the diversity of the population. At the same time, abroad we are all Kazakhs, he noted.

“I would say the assembly is a small model of the United Nations. As chairman of the assembly Nursultan Abishevich [Nazarbayev]

said, in Kazakhstan, we are different, but abroad we are all Kazakhs,” he said.

The centre, which specialises in charitable assistance, opened in the capital in 2009.

“We do not neglect people who really need attention, help and support. We have many patrons who support a large number of families... They do not want to spread information about the help they provide. We have taken care of several orphanages and we try to make them happy all the time,” he told assembly.kz.

Continued on Page B2

Chess players win 2019 Asian Juniors Championship medals

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh chess player Assel Serikbai won the Asian U-20 Championship, which took place June 30 to July 9 in Surakarta, Indonesia. Kazakh player Nazerke Nurgali also won gold and bronze in the championship’s blitz and rapid tournaments respectively.

Serikbai bypassed 36 rivals from nine countries to win the championship. With her tournament results, she received the title Female International Master, also completing the female grandmaster norm.

“The match was not easy. Also, Nazerke and I were the only ones from Kazakhstan in the women’s tournament, but we managed to cope with excitement, and we

showed good results,” she said, reported the Kazakhstan Chess Federation.

“I participated in nine rounds and scored seven points. Unfortunately, in the fifth and sixth round I lost to my rivals. However, my result was the best and I became a champion. I received the title of international master of chess among women. Everyone knows that every victory comes with great difficulty. I am very glad that I was able to meet the expectations of my relatives, the coaching staff and all of our people. Such competitions help young athletes grow to a professional level. There is also an opportunity to exchange experience with colleagues from other countries,” she told bnews.kz.

Continued on Page B7

NU students utilise 3D printer in design of electric scooter

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Nazarbayev University (NU) students recently designed a new model of an electric kick scooter using a 3D printer to create some details at Nazarbayev University Research and Innovation System (NURIS).

The team of NU sophomores with diverse engineering, natural and social sciences backgrounds worked on the project for four months.

SteelG was created by Maksat Anuarbek, Yersultan Baimukhan,

Akmaral Kalmanbaeva and Sul-tanmurat Yeleu, with NURIS engineer Aidar Alimbayev serving as curator.

“In mid-April, we gathered a team of four students of different majors. Then, we began to get acquainted with the capabilities of the experimental Machine Shop and consulted for the first time with the engineers of the digital prototyping lab FAB LAB. After that, we energetically mastered all the equipment needed to assemble the scooter – hand tools, laser machine, 3D printer and many others,” said team leader Baimukhan.

The students designed the technical characteristics by taking their inspiration from major electric scooter manufacturers. The collapsible device with concealed wires can reach 25 kilometres per hour and the rider can monitor the speed and battery using a Smart App mobile application.

The young developers tested 120 prototypes. They plan to refine the design for the consumer market and make a number of scooters for sale.

“Each part of the scooter we did at least twice; the steering part, namely the fork, was modified

four times. In the first version it was rough; we got it into shape. We ourselves did the metalworking, cut out metal plates, made all sorts of manipulations. We tested four different models and ended up with a more oval-shaped, streamlined and ergonomic front fork. It is this scooter that was assembled for competing in contests, not for sale. We will continue to refine the design and technical part, but, first, we already have plans to make a series of 100 scooters for sale,” said Baimukhan.

Continued on Page B5

Almaty-based Nomad Stunts founder achieves long-held wish to work with Disney

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Almaty-based Nomad Stunts worked with Disney’s live-action adaptation of the Chinese legend of Hua Mulan, helping recreate the 1998 children’s favourite cartoon of the same name. Founder and leader Zhaidarbek Kunguzhinov shared his impressions from the movie shoot with The Astana Times.

The plot features the heroic deeds of the young woman who pretended to be a man in order to preserve the honour of her family and save China from invaders. The motion picture is considered one of the most expensive Disney projects, with a production budget of \$290 million.

The trailer was out July 7. Disney has scheduled the movie’s release for March 27, 2020.

The film promises to be spectacular, as the Nomad Stunts team has nearly 20-years’ experience and is well known for performing stunts on horses, one of the hardest types of tricks. They have a long history working with Hollywood and, relatively recently, with online giants such as HBO and Netflix.



“We have been working with Hollywood studios for a long time, but I always wanted to work with Disney. I like the films that they

make for children and I wanted to see the process from the inside, to understand how such large-scale motion pictures are created. I can

say one thing – everything was at the highest level,” Kunguzhinov said.

Continued on Page B2

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

PALACE OF INDEPENDENCE

June 2 – Aug.10

First contact, exhibition

PALACE OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

June 25 – Aug.10

Re-membling, Dialogues of Memories, exhibition

TSE ART DESTINATION

July 4 – Aug.8

Racing the Galaxy, exhibition

ASTANA ARENA

Aug.1 at 8 p.m.

FC Astana - FC Santa Coloma Andorra, UEFA Europa League

ASTANA OPERA

Aug.9 at 7 p.m.

Music Holidays at Astana Opera, concert

BARYS ARENA

Aug.7 at 3 p.m.

HC Neftekhimik Nizhnekamsk – HC Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg, President's Cup 2019

Aug.7 at 7.30 p.m.

HC Barys Astana – HC Ak Bars Kazan, President's Cup 2019

Aug.8 at 3 p.m.

HC Ak Bars Kazan – HC Salavat Yulaev Ufa, President's Cup 2019

Aug.8 at 7.30 p.m.

HC Barys Astana – HC Neftekhimik Nizhnekamsk, President's Cup 2019

Aug.9 at 7.30 p.m.

HC Salavat Yulaev Ufa – HC Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg, President's Cup 2019

Aug.10 at 5 p.m.

HC Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg – HC Barys Astana, President's Cup 2019

Aug.11 at 5 p.m.

HC Salavat Yulaev Ufa – HC Barys Astana, President's Cup 2019

Top female boxer, promoter of the sport is among 100 New Faces

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – World boxing champion and Kazakh Honourary Master of Sports Dina Zholaman is among Kazakhstan’s 100 New Faces. She promotes women’s boxing and brings boxing victories to Kazakhstan as a result of her dedication and two-three times per day trainings year round.

The 100 new faces programme is a national project to highlight the stories of inspirational Kazakhs across the country from many walks of life.

Zholaman was just 12 years old when she started boxing in 2007 at the Zhaksky junior sports school under the guidance of trainer Alexander Vysotsky. The same year, she



Dina Zholaman

got her first big wins. She won two bronze medals in the Kokshetau region-level competition and in the nationwide Kazakh Youth Championship. Then, in 2008, she won the Kazakh Youth Championship.

“I grew up without a father. I was raised by my mother. I had to be strong, to stand up for myself. I have always been spiritual and had a fighting spirit... Boxing immediately attracted me. At that time, I also liked the Xena the Warrior Princess series. I also wanted to be such a warrior woman. I think boxing just personifies this fighting spirit, strength, courage,” Zholaman told prospects.kz.

She lived in the small Kazakh village Zhaksky in the Akmola Region with deep-rooted social bias that boxing was only for boys. At first, the young athlete faced

resistance to her hobby, but her strong will and passion for boxing helped her to go along with it.

“My mom was at first against my hobbies. She even asked my coach to kick me out of the room. But when I won the championship of Kazakhstan,... she got used to my love of boxing, (and she) became my main fan. If possible, she goes to my competitions, supports me. For example, last year my mother, grandfathers and little sister came to the World Cup in India, rooted for our team. My family is proud of me,” said Zholaman.

In 2014, after seven years of winning medals and titles in Kazakh Championships, she participated in the World Championship in North Korea. She took fifth place and was awarded the title of Master of Sports of international class.

In 2016, having won the championship of Kazakhstan, she had the opportunity to again participate in the World Boxing Championship among Women in 2016 in the Kazakh capital. At this World Championship, she has four fights and became the second world boxing champion among women in Kazakhstan.

“I think that women’s boxing in Kazakhstan has a great future. Especially after the successful performance of our team at the home world championship in 2016. I still remember with pleasant emotions how the fans supported us in Astana. We love our job. There is nothing terrible and bad in women’s boxing. This is a beautiful sport. Our girls are great at boxing at the world level,” she told sports.kz.

Children’s book series introduces Central Asia to readers of all ages, backgrounds

Continued from Page B1

“This communication united us, raised awareness about the project and served as an incentive for them to talk to their families to learn more about their own culture,” she added.

Abrams, who worked in international security for approximately 15 years, grew up in Kazakhstan, lived in Tajikistan and now resides in the United States. She noted the experiences shaped her book, because “the more you travel, the more you understand what your own country has to offer in terms of culture, traditions, nature and social interactions.”

“This prior work experience gave me the skills to run my project, cooperate with people of different backgrounds, successfully fundraise, analyse the market and find the right structure for the content of the book. I believe my book helps to show parents and children around the world the value of diverse cul-

tures. It is what we call in international policy a soft diplomacy tool – those from Central Asia have the opportunity to share their culture with others, while international audiences can start learning about the region from a very early age,” she said.

“For example, diplomats and foreign aid workers living in Central Asia now have a way to share their experience with their families. Some people ordered 10 to 15 books for Christmas gifts last December – for their nephews, nieces, grandchildren and cousins,” she noted.

Through donations, the book also made its way to children of refugees in Russia and Ukraine.

“The children of refugees and labour migrants often lack the reading skills in their new country and have difficulties attending school. At the same time, they miss their homes and feel the need to connect with their culture,” said Abrams.

Children often invent imaginary

friends, through which they channel their creativity and empathy. For many, a boy from a Central Asian village has become such a friend as well as a way for adults to recall their younger days.

“Children are children everywhere. They are curious and thirsty to learn things. They like to explore the world around them and beyond the horizon. They like adventures and having fun. Isn’t that what childhood is about?” she said.

Abrams is writing a second book about Barzu, in which readers will learn about Central Asia’s sweet melons, Timurid architecture, his mother’s job as a weaver and grandmother’s story about the way unusual embroidery helped the ruler of the City of Blue Domes save his people from hunger. The book will be crowdfunded this year and released in April.

“The main topic will be the magnificent embroidery of Central Asia. Children will discover the diversity of this craft and the meanings of the ornaments,” she

said. “I just came back from my research trip to Uzbekistan, which was crowdfunded by my readers. I talked to local experts, craftsmen, grandpas, grandmas and weavers. All of the secrets that I learned will be included in the ethnographic notes section in the next book!”

Abrams plans to donate copies through a crowdfunding campaign to Kazakhstan’s Kamkor Zhurek (Caring Heart), which helps orphans, single mothers and children with disabilities.

“I hope to find an organisation that will help me translate the book into the region’s languages and disseminate it among schools and libraries in Central Asia, especially those in villages and small towns,” she said.

Book three will focus on the Silk Road and the nomadic cultures of Central Asia.

One can get to know Barzu by ordering “Orange and Blue: The World of Barzu” on Amazon or directly from Abrams on Facebook and Instagram (@marina.abrams).

Almaty-based Nomad Stunts founder...

Continued from Page B1

“The ‘Mulan’ project for us is a landmark. For me, it is also very valuable that Nomad Stunts showed itself at a high level; we were told more than once that we did a great job and this, of course, is very nice. Well, New Zealand itself is just a gorgeous country; very glad that I managed to go there,” he noted referring to the location of the shoot.

Nomad Stunts sent a 13-member team to the set. Kunguzhinov, in addition to his stunts and horse training, also played a small part as a tribal military commander. Kanat Kudyarov doubled for one of the main protagonists, actor Jason Scott Lee, while Zhandos Aibassov doubled for another lead character.

“(We) got experience working with New Zealand riders, seeing how they prepare horses. I cannot say that there were some cardinal discoveries, but we always learn because each new film gives a new experience. This time we came up closer with the way how to shoot the stunts on the chromo key, saw what the distance should be, how the frame is overlaid. We are trying to take something useful from each project we work on,” he said.

Each stunt performance is dangerous and tricks on galloping horses multiply the risks. Kunguzhinov recalled an extremely dangerous moment for stunt performer Murat Burkhanov. His years of training payed off and Burkhanov completed the hardest scene just in one take.

“There was one moment when the riders galloped at high speed in one line, very tightly to each other, and one of my guys, Murat Burkhanov, had to fall right under the hoof between the horses. We made one take, which was immediately filmed; the director of the action unit approached us immediately, thanked us and said how cool it was to do such a complicated trick and even from the first take! There were other difficult moments, but the most important thing was that we had enough time to prepare, so that we could rehearse everything thoroughly,” he said.

The risks were also minimised, as the stunt group worked with Disney professionals.

“Since this is a Disney company, a company with a long history and vast experience, the process went very well; the conditions were just great. Of course, there were situations when plans changed and there was an additional need to urgently train the horses, but we were given the time to prepare and everything was fine. Everything worked as one coordinated mechanism,” said Kunguzhinov.

Nomad Stunts is an international team. While most of its members are from Kazakhstan, with another big group from Kyrgyzstan, it also includes performers from Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Russia and Turkey. The team is currently composed of 86 people, including 12 young women.

“Girls are often invited, because there are not so many female stunt people in the world who can do horse tricks, tricks with burning and fence themselves,” he said.

The team trains rigorously six days a week and seven when film preparations begin.

“As a rule, before lunch we work out stunts with horses and after lunch, we go through general physical training – fights, fencing, pulling on ropes,” said Kunguzhinov.

The team plans to make more appearances in international projects.

“According to the plans, we have several projects in Bollywood. I recently returned from the negotiations. Also, several joint projects with the Turkish side, where Nomad Stunts, fortunately, have long been known. We are currently negotiating filming in Georgia and Italy. I hope everything turns out well, since the Nomad Stunts team is universal; our stunt people do absolutely different tricks and people are already aware of this around the world,” he said.

Before becoming a stunt person, Kunguzhinov was an artist in the Kazakh State Circus for seven years. As a young risk taker, he continuously excelled in his abilities and was awarded silver (1993) and bronze (2001) medals at the Lions International Chinese Circus Art Festival. He is an Honoured Worker of Kazakhstan and was awarded the Order of Kurmet (Honour).

Kunguzhinov won the 2013 award “For the Promotion of Sports in Cinema” presented by the American International Academy of Martial Arts. The honour is known as the “Sports Oscar.”

Nomad Stunts has performed in movies such as “Mongol,” “Nomad,” “The Road to Mother,” “Viking” and “Zhaushurek Myn Bala” and the “Marco Polo” series (seasons 1 and 2). The group has collaborated on set with Hollywood icons including Jet Li, Chuck Norris, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Jason Statham and Bruce Willis.

Kunguzhinov recommends young people seeking to become stunt performers work hard and never give up.

“I advise novice stunt people to work on yourself, to train for endurance, since in our work psychological stability is the main thing. It happens that it is difficult to tune yourself up morally before a difficult trick – you start thinking that you will be injured, but you have to go all the way. Don’t be afraid of anything, because if there is fear or doubt, then there will definitely be an injury. You need to give a lot of effort, do not despair, never stop; there are times when you want to quit, but you need to go through it. But then it will be the other way around – you want to quit and [can’t, because] this work is dragging on. In general, I noticed that many people think that the work of stunt performers is money and fame, but first of all it is hellish work, methodical work and experience that must be experienced again and again. Often there will be such loads, when it will be very, very hard; you need to master all this and realise that when you go through all the difficulties, you will be proud of yourself!” said Kunguzhinov.

We are different, but abroad we are all Kazakhs, says Kurdish community leader

Continued from Page B1

“However, one of the most respected people, Yusup Aliyev, is worth mentioning. He has adopted 12 orphans. Most remarkable, they are all children of different ethnicities. Although he has children and grandchildren, he has committed himself to these children and has given them a bright future,” he added.

Fatoyev emphasised people like Aliyev can become role models for youth.

“My heart is full of pride and gratitude when I meet people with such strong spirit. At the same time, looking at them, we try to be equal and it teaches us to be kind, to be able to value and to love one another,” he said.

The centre’s focus on charitable activities is due to the life experience of the Kazakh people in the 1930s when many ethnicities were deported to the country.

“The Kazakhs themselves fell apart and lived in their homeland needing help, but they did not strangle the peoples who had settled down and did not think that they were foreigners, because the spirit of the Kazakh people is very high... My ancestors were wealthy and rich. When the deportation took place, they were left hungry in the cold steppes. They did not know what to do; their souls were broken and Kazakh families shared their small sources of water and bread,” he said.

“My friend’s grandfather had been living with his family in the home of a Kazakh woman who took them into her house in winter. All of them became as



Members of the Kurdish community in Kazakhstan.

one family. That Kurdish family was so grateful to the woman that they took her family name. His descendants continue to bear the family name to express their gratitude to the Kazakh people, [yet] they are a pure-blooded Kurdish family,” he added.

The centre also focuses on educating youth, preserving and passing Kurdish traditions to the younger generation.

“As you can see, our course differs from others. We always pay great attention to growing adoles-

cents,” he said. “We have a lot of children’s groups. They sing and dance in the Kurdish language as well as Kazakh and other languages.”

The centre is considering opening a Sunday school to teach Kurdish.

“We talked about this with the teachers. It is not only Kurds who want to learn the Kurdish language but also many people want to know it, because it is a Persian language. It has its own peculiarities,” said Fatoyev.

He stressed performing good work depends on the team; thus, he is grateful for the centre’s team.

“The presence of a strong team helping each other plays a major role. From the first working day of our centre, we have done a lot of work through teamwork,” he said.

“We created the Mother Council, headed by Malika Sadikova, and the Council of Elders, headed by Yusup Aliyev in Nur-Sultan and Hassan Atashev in the Akmola Region,” he added.

Photo credit: assembly.kz

CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

Astana Opera Ballet performs in Lithuania

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Astana Opera Ballet staged a gala programme July 9 in Kaunas, Lithuania. The performance received high praise from both local critics and the audience, reported zakon.kz.

The programme included classic and contemporary pieces. Altynai Assylmuratova started the concert with the pas de deux from “Giselle” by Adolphe Adam, followed by Anastasiya Zaklinskaya and Olzhas Tarlanov as Giselle and Count Albert, respectively. Rustem Seitbekov and Gaukhar Usinova performed a piece from “Carmen” by George Bizet.

The evening continued with an excerpt from “The Sounds of Times” written by Kazakh composer Aktoty Raimkulova and



Photo credit: Astana Opera

staged by Swiss ballet master Kseniya Zvereva. The piece was

performed by Anel Rustemova and Tarlanov.

An excerpt from “Notre Dame de Paris,” presented by Bakhtiyar

Bakhtiyar Adamzhan, became the enchanting conclusion of the evening,” noted one of the local reviews.

The public was impressed by the concert.

“Artists showed us a high level of dancing, technical and acting skills. The professional skills of dancers are beyond praise. It is obvious that each of them has a vivid personality, artistic charisma and their own style. The movements and arms of the ballerinas were flawless; they were like poetry in motion. The troupe is undoubtedly in great shape,” said audience member Agne Raude.

The public and critics welcomed the troupe to perform in Lithuania again.

“I would also like to note the genre variety and contrast of the numbers of an interesting, rich and well-designed concert programme. I liked everything: both classical ballets and modern numbers. It was a truly impressive show! I hope today’s performance in Kaunas will not be the last,” said Raude.

Disney concert raises more than \$18,000 to support inclusive education

By Aidana Vergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh singers performed well-known Disney movie soundtracks in their native language July 6 at the Zhuldyzdar Sherui (Stars Parade) charity cinema concert in Almaty. The event raised approximately seven million tenge (US\$18,226) to support inclusive education for children with autism.

Almaty is now on the list of cities with an official Disney Concert license, reported the Nur Otan Party press service.

“Today, for the first time, we heard the voice of the best Disney songs in the state language per-

formed by our artists. This is our gift to children for Capital Day. I want to thank Walt Disney CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) in the person of Igor Makarov, who came to us with his family. Music is what brings kindness, patriotism, a sense of justice and respect for others in children,” said Bauyrzhan Baibek, honorary member of the Bolashak Corporate Foundation Board of Trustees.

Accompanied by a large symphony orchestra, the performers included Balzhan Bidash, Adam Kental, Daniyar Otegen, Zharkynai Shalkar, Danelia Tuleshova, Indi Yedilbayeva, Yerden Zhaksybekov and Nurmuhammed Zhakyp.

This programme included 22 compositions from animated features “Aladdin,” “Beauty and the Beast,” “Frozen,” “The Lion King,” “The Little Mermaid,” “Mulan” and “Pocahontas.”

All funds collected will be donated to the Bolashak Foundation’s Every Child Is Worthy of School social project. The venture has opened 20 inclusive education offices in the capital, Aktau, Almaty, Atyrau, Kyzylorda, Pavlodar, Petropavlovsk, Shymkent and Uralsk, providing an opportunity for 248 children with autism and other neurological conditions to attend school.

Bolashak plans to open an additional 20 offices this year in the Akmola, Aktobe, East Kazakhstan, Karaganda, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Turkestan and Zhambyl regions. The initiative has also received support from the Nur Otan Party as a part the Kedergisiz Keleshek (The future without boundaries) national project.

The Bulat Utemuratov Foundation opened the Asyl Miras autism centre July 5 in Shymkent, the seventh centre in the country to help children with autism spectrum disorders. All services are provided free of charge.



Photo credit: nurotan.kz

Dimash Kudaibergen participates in #Abai175 poetry challenge

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh singer/songwriter Dimash Kudaibergen is one of the latest people to participate in the #Abai175 poetry challenge dedicated to the Kazakh poet and thinker’s 175th birthday. He was nominated by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

“With great respect, I took from the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev the challenge of reading poems dedicated to the 175th anniversary of the great thinker and poet Abai. In turn, I pass on the baton of this challenge to Akim (Governor) of the Aktobe Region Ondasyn Seyilovich Urazalin, People’s Artist of the Russian Federation Igor Yakovlevich Krutoi and my dear #dears (the term used to describe Kudai-bergen’s fans),” he said.

Kudaibergen passed the challenge to the men and his fans in the video posted on his Instagram page. He chose Abai’s “Qaqtaghan aq Kumistei,” which describes female beauty.

Tokayev passed it to him July 9 after posting a reading of “Gylym Tappai Maqtanba” on his In-



Dimash Kudaibergen

stagram page. Tokayev was nominated by 9-year-old school student Lyailim Shamshyrak.

The challenge was created by Bolashak program alumna Shynar Shakenova, who posted her own video June 5. Using the hashtag #Abai175, she encouraged others to make a video reciting one of his poems, then post it online. It quickly gained momentum in Kazakhstan and abroad, with 1,848 Instagram users taking the challenge. Participants have included Minister of Education and

Science Askhat Aimagambetov, Minister of Culture and Sports Aktoty Raimkulova, Ambassador to Russia Imangali Tasmabambetov, Russian musician Valeria and Russian producer Arman Davletiarov.

Kazakhstan will celebrate Abai’s 175th birthday August 10, 2020 with more than 500 events, both in Kazakhstan and internationally, reported 24.kz. His birthday will also propel initiatives to popularise tourism in Semey, his birthplace, said Tokayev during an April 27 meeting with city officials.

Altyn Adam World exhibition tour opens in North Macedonia

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh National Museum opened The Great Steppe: History and Culture exhibition July 11 at the Macedonian National Archaeological Museum in Skopje. The display, part of the Altyn Adam (Golden Man) World international exhibition, will afford residents an opportunity to see the mysteries of the vast area.

The Altyn Adam World exhibition tour opened in Minsk in December 2017. The Kazakh

national treasures have subsequently travelled to museums in Azerbaijan, China, Poland, Russia, South Korea and Uzbekistan.

The exhibit seeks to introduce foreign audiences to Kazakhstan’s rich historical and cultural heritage. Altyn Adam, the country’s national symbol, is the remains of the 17-18-year-old Saka prince who lived during the early Iron Age, approximately in the sixth-fifth centuries BC.

The warrior’s burial clothing is embroidered with golden plates and his mound contained

nearly 4,000 pieces of skillfully handcrafted gold jewellery shaped like birds, hawks, hawthorns, horses, moose and tulpars (Pegasus). Kazakhstan incorporated tulpars into its national coat of arms and an Altyn Adam sculpture decorates the Independence Square in Almaty.

Archaeologist Kemal Akishev discovered the first Altyn Adam in 1969 in the Issyk mound near Almaty. It is recognised as the discovery of the century and researchers recreated the look of the ancient warrior.

Archaeological excavations revealed five additional mounds with golden men in Araltobe Kurgan, Shilikti near the capital and Taldy’s burial ground in the Karkaraly District.

Exhibition visitors will see the unique archaeological findings from Saka mounds in Berel (the East Kazakhstan Region), Taksai (the West Kazakhstan Region) and Taldy-2 (the Karaganda Region). The Kazakh National Museum included 292 exhibits from its holdings.

The Saka tribe (Persian for “mighty men”) was divided internally into three large groups including the Saka Tigrahaud (“wildermen”), distant ancestors of the Kazakhs who lived in the territory where the Issyk mound was discovered. In their writings, ancient Greek authors referred to them as Asian Scythians, while other early sources described them as “tours with fast horses.”

The exhibit will close Aug. 11 and by the end of the year is planning visits to museums in Georgia, Japan, Spain, Turkey and the U.K. In 2020, it will be displayed in Austria, France, Germany, Italy and the U.S.



Photo credit: Altyn Adam World Facebook page

DISCOVER KAZAKHSTAN WITH A NEW APP

A unique digital product – “Kazakhstan – Land of the Great Steppe” – is one-of-a-kind high quality interactive application, presenting multimedia on the most representative geographic, political, touristic, historical, economic facts about Kazakhstan. It contains hundreds of high quality unique photographs, videos, 3D objects, panoramic tours, interactive charts, and innovative maps. It should be of interest to anyone who wants to learn about the world’s ninth largest country, including tourists, students, and business people. Available in English, Russian, and Kazakh.

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

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

Main restoration of Arys to complete by August, says Prime Minister



Photo credit: primeminister.kz.

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – National and local officials hope to finish by Aug. 1 the most important repairs to the town of Arys, which was heavily damaged June 24 by a large explosion at a munitions warehouse nearby, Prime Minister Askar Mamin announced July 11 during a visit to the Turkestan Region.

The explosion and resulting fires killed two soldiers and a civilian and caused widespread damage, reported the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Emergency Situations Committee.

The warehouse fires were contained by firefighters, and the preliminary cause of the explosion was found to be a violation of fire safety rules during warehouse construction and restoration.

Mamin inspected the progress in restoring residential buildings in Koktem-1 and Koktem-2, kindergartens, schools, railway stations, hospitals and a public service centre during his visit, reported Primeminister.kz. He called for the timely restoration of infrastructure so that educational facilities, for example, would be ready for the start of the academic year in September.

Eighty-five percent of houses in Arys were damaged after the explosion at the warehouse, said First Vice Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Kairbek Uskenbayev. As of July 18, 1,469 houses in Arys have been repaired, while another 4,698 houses are under repair by more than 6,868 builders and 207 construction companies, according to the Committee on Construction and Housing. Approximately 100 to 250 houses are being repaired daily to meet the

Aug. 1 deadline set by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Approximately 70 percent of the military arsenal in Arys, which included artillery, ammunition, grenades and anti-tank and anti-aircraft guided missiles, was destroyed by the explosion and fires. The remaining munitions will be relocated.

The explosions also forced a four-day evacuation of all of the town’s 45,000 residents. Eight-hundred pensioners and veterans and 4,000 children from Arys will also be given the opportunity to rest in holiday homes and summer camps, respectively, elsewhere in the country until August.

Each resident will receive 100,000 tenge (US\$260.76) as part of a social support measure set by Mamin in a June 29 visit to the region, reports the Turkestan Region Akimat (administration). The national budget will contribute two billion tenge (US\$5.22 million), the regional budget will contribute one billion tenge (US\$2.61 million) and the Turkestan Corporate Fund for Social Development will contribute the remaining sum to the 4.78 billion tenge (US\$12.46 million) required for the initiative.

Disaster relief to Arys came from citizens around the country as well as from the newly formed Turkestan Corporate Fund for Social Development, Nur Otan Party’s “We are United with Arys” campaign for humanitarian aid, StartTime’s crowdfunding campaign, ticket sales from the July 6 capital day celebrations and government officials’ June 25 salaries. The Turkestan Corporate Fund for Social Development gathered more than 1.65 billion tenge (US\$4.3 million) in donations as of July 9, reported the Turkestan Region Akimat.

Government for Citizens provides more than 15 million services

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh government-owned company Government for Citizens provided more than 15 million public services in the first half of 2019 and seeks to improve the delivery of services through automation and better interagency cooperation, said Vice Minister of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry Abilaikhan Ospanov at a July 19 press conference.

The Kazakh government increased the number of services offered in April by 120 to 740. Of those, 532 are online and 208 are offered as paper-form services. The Government for Citizens state-owned corporation offers 635 services.

“We need to offer more services in electronic format. The services

are available through egov.kz, the Telegram-bot, a mobile app, the Government for Citizens state corporation and a single contact centre for consulting on the provision of public services,” Ospanov said.

Egov.kz provided 23.5 million services in the first half of the year compared with 12.8 million services in 2018.

Some 329 public service centres (TsONs), including 23 centres with autodrome equipment and 17 digital centres operate in the country. Seventy mobile offices operate in the remote areas.

Since the beginning of the year, 74 services for business procedures were reduced. The terms of rendering public services were reduced two-fold and decreased to 10 days. Due to integration, the number of documents was reduced to three or four. Thirty-seven ser-

vices offered at the office of the service provider were excluded and 17 services were additionally converted into electronic format.

“We are now working to unite public services for further improvement. It will be called the composite government services. We identified a full register of composite services and 11 composite services were already launched, which include the provision of 25 public services from the entire registry,” he said.

An intellectual consultant was introduced as part of the Digital Kazakhstan programme. More than 200,000 services were provided by chat-bot.

Ospanov said that the mGov, an updated mobile app with 77 services will be launched in August. The list of services will be updated weekly.

“This app will be useful tool for

obtaining public services. It features the most in-demand services. The Face ID will available for authorisation and signing a request for public services,” he added.

Four offices in Almaty and Nur-Sultan offer services using biometric data including face and fingerprint recognition since December. Approximately 15,000 service recipients were registered and more than 3,400 public services were provided.

Mobile ID signature verification will be also launched in the near future.

The @EgovKzBot bot in Telegram messenger features 25 services including an address certificate, a certificate of the absence (presence) of real estate, online queue booking and other services. Approximately 400,000 users have received more than 600,000 public services.

Advanced technology surgery centre opens in Semey

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – A new surgery centre opened July 14 in Semey. This centre uses hybrid surgery technologies that are unique to Kazakhstan and corresponds to international joint commission accreditation standards for hospitals, reports KazInform.

“Today, I enjoyed working with modern, high-class equipment in the new surgical room, which has no analogues in Kazakhstan. A hybrid surgery room will improve the availability and quality of the provision of high-

tech medical care to the population and treat difficult patients in their own hometown without sending them to other cities or countries,” said surgeon Serik Akshulakov on the convenience of having this centre in Kazakhstan.

Akshulakov conducted the opening ceremony and performed the first surgery in the centre with the Head of the Neurosurgery Department of the Neurosurgical Centre and the Head of the Department of Endovascular Surgery and Hybrid Operating Emergency Hospital Aibol Maralbayev. Together, they removed a patient’s brain tumour.

have undertaken additional education, with 12 more planned to receive it by September.

The centre is planned to host approximately 3,000 surgeries per year and to completely cover the demand for surgeries in Semey and the East Kazakhstan Region.

“Today, this equipment corresponds to the latest European and American quality standards, and with the support of the Ministry of Healthcare, we hope that within the framework of the guaranteed free medical care, surgeries using the new equipment will be available to residents of the region,” said the Deputy Akim (Governor) of the East Kazakhstan Region Asem Nupupova.

The project cost was 2.3 billion tenge (US\$6 million), with the equipment costs being 1.7 billion tenge (US\$4.3 million). The state and regional governments funded the centre.

Two sugar plants to be built

By Yerbolat Uatkanov

NUR-SULTAN – The Ministry of Agriculture seeks to reduce the nation’s dependence on imported sugar by building two sugar plants by the end of 2021.

The plants will be in the Zhambyl and Pavlodar regions and cost \$775 million. The plants will have a capacity of 100,000 tonnes per year and will use local raw materials.

Sugar production in Kazakhstan fell 45.4 percent in the first

five months of this year compared to 2018. Total production the first five months of 2019 was 91,100 tonnes. The largest volumes of production are traditionally concentrated in the Zhambyl region at 67,200 tonnes. Production volumes fell 48.7 percent in the region. The Zhambyl region has two plants called Tarazsky and Merkenskiy. Both plants belong to the Central Asian Sugar Corporation.

The sharp production decline is due to the suspension of the activities of the Central Asian

Sugar Corporation. The Shusky, Tarazsky and Merkensky sugar factories were stopped for several months.

Another 24.8 percent of local production was provided by manufacturers of the Almaty region, where the following corporation’s plants operate: Koksui, Aksu, Burundai, Eskeldi and Alakol sugar factories.

Officials hope the two new plants will combat the decline. The plant in the Zhambyl region will cost \$208 million while the Pavlodar region plant will cost \$568

Kazakhstan to spend \$3.3 billion until 2023 to develop Shymkent

By Assel Satubaldina

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan will invest 1.284 trillion tenge (US\$3.3 billion) until 2023 to boost development and upgrade infrastructure in the nation’s third largest city Shymkent.

The funds will be used to implement 89 initiatives, said Kazakh Minister of National Economy Ruslan Dalenov.

The initiatives are included in the comprehensive plan for the city development until 2023 adopted July 9 by the Kazakh government.

Of those, 836 billion tenge (US\$2.18 billion) are private investments, 299 billion tenge (US\$778.2 million) will come from the national budget and 68 billion tenge (US\$176.9 million) are through public-private partnerships.

Located in southern Kazakhstan, Shymkent has grown significantly in the last decade with the population exceeding one million in 2018 following Almaty and capital Nur-Sultan.

Shymkent also received the city of national significance status in 2018, joining Almaty and Nur-Sultan.



With the measures in place, the officials expect annual volume of investment will reach 1 trillion tenge (US\$2.6 billion).

In 2018, gross regional product reached two trillion tenge (US\$5.2 billion) and the volume of investments reached 588 billion tenge (US\$1.5 billion).

Dalenov said access to a central water supply will grow from 93 percent to 98 percent, natural gas supply will increase from 92 percent to 98 percent and the proportion of roads in satisfactory condition will grow to 59.4 percent.

“The economy will grow to 3.5

trillion tenge (US\$9.1 billion). In real terms, this is 5.5 percent annual growth on average. Nearly 60,000 jobs will be created,” said Dalenov.

“Shymkent has a huge economic potential. Significant investments will be made in infrastructure development, energy, tourism and

services sector. This will ensure the real economic growth of 5.5 percent annually, which is higher than nationwide,” he said.

Prime Minister Askar Mamin said Shymkent should become a regional hub and a magnet for investors.

Three new industrial zones will be built in Shymkent, adding to the Ontustik special economic zone that will also be expanded.

To improve transport infrastructure, a new passenger terminal at the city’s airport will be built and rail station will be reconstructed.

“We are implementing 11 projects (in transport infrastructure), including the reconstruction of a 31-kilometre A2 road, prolongation of Kunayev Avenue towards Tashkent extending by 31 kilometres. Also, the construction of four main crossroads [is envisaged]. Twenty-four kilometre South and South-East ring roads will be built,” said Shymkent Akim (Mayor) Gabidulla Abdrakhimov.

Mamin also instructed the completion of the construction of a gas distributing station and a 190 billion tenge (US\$494.5 million) combined cycle plant with a 450 MW capacity.

“The plan will allow increas-

ing the volume of housing construction from 500,000 square metres this year steadily up to 1 million square metres per year and bring the housing supply to 30 square metres per capita,” said Mamin.

Tourism development also promises big opportunities. Shymkent will be the cultural capital of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 2020.

“As a rule, the city chosen to be the cultural capital hosts many international events. I instruct the Shymkent Akim (Mayor) to prepare the plan of events with state bodies,” said Mamin.

Abdrakhimov said a Nepalese investor will build a Disneyland-like amusement park and aqua park in Shymkent.

“We will allocate 100 hectares of land for the construction. He is now making calculation with the specialists from Dubai who built Dubai aqua park. We expect the delegation July 13, where we will discuss the project in more detail,” said Abdrakhimov.

The officials expect the proximity to Turkestan and Tashkent will also attract tourists, facilitate the construction of tourism infrastructure and create new jobs.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

Youth-friendly health centre opens in Almaty

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – A youth-friendly health centre opened in Almaty July 11 as part of the Year of the Youth. The Place Where You Are Always Welcome is a resource hub providing information and services for young people on ways to develop life skills and prepare for the challenges of adulthood.

The project, supported by the Ministry of Healthcare, the Almaty city administration and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), offers the services of a gynaecologist, andrologist, psychologist, social worker and other experts, reported the UNFPA press service.

“When empowered and given the right opportunities, young people

are effective drivers of change. How well they navigate adolescence will determine not only the course of their own lives, but that of their communities and society at large. Realising the full potential of youth without investing in their health is unimaginable. The youth-friendly health centre will be a facility where girls and boys can find answers to questions concerning their physical, emotional and psychological development and life skills, such as ways to build confidence, become an inspiring leader and many other important skills,” said UNFPA Representative for Kazakhstan and Country Director for Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan Giulia Vallese.

The worldwide community adopted a programme of action in 1994 during the International

Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Egypt. The decision marked a paradigm shift in the way the global community viewed the interlinkages between population dynamics, sexual and reproductive health and rights and sustainable development. This year, Denmark, Kenya and UNFPA will host a summit Nov. 12-14 marking the programme’s 25th anniversary.

“The Nairobi Summit is an opportunity to recommit to the main goals agreed in Cairo and to promote the rights and dignity of individuals, including on the right to choose when and how many children to have, to have access to modern methods of contraception and to eliminating gender-based violence, which are prerequisites

to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Promoting youth leadership has been identified as one of the accelerators needed to achieve a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe and every young person’s potential can be fulfilled,” said Vallese.

According to a recent survey on the status of youth sexual and reproductive health and their access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, approximately one third of Kazakh adolescents aged 15-19 are sexually active and the vast majority (91 percent) are not sufficiently aware of HIV and AIDS. The number of teenage pregnancies “remains unacceptably high in comparison with other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, while the unmet need for contraception remains high.”

“When you are a teenager, you may be exposed to many risks – peer pressure, bullying, risky behaviour, including risky sexual behaviours, and more. It is important to have the correct information, to learn to say ‘no’ and resist peer pressure, but most importantly to have the choice and power to make decisions that will be fundamental for your future live. By visiting this centre and participating in its activities, we can empower youth to make healthy choices in areas that concern their lives. The Astana Declaration on ‘Investing in Youth. Leaving No One Behind’ enumerates it all,” said Y-PEER Youth Network member Aiyim Olzhabai.



NU students utilise 3D printer...

Continued from Page B1

The team conducted a survey with approximately 700 respondents, predominantly aged 17-23, that demonstrated the demand for such a product.

“According to the results of the survey, most of the respondents do not have an electric scooter, but would like to buy one to use daily,” said Kalmanbaeva.

Their analysis of similar scooters available through online stores showed sales increased 70 percent in 2018. The trend could continue to gain momentum, as consumers may want to drive cars less.

The team is continuing to de-

velop SteelG and plans to participate in the four-month programme sponsored by NURIS Business Incubator that supports innovative start-ups in their early stages. They will also look for new team members with 3D modelling, engineering and critical thinking skills.

Recently, the team participated in the Castelloli Smart Scooter Challenge in Spain. The international competition invited teams to present their engineering developments, conduct market analysis and outline business plans assessing the potential launch of their machines in terms of production, price, dealers, markets and other factors.



Volunteers preserve, revive Qoi-Tobet Kazakh aboriginal shepherd dogs

Continued from Page A1

“I was able to establish contact with scientist Alexander Nikolayevich Vlassenko, who agreed to advise and monitor materials from the trips,” he said. “I found that very interesting that dogs that are not known to the cynology live in the Kazakh province. Since then, I have been trying to find as many representatives of such dogs as possible and give them a chance for a rebirth.”

The breed he discovered does not have an official name. Among locals, it is called Qoi-Tobet, which is translated as sheep dog.

“The etymology of this term is not entirely clear... It is clear that this is due to the nature of its activities – escort livestock and protect from predators,” he said.

The breed is special, said Khibash, because it can live in extreme nature conditions similar to wolves and help herders protect cattle from predators.

“The main advantage of these dogs is their aboriginal state. That is, the psychophysiological state of the body, which allows them to exist in the wild, like a wild cousin wolf, and successfully withstand extreme climatic conditions inherent in many regions of Kazakhstan,” he said.

“That means that they didn’t lose those qualities that were recently inherent to many aboriginal breeds; for example, Turkmen Shepherd Dogs or Alabai, which due to their great popularity began to be bred in green-



Bauyrzhan Khibash with Akkus.

house conditions and massively used in... dog fights,” he added.

The Qoi-Tobet breed is undemanding. Although they are not gigantic, they are quite big, with their size corresponding to that of a potential enemy, a steppe wolf. They are friendly with people including children and do not behave aggres-

sively with other representatives of the breed, said Khibash.

By helping herders, the breed contributes to developing the country’s agriculture.

“Possessing such a huge agricultural potential, Kazakhstan should develop it as much as possible. Certain steps in this area are being

taken, but so far, this is far from perfect. And when (we reach the) peak, a lot of herders will need a powerful, hardy assistant,” he said.

While some may suggest organising a cull to reduce the wolf population rather than use dogs, Khibash argued “wolves are essential and an integral part of a healthy ecosystem.”

“In this regard, I have a different philosophy... If we destroy the wolf, we will lose pastures. Remember what happened to Yellowstone Wildlife Park. Therefore, in the course of its activities, a person should harmonise his relationships with wildlife as harmoniously as possible. There is no other way,” he said.

Besides practical importance, the dogs have ethno cultural and biological value as a heritage of Kazakh ancestors and endemics.

“At one time, and even now, a lot of criticism and condemnation was poured onto the heads of Kazakh dog enthusiasts from representatives of neighbouring nations for encroaching on their dog breeds as national value,” he said.

“The dogs that I want to recover differ in exterior. They will not cause any objections, because although they were spread from northern Mongolia to Spain (Hun, Mongolian-Tatar and Turkic expansion), for the most part they were concentrated on the territory of Kazakhstan,” he added.

Students to pay part of tuition by volunteering with social organisations



Photo credit: Kazinform

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Starting in September, Kazakh students will be able to pay a part of their tuition by volunteering, said Director of the Department of Higher and Postgraduate Education of the Ministry of Education and Science Adlet Toibayev at a July 7 press conference.

The programme will be available through a soon-to-be launched website, where all students studying in Kazakh universities will be eligible to register and choose a type of work. Volunteer organisations willing to recruit new members through the programme will also be invited to register.

Volunteer opportunities include educational work in neighbourhood clubs (social organisations that provide educational and recreational services to local community members for free or at a lower cost than commercial organisations) and inclusive educational organisations. Students will be able to tutor the English and Kazakh languages, as well as other school subjects, and coach sports. Other choices involve organisational and administrative work with social organisations and social work with the elderly and teenagers at risk. The options will correspond with the students’ majors as closely as possible.

Students will have a choice between taking a two-credit (20 hours) workload covering 20,000

tenge (US\$52.21) or five-credit (50 hours) workload covering 50,000 tenge (US\$130.52) of their tuition. Tuition costs vary from 75,000 tenge (US\$195.77) to 1.8 million tenge (US\$2,819.12) per semester, depending on the programme, university and region, according to the Freedom Finance Life study. The credits earned will also count towards degree completion.

The pilot programme is planned for three years and is expected to

Students will have a choice between taking a two-credit (20 hours) workload covering 20,000 tenge (US\$52.21) or five-credit (50 hours) workload covering 50,000 tenge (US\$130.52) of their tuition.

involve 50,000 students. The project will be coordinated by local executive bodies.

In January, the First President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, suggested raising the scholarships of students who do volunteer work by 30 percent, reported Vlast.kz.

livestock without practical use of dogs,” he added.

Part of his work includes finding the dogs, securing good care for them in a household and insuring they practice in the steppes.

“It turned out that finding customers (a household) is not easy. Therefore, there was a need to buy offspring and distribute them further. Sometimes, I paid half the price of puppies to herders... but I don’t complain. We managed to keep at least five or six puppies in the steppes and they showed good results; the owners called and thanked me. Unlike fighting and city dogs, ours are more authentic and they understand the most important thing their city brothers have already lost,” he said.

Khibash suggests organising large-scale expeditions to remote Kazakh regions to search for surviving dogs of the breed and open private veterinary educational institutions and cynological courses and inviting experts to save and revive them.

“There is a need to use the experience and knowledge of the nearest neighbours and to attract professors,” he said.

While some might think there are only two breeds of Kazakh dogs, Tazy and Tobets, by travelling across the country, he has realised the opposite.

“Such a huge territory... simply could not be so scarce on the breeds. There were many more, but due to various historical upheavals, not all of them were preserved,” he said. “Nevertheless, our land still holds many secrets that are waiting for their Columbus, so let’s hope, believe and search.”

Khibash can be reached by e-mail (b.khibash@mail.ru) or mobile phone (+7 701 202 08 76).

NATION&CAPITAL

TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

Burkhan-Bulak waterfall, country’s highest, attracts tourists with untouched nature, fascinating views

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – The Almaty Region tops many lists with its rich natural attractions, one of which is Burkhan-Bulak, Kazakhstan’s highest waterfall. It is located in the mountainous Jongar Alatau area in the Kora River gorge.

The waterfall is 168 metres long, 114 of which are visible, and rises to an altitude of 2,000 metres above sea level. Burkhan-Bulak is 70 kilometres from Tekeli and approximately 130 kilometres from Taldykorgan, the regional centre, according to eltourism.kz.

Burkhan-Bulak River, a right tributary of the Kora, originates from Jongar Alatau’s springs and moraine lakes.

There is a hiking trail but no direct



Photo credit: tenghnews.kz

road from Tekeli to the Kora gorge, through which its namesake river flows. As a result, tourists must take the Oskemen highway to the road into Kapal village and drive into the mountains. The best options are to go with a guide who has already visited the waterfall and knows the road, use tourist agency services or ask locals.

Once on the road, the first thing tourists see is the gorge, a place that delights with the mountain ranges’ untouched nature. The gorge is spread over 90 kilometres and its depth in some places reaches nearly one kilometre.

The waterfall is beautiful any time of the year, but the best time to visit is summer, when the warmer weather and melting glaciers give the tumbling water added strength. Although it is summer, the climate is cool and humid.

In winter, the temperature can drop to -40 degrees Celsius, freezing the waterfall and Kora River. Although it is more difficult to reach the area in such weather, the winter landscapes are as fascinating as the summer ones.

The place has many legends, one of which is the story of a mother and her son, Burkhan. According to lore, his mother wished for him to have a wife who was his equal, but he fell in love with a freedom-loving Kora from a rich family. When Burkhan’s mother learned of this, she forbade him to see the girl and locked him in a castle as a punishment, but he managed to escape from captivity and join her. The Kora River represents them being together after many years have passed. To complete the tale, a small, nearby river is known as Tears of a Mother.

Alakol Lake officials announce \$78 million tourism infrastructure investment

By Assel Satubaldina

NUR-SULTAN – Thirty billion tenge (US\$78.3 million) will be invested in the next four years in infrastructure projects at Alakol Lake, a popular beach vacation destination between the East Kazakhstan Region and Almaty. A working group was created to plan and monitor the projects.

The lake, among the national tourism priorities, receives significant support from the state and work has been ongoing since 2016. The government allocated 500 million tenge (US\$1.3 million) from the 2017 budget and 800 million tenge (US\$2.08 million) from the 2018 budget to develop the shoreline infrastructure.

The area’s approximately 175 recreation centres and two hotels cater to different budgets, from 5,000 tenge (US\$13) per night hostels to luxury accommodations.

East Kazakhstan Region Akim (Governor) Danial Akhmetov met with the region’s entrepreneurs July 12 seeking ways to boost development at the lake.

To control coastal erosion, ensure safe access and protect the coastline, breakwaters will be installed every 100-150 metres along two kilometres of the shoreline. A water supply system, water intake facilities and sewage treatment network will also be built. A 110 kW-capacity power transmission line from Makanchi village to Koktal will ensure stable electricity supply.

An airport opened in Usharal village in 2017, making Alakol Lake more accessible for tourists. Flights are operated from Almaty,

the capital and Taldykorgan with fares partially subsidised by the government.

The airport runway will be renovated, with officials recently completing the design specifics and estimates. The changes will allow aircraft to take off and land from two directions and increase the runway length to 2,100 metres and width up to 45 metres. The alterations also envision installing high-intensity lights and constructing a new terminal with a capacity of 70 passengers per hour.

“We have invested a lot of resources to develop the coast in the past two years. In the next four years, we will invest more, so that not only locals, but also foreigners will come here and enjoy their vacation,” said Akhmetov.

Officials will study the Austrian experience to build a year-round recreation and health centre in Alakol to make use of the lake’s mineral and healing waters. He noted the road connecting Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kalabatau village, Semei and Ayagoz village remains a problem, promising to finish reconstruction in two years.

Akhmetov also urged businesses to come out of the shadows. State Revenue Department Deputy Chair Yerzhan Ktanov said an 11-day inspection revealed 38 businesses working in the shadow economy.

“In 2018, businesses paid 67.5 million tenge (US\$176,232) in taxes to the budget. This year, the sum is expected to reach 100 million tenge (US\$261,085), which is 148 percent more than last year. But there are still cases when businesses submit incorrect information about their revenues, subsequently evading taxes,” he said.



Photo credit: Aquarida Tour

Kazakhstan seeks airline services expansion at Routes Silk Road 2019 forum

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – The forum Routes Silk Road 2019 gathered July 15-17 more than 250 people from business, government and aviation in panel sessions and 800 face-to-face meetings to discuss air services at the capital’s Palace of Independence, reports the city akimat (administration).

“The Astana Convention Bureau is excited to host this prestigious event and welcome all participants to our wonderful city. Nur-Sultan is growing at a tremendous pace and this is an important and timely event on our journey to develop Nur-Sultan into a leading business and convention destination in Central Asia,” said Astana Convention

Bureau Deputy Director Helena Mahuas to Routesonline.com.

The route development forum for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia will help Kazakhstan’s aviation market expand, increase its number of international flights and learn from major aviation companies, said Nur-Sultan Deputy Akim (Mayor) Bakhtiyar Maken at the forum’s opening. For example, the Kazakh Civil Aviation Committee met with representatives of foreign airlines and airports to discuss opening new destinations from Nur-Sultan.

“For Nursultan Nazarbayev Airport, the international exhibition Routes Silk Road 2019 is a significant event. The conference will

give us an excellent opportunity to declare ourselves as a high-level airport, present a new passenger terminal and discuss the development of new and existing destinations,” said Nursultan Nazarbayev International Airport Chief Executive Officer Radilbek Adimolda.

Last year, 38 airlines offered scheduled international flights from Kazakhstan, and international capacity rose 5.3 percent to 3.54 million departure seats. At the forum, Kazakh Tourism Deputy Chairman Kairat Sadvakassov urged local ground handlers and tour operators to consider 24 and 48-hour itineraries to allow a longer stop at Nur-Sultan for transit passengers, given that airports are increasingly honing their hub potential.

“We recently launched direct flights to Ulaanbaatar and Tokyo. We are planning to launch flights to New York, Singapore and Shanghai. We have worked throughout 98 international routes. I know that there are many heads of airlines that would like to work in Kazakhstan, and we are open to cooperation,” said Kazakh Vice Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Berik Kamaliyev.

Approximately half of South Korea’s population consider themselves keen travellers, and many have visited well-established destinations and seek new experiences, a gap which Kazakhstan may well fill, noted Somon Air Chief Executive Officer Thomas Hallam.

Great Steppe History travelling exhibition opens in Taldykorgan

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – The Great Steppe History travelling exhibition opened July 13 in an exhibit centre in Taldykorgan in the Almaty Region, reported TengriNews.kz.

“The idea of the exhibition was inspired by the ‘Seven Facets of the Great Steppe’ article. What is the world’s perception of the peculiarities of the people living in the arid zone in the centre of the Eurasian continent for centuries? What is the difference between the Asian continental feeling and the European sea sensation? What values did horse riding people bring to the world bank of human culture?” said organiser Dinara Amangeldina.

The travelling exhibit features more than 100 works of 12 artists including Askhat Akhmedyarov,



Photo credit: inform.kz

Said Atabekov, Alibay Bapanov, Smail Bayaliyev, Saule Dusenbina, Almagul Menlibayeva, Moldakul Narymbetov, Rashid Nurekeyev, Arystanbek Shalbayev, Vitaly Simakov and Saule Suleimenova.

Exhibition curators Liza Akhmadi and Yulia Sorokina were present for the opening ceremony.

Among the objects are Dusenbina’s “Pillows,” a set of airbags depicting batyrs and other animals.

Jastar Kerueny domestic tourism promotion project to launch

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Jastar Kerueny, the domestic tourism promotion project devised by creative young Kazakhs collaborating with established influencers, will launch Aug. 12, reported Kazinform. The project is designed to both promote and study Kazakh tourist destinations.

The millennials involved will gather in the capital that day to initiate the project. The programme will include a concert featuring local celebrities.

The following day, they will travel to the regions. The four-day trip will include visiting and promoting domestic tourist attractions and they will be accompanied by Tourism in Kazakhstan brand ambassadors selected from established Kazakh influencers.

The project involves seven tourist destinations – Aktope, accompanied by T Jokers project members; the Almaty Region, accompanied by Gani Azhikenov, Eldos Zhanuzak and Zhanerke Zhumadil; the East Kazakhstan

Region, accompanied by Darkhan Dzholyshebekov and Zamanbek Zhanaliyev; Karaganda, accompanied by Yessenali Aigerim and Anuarbek Zhalel; Pavlodar, accompanied by Irina Ten and Nazim Missanov; Shymkent and the Turkestan Region, accompanied by Aigerim Abdykarylova and Daulet Bizhanov, and Uralsk, accompanied by Pazl YouTube project team Gabit Adirshayev, Aktoty Bolshova and Alisher Konysbaev.

After the trip, the participants will present an assessment in the

capital. The influencers’ evaluations and recommendations will be included in devising tourist attraction policies.

“We want tourism to develop as much as possible; for that, we want to collect recommendations and give them to authorities and, later, state authorities are to take certain measures to improve the domestic tourism situation,” said Youth of Kazakhstan Congress Executive Director Tokhtar Bolysov at the July 17 Central Communication Service press conference.

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019

Paralympians from 78 countries compete for 20 gold medals at Nur-Sultan's World Para Powerlifting Championships

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Four hundred and forty-one Paralympians from 78 countries competed for the World Para Powerlifting Championships's 20 gold medals in the capital's Congress Centre July 12-20, reports the city akimat (administration).

Powerlifters set a strong tone on the first day, with three-time Paralympic silver medallist Cui Zhe setting the first world record at the 2019 World Championships with a lift of 104.5 kilogrammes in the women's up to 41 kilogramme event.

"I have worked hard in the last



two months for a good result here. I could not have asked for anything more. It feels great. I am very happy that I could achieve my goal at this championship," she told Paralympic.org.

Kazakh audiences cheered for Raushan Koishibayeva, a Paralympic silver medallist with amputated legs, in the women's up to 67 kilogramme event July 16.

"I am proud that our country will host such a big event and I think that all of this will have a positive effect and help Kazakh Para sport to move forward," she said to Paralympic.org before the competition. "I hope for a successful performance because these are home walls and

there is double the amount of responsibility. But we will see. The barbell will single out the winner."

A key task in the national sports industry is to increase the share of the population engaged in sports to 30 percent by 2020, said Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altay Kulginov in his opening ceremony speech.

"Starting this year, people with disabilities have been able to access the Paralympic Training Centre for free," he said of the centre that opened in July 2018 as part of the Tugan Zher (Motherland) state programme.

The event, in which athletes with physical and intellectual disabilities compete, was organised

by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) every four years. Held for the eighth time, it became an important stop for para-athletes' qualification pathway to the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

"Paralympic sport is the most striking way to prove to people that, despite difficulties in life, people can make a significant contribution to their country's development," said the then Nur-Sultan Akim Bakhyt Sultanov at his Jan. 31 meeting with IPC President Andrew Parsons. "There is no greater pride than when the flag of Kazakhstan is raised at international competitions in which people with disabilities participate."

Children get medals at Winners Games for cancer survivors

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh children won medals at the July 3-8 World Children's Winners Games for cancer surviving children in Moscow. Expenses for some of the participants were paid by the Young Talents Samruk Kazyna programme.

"I really enjoyed the games, where more than 500 people from 15 countries took part. I participated in chess and football tournaments. These are my second games, so this is my last time here," said Alexander Zabolotnyi, one of the games' participants. His father added that a child in remission can only participate in the games twice, unless he has cancer again, so they hope it's Zabolotnyi's last games.

Children from Kazakhstan won medals in chess, football, swimming and other sports. Bisultan Berdibai and Assel Bayaliyeva won bronze medals in chess. Berdibai also won silver in football and gold in athletics. Ayanat Baisakova, Yuli-



ya Lepsheyeva, Roman Shigov won bronze in football. Baisakova also won gold in swimming. Zabolotnyi, Alexander Korolyov, Adil Sarbayev and Kirill Puzikov won gold in football. Korolyov also got bronze in shooting. Polina Klinkovich won gold in swimming and race walking and bronze in tennis.

This year, Kazakhstan was represented by 17 children, with five of them funded by the Young Talents Samruk Kazyna programme.

"By implementing the Young Talents project, we strive to support our talented children, to give them the opportunity to show their abilities in both national and international competitions," said Director of Corporate Communications Department of the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund Miras Irgebayev.

The World Children's Winners Games are sports for children who have undergone cancer treatment. The Winners Games have been

held in Moscow since 2010. In total, more than 3,000 children from more than 20 countries have taken part. All participants compete in six sports: athletics, swimming, table tennis, shooting, chess and football in their age groups. The games aim to help children forget about the disease and return to a full life. The games also seek to motivate children to get into sports and give them the opportunity to believe in themselves and their strength.

Gymnasts take silver medals at Universiade

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh gymnasts Milad Karimi and Nariman Kurbanov won silver medals in the crossbar and the pommel-horse exercises, respectively, July 7 at the 2019 Universiade, reports Olympic.kz.

In the crossbar exercises competition final, Karimi finished second with a score of 14.675. The winner of the competition was Chia-Hung Tangu from Taiwan, Ivan Stretochov from Russia won bronze. Earlier Karimi took fifth place in the all-around competition, seventh in the floor exercise competition and fourth in the competition on the uneven bars. Karimi shared his excitement over winning the silver medal with Olympic.kz.

"Honestly, I can't believe that I took second place. Emotions overwhelm me! I put myself together, really put myself together to perform well in this final and I didn't pay attention to anything else," Karimi said. He also shared his plans on the World Cup preparation, as the Olympic spots for Kazakhstan will depend on its result.

"Five days of rest and back to the battle again! We will be preparing for the World Cup, where spots for the Olympic Games will

be distributed. I will adjust the programme, I will try to add complexity on the horse and the rings," said Karimi.

Kurbanov also won silver at the Universiade. His final performance was estimated by the judges at 14.7 points. Chin-Kal Li from Taipei won the gold in this competition. Kazumaya Kaya from Japan received bronze. Karimi told Olympic.kz his medal was an unexpected result, as his form was in decline after the last World Championship.

"I'm so glad, I'm happy. After the last year's World Championship, I had absolutely no results, there was a decline in form," said Kurbanov.

"I have one more goal left, the World Championship next October. I will direct all the preparation towards it. I will complicate my programme by the start of the World Championship. But first, a week of rest, you need to come to your senses, tune in and prepare for the World Championship. Now my new goal is the World Championship medal," said Kurbanov.

The Universiade is an international multi-sport event, organised for university athletes by the International University Sports Federation (FISU). This year's Universiade took place in Naples, Italy between 3 and 14 July.



Nariman Kurbanov

Chess players win 2019 Asian Juniors Championship medals

Continued from Page B1

"Our girls, as always, did well! After the victory of Dinara (Saduakassova) at the Asian Championships, our juniors backed up her result with a victory in the under-20 continental championship," Kazakhstan Chess Federation's Executive Director Irina Grishchenko.

The Asian U-20 (Juniors) Championship gathered 70 athletes: 34 in the men's and 36 in the women's sections. Kazakh chess players Sultan Amanzhol (men's section), Serikbai and Nurgali represented Kazakhstan at the championship.



Assel Serikbai

Serikbai and Nurgali began playing chess from a very young age and plan to continue a career in sports.

"I have been interested in chess since childhood. My parents sent me to school when I was five years old. In the second grade, a chess club opened in our school. Together with my friends, I decided to sign up and now I understand that this decision was fateful for me," Nurgali told bnews.kz.

"I became interested in chess at the age of six. Then I studied in the first grade. Our school has opened a class for teaching this sport. Its head Riza Koshkarova invited me and I agreed. Parents also ap-

proved my choice. There, I was taught a lot," said Serikbai.

The athletes are famous in Kyzylorda, said Zhaksylyk Ospanov, deputy head of the region's sports department.

"In our region there is a big support for young chess players. In the school of Olympic reserve No.1, there is a chess department. They have their own budget. The Department of Sports of the Kyzylorda region also allocates funds for the participation of athletes in international tournaments. The region organises various competitions. Assel Serikbai and Nazerke Nurgali are our pride," he said.

Kazakh athletes win three medals in karate at Asia Championship

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh karate team won three medals July 20 at the 2019 Asia Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Andrei Aktauov took gold and Didar Amirali and Sofia Berultseva won silver, reported Olympic.kz.

"The results of the latest Asian Championship, compared with last year, turned out to be more than successful for us, especially considering the fact that the championship is licensed and its results may affect the Olympic rankings," said head coach Zhastalap Sanauov.

Aktauov won in the men's under 55 kilogramme category. To



advance to the finals, he fought athletes from Cambodia, Iran and

Malaysia, then faced Alshari Abdulla from Saudi Arabia. Aktauov

and Abdulla previously met in the finals of the 2014 Asian Games,

with Aktauov also winning gold that year.

Amirali competed in the men's under 67 kilogramme category, where he also won silver at the 2018 Asian Games. This year, Amirali fought competitors from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Jordan, winning all the rounds. He was defeated in the finals by Japan's Hiroto Shinohara, the 2014 Asia Games champion.

Berultseva, who last year won the world junior athlete karate championship, gained her medal in the women's over 68 kilogramme category. She won rounds against competitors from Tajikistan, Taiwan and China. In the finals, she fought Iranian

Hammedeh Abbasali, who previously medalled at the senior world championship. Abbasali defeated Berultseva 4-2.

Despite the overall success of the Kazakh team, leader Darkhan Asadilov, who was voted Kazakhstan's best athlete in June, was unable to secure any medals, noted Sanauov.

"It's a pity, of course, that our leader Darkhan Asadilov was left without an award, but even this moment cannot influence the situation. Darkhan will continue to remain at the head of the Olympic list at least until the next sporting event that is to be held in September – the Premier League in Tokyo – and then we'll see," he said.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019



YARKOcros run emphasises fun, charity and health awareness

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – People ran five kilometres for charity July 20 at the seventh annual paint race YARKOcros in the capital’s Triathlon Park, reports the city akimat (administration) press service.

The race was organised by the Plant a Tree fund with the support of the akimat. With clean white shirts and a 10 a.m. start, runners made their way through the ‘jungle’, this year’s theme, of bright and environmentally friendly col-

oured powder blasted from bottles to receive their medals at the finish line.

There were no winners or prizes at the untimed event, which emphasises fun, charity and health awareness over competition. Fittingly, celebrations were held at the finish line, featuring football darts and an art zone, and the funds raised contributed to tree planting and sports field installations. Last year, the proceeds went to equipping basketball and volleyball courts with the Beat Autism association.

The first paint race, known as The Colour Run, gathered 6,000 people in Arizona, the United States in 2011. It has since grown into more than 200 annual events with over two million participants in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and the United Arab Emirates.

Non-traditional running events like paint races encourage the participation of people of all ages that have never run a 5K. Participation was free for children under 3 and cost 3,500 tenge (US\$9.10) for children over 3 and 5,000 tenge (US\$13.01) for adults before

July 18, after which registration cost 4,500 tenge (US\$11.71) for children over 3 and 6,000 tenge (US\$15.61) for adults.

Adults received a t-shirt, backpack and start number at Triathlon Park July 19 at 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Children under 3 did not receive a starter kit, and kits for children over 3 did not include a t-shirt, which could be purchased separately.

A YARKOcros race will also gather runners in Shymkent Aug. 17. One may register to participate at www.yarkocross.kz.

Mayor urges construction companies to follow safety procedures, pay employees and buy locally



Altay Kulginov (C).

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altay Kulginov discussed safety compliance and the purchase of local materials July 16 with representatives of construction companies working in the capital, reports the city akimat (administration) press service.

Kulginov urged construction workers to comply with safety procedures at construction sites by wearing protective hats and footwear.

“I ask you to follow the safety precautions and requirements for work attire, ranging from helmets to safety footwear. The most important thing for us is the safety of our people, especially those who work at construction sites. Please do not skimp on that. After all, when safety precautions are observed, there is order, quality and results,” he said.

Kulginov also urged construction companies to buy locally produced construction materials.

“The types of building materials that are produced by us should, if possible, be used when building the city. We have production factories for houses and elevators, thousands of people are working in these industries and all of this is being produced for your benefit,” he concluded.

Kulginov also called on developers to pay employees on time and comply with the conditions stipulated in labour contracts.

“We are creating and will continue to create all the conditions for you to do business, but if you do not pay wages or pay wages (informally) in envelopes, then we will have a different conversation, so please work within the law,” he said.

“If someone from the akimat creates barriers to your business, then you can contact us. We will restore order. If someone asks for bribes or money, there are services that will respond instantly. You can contact me directly,” he added.

The mayor and construction company representatives discussed waste management and real estate developers’ responsibility to investors.

Nur-Sultan has a single landfill site located along the Alash Highway where construction companies may legally dispose of their waste. Since the beginning of the year, 66 drivers have unloaded construction company waste at sites with no licence to accept waste, and 76 drivers have unloaded dirt on the roadway. Video surveillance cameras may be installed in 10 sites prone to illegal dumping by construction companies to change construction companies’ behaviour.

Kulginov also called for a more responsible approach toward real estate investors, given that there are more than 10,000 investors affected by the actions of unscrupulous real estate developers. For example, developers’ fund misappropriation has left many housing projects idle.

“I met with real estate investors, many of whom did not get the chance to move into their apartments, mortgage their property, live in dormitories or were left without any housing options. The state is now solving their problems. We will exercise strict control over each project so that this does not happen again. If you want to do business, we will support you. The President personally controls the removal of administrative barriers for businesses, but businesses must also accept some level of responsibility on their part, especially in the field of construction,” he said.

Palace of Martial Arts opens



Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – The new, government-sponsored Palace of Martial Arts opened July 6 in the capital. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev attended the opening.

The 32,000-square-metre, \$50.8 million centre will offer training facility for professional and amateur martial arts athletes. It has been built by the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund and includes a gym, fitness centre, mini football pitch, 25-metre swimming pool and hotel throughout its four floors. It can hold up to 5,000 spectators and host competitions in boxing, judo, weightlifting and wrestling.

“The sports facility was built to meet the standards and requirements of international sports federations. Innovative engineering solutions were applied to the building to provide the most advanced energy-efficient heating, ventilation, air conditioning and lighting systems. The unique triangular shape of the Palace of

Martial Arts symbolises the form of a flying eagle, a symbol of the freedom and strength of Kazakhstan,” said Samruk Kazyna Construction Director of Procurement and Operations Darkhan Mussanov.

The opening of the Palace of Martial Arts coincided with the Day of the Capital and a gala festival of martial arts that began May 7 in Shymkent. The festival was meant to promote a healthy lifestyle among youth and featured performances by martial artists from the Kazakh Martial Arts Association.

“Sport has become an important economic and social policy direction. A clear confirmation of my words is that the Palace of Martial Arts, built upon the instructions of (the First Kazakh President) Nursultan Nazarbayev, has opened its doors today,” said Kazakh Minister of Culture and Sport Aktoty Raimkulova at the opening ceremony.

“Today, sports facilities are working at an overload of 143 percent. The design and documentation are being developed for the construction of fitness centres in four residential areas of the city, including Koktal-2, Ilyinka, Ondiris and Zheleznodorozhny,” said the then Nur-Sultan Deputy Akim (Mayor) Yerlan Kanalmov in May on additional sports facility construction that will take place in 2019-2021.

Presidential directives on improving living standards to be incorporated into capital’s social, economic development

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – The capital’s akimat (administration) will incorporate President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s call for government to improve living standards in the city’s social and economic development, said Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altay Kulginov at a July 17 meeting on the results of the July 15 expanded government meeting chaired by Tokayev.

Akim (Mayor) Altay Kulginov at a July 17 meeting on the results of the July 15 expanded government meeting chaired by Tokayev.

The First President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, tasked the new government, appointed Feb. 25, to “take effective steps in improving living standards, stimulating the economy and implementing strategic objectives.” Tokayev further directed government agencies to increase incomes, create jobs, improve land use and develop a better investment climate at the expanded government meeting.

“Increasing the income of the population is our main job. (There is a) growth of 6 percent, but we cannot stop there. Sanctions and protectionism also influence the development of our country. International experts talk about the unstable situation in the world. Therefore, we should also consider the creation of new jobs as a priority,” said Tokayev.

The government will allocate two trillion tenge (US\$5.3 billion) from the state budget to social support over the next three years, and Kulginov sees a role for the city akimat in advancing these socially-oriented measures.

“This year, concrete steps have been taken to increase the incomes

of the population, including socially vulnerable groups. From June 1, the wages of public sector employees increased by up to 30 percent.

The criteria for the provision of targeted social assistance was updated. This made it possible to increase the average amount of aid given and increase the number of recipients of targeted social assistance almost three-fold,” he said.

Creating favourable conditions for business will also remain a priority for the akimat. The territory of the capital’s Industrial Park is 95 percent full, and another park will be opened to accommodate the creation of new industries.

“There are concerns about the workload of projects that were launched (at the Industrial Park), some of which are generally idle. Of the 49 projects in the Industrial Park, 10 projects function according to how they were accepted. Twelve projects, which were introduced in 2017-2018, function at a workload of approximately 10 percent. There is room for work,” said Kulginov.

The akim emphasised that the capital’s new business projects ought to be export-oriented and hopes to see more light manufacturing projects, which amount to two at the moment, given the recent launch of the Economy of Simple Things state programme.

The criteria for the provision of targeted social assistance was updated. This made it possible to increase the average amount of aid given and increase the number of recipients of targeted social assistance almost three-fold,” he said.

Creating favourable conditions for business will also remain a priority for the akimat. The territory of the capital’s Industrial Park is 95 percent full, and another park will be opened to accommodate the creation of new industries.

“There are concerns about the workload of projects that were launched (at the Industrial Park), some of which are generally idle. Of the 49 projects in the Industrial Park, 10 projects function according to how they were accepted. Twelve projects, which were introduced in 2017-2018, function at a workload of approximately 10 percent. There is room for work,” said Kulginov.

The akim emphasised that the capital’s new business projects ought to be export-oriented and hopes to see more light manufacturing projects, which amount to two at the moment, given the recent launch of the Economy of Simple Things state programme.

The criteria for the provision of targeted social assistance was updated. This made it possible to increase the average amount of aid given and increase the number of recipients of targeted social assistance almost three-fold,” he said.

Creating favourable conditions for business will also remain a priority for the akimat. The territory of the capital’s Industrial Park is 95 percent full, and another park will be opened to accommodate the creation of new industries.

“There are concerns about the workload of projects that were launched (at the Industrial Park), some of which are generally idle. Of the 49 projects in the Industrial Park, 10 projects function according to how they were accepted. Twelve projects, which were introduced in 2017-2018, function at a workload of approximately 10 percent. There is room for work,” said Kulginov.

The akim emphasised that the capital’s new business projects ought to be export-oriented and hopes to see more light manufacturing projects, which amount to two at the moment, given the recent launch of the Economy of Simple Things state programme.

