



First Caspian Economic Forum discusses regional economic cooperation, infrastructure development



L-R: Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Novruz Mammadov, First Vice President of Iran Eshaq Jahangiri, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Askar Mamin.

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – Participants of the Aug. 12 first Caspian Economic Forum discussed economic ties among Caspian littoral countries in trade and tourism as well as infrastructure development around the inland sea.

The forum took place at the Avaza resort in Turkmenistan and gathered more than 3,000 politicians, diplomats, business people, environmentalists, scholars and journalists from around the world. It was the first time representatives of Kazakhstan, Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkmenistan had met in the five-sided format after signing a convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea Aug. 12, 2018, in Aktau, Kazakhstan.

“We are all like-minded people, united by the importance of a multifaceted and systemic dialogue on

the development of the Caspian region, determining the prospects for international cooperation in the Caspian... Today, the objective interests of not only coastal, but also other states are concentrated here, due to the fact that the Caspian region is a large natural source of hydrocarbon resources, a continental-scale transport and transit hub, a promising territory for expanding international trade,” said President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in his welcoming speech, as reported by sng.fm.

At the beginning of the forum, participants visited the International Caspian exhibition of innovative technologies and the Turkmen Sahara 2019 exhibition, where they were able to familiarise themselves with the achievements of modern technologies and the automotive industry at the Turkmenbashi international seaport, noted

the Turkmen Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting of the Caspian littoral countries’ ministers of economy took place at the Berkarar Hotel, where representatives of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Russia discussed cooperation in trade, free trade zones and the regulatory framework.

At a similar meeting of the transport ministers, they discussed developing international freight traffic, increasing exports and diversifying transit freight flows to the markets of other regions.

The countries’ business community representatives discussed import and export possibilities and exchanged experience in oil and gas resources processing.

As a part of the forum, Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin met with Berdimuhamedov to discuss trade and economic cooperation. They emphasised the importance

of deepening cooperation between border regions and noted the potential to expand bilateral cooperation in engineering, chemical industry, metallurgy, agriculture, tourism, transport and gas, reported primeminister.kz.

Mamin stressed the need to create conditions to attract investment into the region, including using the Astana International Financial Centre and existing agreements on free trade zones. He made suggestions to improve transport systems and the efficiency of multimodal transportation and to develop tourism in the Caspian Sea.

Mamin also said more work is needed to preserve the Caspian Sea’s ecosystem, including introducing clean technologies through the International Centre for Green Technologies and Investment Projects, established in Kazakhstan on the premises of former EXPO 2017.

GDP grows 4.2% Jan-July

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan’s gross domestic product (GDP) grew 4.2 percent in January-July, said Minister of National Economy Ruslan Dalenov at an Aug. 13 government meeting.

“(This year’s) GDP growth is driven by accelerated growth in industry, construction and services, as well as steady growth in agriculture and investment in fixed assets,” explained Dalenov.

Communication services grew 2.6 percent, industrial production grew 2.7 percent, agricultural production grew 3.5 percent, oil refinery production grew 5.1 percent, transport grew 5.4 percent, trade grew 7.5 percent, construction grew 11.5 percent, light industry production grew 14.3 percent, non-ferrous ore production grew 17.2 percent and pharmaceutical industry production grew 18 percent in January-July, all of which contributed to greater GDP growth.

Investment grew 11.3 percent, with investment increasing 61.4 percent for agriculture, 46.3 percent for construction, 23 percent for trade and 18.9 percent for industry.

“Given the current trends, central and local executive bodies need to concentrate on ensuring the growth of key economic indicators and control over investment projects, maximising efficiency throughout the construction and agricultural season and strengthening inflation control in the third quarter (of 2019),” said Dalenov.

“Economic growth was achieved in the Atyrau, Karaganda, Kostanai, Kyzylorda, Turkestan and East Kazakhstan Regions (in January-July),” said Prime Minister Askar Mamin, who chaired the meeting. “Akims (governors and mayors) and heads of state bodies and regions will be personally responsible for the final outcomes and use of budget funds.”

Continued on Page A4

EBRD focuses on small and women’s businesses, investment environment

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has invested more than \$9.1 billion through 261 projects in the economy of Kazakhstan as of July. In 2015, the bank also launched the Women in Business programme, which empowered women entrepreneurs nationwide.

The EBRD will continue its cooperation with the Kazakh government and the private sector on investment projects, reforms and improvement of the investment environment, EBRD Vice President for Risk and Compliance and Chief Risk Officer Betsy Nelson said in an exclusive interview for this story.

“We agreed on the five-year strategy with the government, and we are going to work on it. We see there’s a need to develop the private sector and balance state-owned enterprises versus the private sector. It is important to ensure the business environment for attracting foreign investors. We focus on manufacturing, services, businesses agriculture, tourism and energy efficiency in many countries, and Kazakhstan is no exception. Another key area for us is the competitiveness of the small-business sector as well as the private sector. We help small business get the support it needs. It’s a key thing for the bank as a whole, and it’s a key theme in many of our countries,” Nelson said.

Continued on Page A5

ATOM Project’s Honorary Ambassador remembers Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – The ATOM Project and its Honorary Ambassador Karipbek Kuyukov called for renewed efforts to bring about a nuclear weapon-free world on the 74th anniversary of the atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Atomic Age arrived upon the United States’ bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Aug. 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, that killed between 129,000 and 226,000 people. The bombings have been the only use of nuclear weapons in armed conflict, and The ATOM Project aims to keep it that way.

“We must never forget that day or the lives lost in Hiroshima,” said Kuyukov. “Many lives have been lost to or destroyed by nuclear weapons, including days later in the city of Nagasaki, as well as over decades of nuclear weapons testing. But Hiroshima was the first use of a nuclear device meant to kill. It is a moment of shame for the international community and of horror for the people of Japan. It is a moment upon which we should forever shine a light to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used to kill again.”

Seventy-four years later, the



Karipbek Kuyukov

world still lives with the threat of nuclear weapons use. Many in the international community, however, including Kuyukov, have pledged to change that.

Kuyukov is among the 1.5 million people who have suffered as a result of the 456 nuclear tests conducted over 40 years at the Soviet Union’s Semipalatinsk Test Site. He was born without arms as a result of his parents’ exposure to those tests before Kazakhstan shut down the site in 1991. He has gone on to become an internationally recognised non-proliferation

activist and painter, whose works capture the suffering of the victims of nuclear weapon testing.

He delivered a powerful plea to ban nuclear testing at the Sept. 6, 2018 session of the United Nations General Assembly and received the Nuclear-Free Future Award Oct. 24 from the Franz Moll Foundation for the Coming Generations.

Kuyukov’s home country has also become a leader in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, having renounced what was then the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal inherited from the So-

viet Union. Kazakhstan signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons March 2, 2018 and July 3, 2019, respectively, and assumed the 2019-2020 chairmanship of the 48-member multilateral export control regime Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Leading by example, The ATOM Project Honorary Ambassador and Kazakhstan show that building a nuclear weapon-free world is within our power, “with political will and the united voice of citizens around the world,” despite setbacks such as the Aug. 2 withdrawal of the United States from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

“The city of Hiroshima opened one of humanity’s most deadly and dangerous chapters. One way we can honour the lives lost is to make sure Nagasaki closed that chapter, that the lives lost in that city will be the last destroyed by the use of a nuclear weapon,” said Kuyukov.

The United Nations’ Aug. 29 International Day against Nuclear Tests, also the 28th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, will serve as another important reminder to the international community about the need to renew the efforts for a safer world.

National Council of Public Trust to hold first meeting

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – The first meeting of the Kazakh National Council of Public Trust has been tentatively scheduled for Aug. 28. Participants will establish the council’s activities and form working groups, National Council secretary and advisor to the Kazakh President Yerlan Karin announced recently.

The council is an advisory body called for and approved by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in July. The council will make policy recommendations based on input from the public, political parties and civil society.

“At present, there are a number of questions regarding the operating principles of the National Council. It is necessary to decide which working groups will be created, who will be part of the group. It is assumed that the created groups will hold their meetings and identify priority areas. The exact date of the meeting is being agreed upon, for now, it’s planned for Aug. 28,” Karin told sputniknews.kz.

The first meeting’s participants will also discuss proposed council rules.

“The members of the National Council will determine the most important topics. We do not want

to make an impression of imposing anything on our part. It is necessary to listen to the proposals of all participants,” he said.

The council’s structure includes the council’s chair, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, deputy chair and Presidential Administration Head Krymbek Kuserbayev, the council’s secretary Karin and more than 40 activists and experts from across various sectors. Among them are human rights activist Aigul Orynbek, information technologies specialist Baghdad Musin, journalist Mikhail Dorofeyev and economist Oraz Zhandosov.

“The President’s decree in June said that within a month the representatives of the Presidential Administration should consult with representatives of political parties and civil society. We did this... We asked them what they see in the future as suggestions for the work of the council. We also analysed publications, expert opinions in the media and social networks. At the same time, we analysed the activity of various public activists, because it happens that social groups or individuals manifest themselves during some events, and then go into the shadows and stop showing initiative. (In contrast) there are activists who constantly raise important issues and become active,” Karin told tengrinews.kz.

INSIDE

NATION
Housing sector investment through Nurlı Zher programme increases 15 percent **A2**
Selection for presidential personnel reserve begins **A2**

ECONOMY
Gross output in farming grows 10.5 percent in six months **A4**
Machine building sector sees consistent growth **A4**

EDITORIAL&OPINION
Celebrating Kazakhstan’s rich history helps move nation toward a successful future **A6**
Inclusive innovation consortia programme promotes social innovations **A6**

BUSINESS
Tiny house rental business emphasises design over size **A7**
FinReview report confirms country attracted \$250 billion in 10 years **A8**

NATION&CAPITAL
Hilton sees expansion opportunities in Central Asia, plans eco-friendly future **B1**
Improved infrastructure has increased tourism at Kolsai Lakes, say officials **B6**

NATION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

New Kazakh presidential assistants, domestic policy head appointed

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Aida Balayeva and Maulen Ashimbayev were appointed July 22 and July 30, respectively, as assistants to Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Gani Nygymetov was appointed July 30 as head of the Domestic Policy Department of the Administration of the President, Zakon.kz reports.

Balayeva was appointed as an Assistant and Head of Department for Monitoring the Consideration of Appeals of the Administration of the President. She left her post as head of the Department of Domestic Policy of the Presidential Administration which she held for several years. Balayeva has Bachelor of Arts degrees in Teaching and Law, as well as a PhD in



Aida Balayeva

Sociology. She started her state services career in 1999 working as a leading specialist of the Almaty Regional Department of Information and Public Accord. Balayeva has a strong media presence, frequently giving interviews to Kazakh media and has 13,000 Facebook followers.



Maulen Ashimbayev

Ashimbayev, previous to his appointment, had worked as first deputy chairman of Kazakhstan's ruling Nur Otan party from February 2018 to June 2019. Earlier, he was chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament). He



Gani Nygymetov

served as the Director of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President, the Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration. Ashimbayev started his career at the Press Development Fund of

the Ministry of Information and Press. He has Bachelor of Arts degrees in Economy and Philosophy and a PhD in Political Science.

Nygymetov was promoted from deputy head of the Department of Domestic Policy to the head of the department position, replacing Balayeva. He started his state services career as project manager of the Department of Public Administration of National Analytical Centre. He also has experience working for the Institute of Eurasian Integration and NURIS (Nazarbayev University Research and Innovation System). Nygymetov has a BA in International Relations, an MBA from Monterey International Studies Institute and an MPA from Nazarbayev University. He speaks English, Hindi and German fluently.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will deliver his first state-of-the-nation address as the head of state Sept. 2, he announced via Twitter. Tokayev intends to direct the Parliament and the Government to toughen punishments for drug dealing, paedophilia, sexual assault and other serious violations of the laws, among other initiatives.

Approximately 5,000 educational grants were allocated to children from large families and recipients of targeted social assistance for the 2019-2020 academic year following the task set by President Tokayev. Local executive bodies will provide grants on a competitive basis. Applicants are required to have Unified National Testing (UNT) results of at least 65 points for admission to national universities, at least 50 points for other universities and at least 60 points for pedagogical sciences. Applications were accepted until Aug. 10 and university admission is open until Aug. 25.

Nur-Sultan will host the first Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) Caspian Safety Symposium on safety issues and labour protection Sept. 24-25, reported the KazMunayGas national company press service. "We need to anticipate future events and create sustainable solutions for the future. There is a need to take measures to develop environmental protection policies together with the oil and gas industry regarding the conservation of water resources and protection of our natural resources, forests and wildlife. I look forward to discussing all these issues at the symposium on Occupational Safety, Health and Safety in the Caspian Region," said Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Magzum Mirzagaliyev.

KazAgro plans to alter its profit targets due to efficiency reform and increase by the end of 2020, reported the company's press service. A draft strategy for a 10-year period is also being developed. It will increase labour productivity and agricultural product export, attract new private investments and innovative technologies and develop new business initiatives in the regions. Measures were adopted to improve the quality of the loan portfolio and improve idle projects. The holding will invite foreign experts to the management bodies.

The Kazakh National Olympic Committee received an invitation to participate from July 24-Aug. 9 in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, according to olympic.kz. The country's team, which currently has ten licenses, includes swimmer Dmitry Balandin (100, 200 metre breaststroke), track and field athletes Olga Rypakova and Georgy Sheiko, cyclist Yevgeny Gidich, open water swimmer Vitaliy Khudyakov and men's classic archery team. More than 11,000 athletes from 206 countries are expected to take part in the completion.

An agricultural cooperation pilot model will be implemented in the Azat District in the Akmola Region, reported Kazinform. The project, developed by Saken Seifullin Kazakh Agro-technical University scholars, is aimed at organising a programme to fatten cattle at local farms. "Its mission is to create a rural non-profit consumer cooperative. Seventy percent of the livestock in the country is kept in farms of rural residents who think it is not profitable to join cooperatives. The large basic farms will become partners of the locals and provide them with land and other infrastructure. The Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund will provide 112 million tenge (US\$289,000) for the project," said university chief expert Toileukhan Nurkiyanov.

Housing sector investment through Nurly Zher programme increases 15 percent

By Assel Satubaldina

NUR-SULTAN – Investment in Kazakhstan's housing sector through the Nurly Zher housing programme increased 15.5 percent in the first six months of 2019 compared to the same period in 2018, Kazakh Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Roman Sklyar announced recently. Total investment through the programme through the end of June was 605.7 billion tenge (US\$1.57 billion).

The programme enables Kazakh citizens to purchase housing at favourable loan rates and offers opportunities for socially vulnerable groups to improve their housing conditions.

"We plan to build 118,000 houses in 2019 and, of those, 48,925 have been already built. To ensure timely commissioning of the housing, 81.7 billion tenge (US\$212.5 million) are available to build the engineering utilities at the sites," said the minister.

The country's regions received 36.8 billion tenge (US\$95.7 million) to build housing areas and 35.8 billion tenge (US\$93.1 million) have been used, he added.

The Turkistan, Kyzylorda, Al-

maty and Kostanai Regions are the country's leaders in housing construction.

"A total of 32.8 billion tenge (US\$85.3 million) have been allocated for the construction and purchase of rental housing without redemption for people on the waiting list in the city akimats (local administrations). Of that, 14.9 billion tenge (US\$38.7 million) have been received by the regions and 14.8 billion (US\$38.4 million) have been used," he said.

The programme enables Kazakh citizens to purchase housing at favourable loan rates and offers opportunities for socially vulnerable groups to improve their housing conditions.

The constructed rental housing is provided for long-term rental without the right of redemption to

socially vulnerable segments on the lists in the akimats in order of priority.

Low-income families can apply for preferential lending at a two percent annual rate given by Kazakhstan's Housing Construction Saving Bank. The bank has received 50 billion tenge (US\$130 million) for this purpose.

Sklyar said the plan is also to commission 6,000 apartments for citizens on the waiting list and, as of July, 924 apartments were commissioned.

Fifty billion tenge (US\$130 million) will go to the construction and purchase of the leased housing for large families nationwide.

Sklyar said 1,000 leased apartments will be built annually in Nur-Sultan, Almaty and Shymkent, the country's three largest cities, to ensure mobility for the country's young working population.

The government is working to present the new Nurly Zher programme that will be in effect until 2025. The revised programme, which is expected to be adopted by the end of 2019, will take into account heating, water supply and wastewater disposal, communal sector modernisation and housing renovation.

Selection for presidential personnel reserve begins

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Selection for the Presidential Personnel Reserve, which President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev talked about in his election programme, "Well-being for all! Continuity. Justice. Progress" will begin Sept. 1.

For the first time, young Kazakh people, who have achieved significant success in areas such as innovative technologies, engineering, business, medicine, economics and culture have the opportunity to be selected and appointed to high government and management positions in the country.

"If you are an author of successful initiatives, are able to offer new projects and come up with realistic and practical ideas that would allow to improve the welfare of Kazakh people, and if you are capable to make decisions promptly and adapt quickly to innovations, fill out an application form online to take part in the Presidential Personnel Reserve project! Challenge yourself and be at the top of the young and successful future leaders, who will play a crucial role in the development of Kazakhstan and will be the driving force of progress," reads an Agency for Civil Service Affairs press release.

The Agency has assured the public

the selection process will be fair and transparent. People eligible to take part will have to be under 35, hold an academic degree and have at least five years of working experience.

Those wishing to be in the reserve will have to pass several stages. After passing a theoretical knowledge assessment, the candidates will be evaluated on their leadership skills, critical thinking level, strategic reasoning, motivation, and values. The candidates will be required to write an essay, present their projects, pass an interview and other evaluative assessments. If successful, the candidates will further have to pass an Expert Committee interview with the deputy head of the Presidential Administration. The final stage will be an interview with the National Commission of Personnel Policy under the supervision of the head of the Presidential Administration.

Three hundred young professionals will be selected on a competitive basis. Before being appointed to their positions for three years, the individuals will take part in training. As part of the training, reservists will undergo internships in government bodies and organisations to acquire the competencies necessary to work with the public, to work in conditions of uncertainty and to develop public speaking skills.

Kazakhstan to digitise mining, metallurgy industries

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh government plans to digitise its mining and metallurgy industries, Chairman of the Committee for Industrial Development and Industrial Safety of the Kazakh Ministry of Industry and Infrastructural Development Kanat Baitov announced at a July 29 press conference on digitisation of the mining and metallurgical industries.

As a part of the 2018 to 2025 plan on the digitisation of mining and metallurgy enterprises, 192 projects are being digitised at a cost of \$4.4 billion. Profits resulting from the digitisation are expected to reach \$5.7 billion by 2025.

Seventy-nine digitisation projects have been completed with 53 more projected to be completed by the end of the year.

The ministry, in accordance with international experience, has developed measures to create an ecosystem that supports the digitisation efforts of domestic companies, Baitov said. These measures were included in the Digital Kazakhstan state programme.

"The fourth industrial revolution is one of the most important trends in the world. Through the introduction of Industry 4.0 technologies, it has become possible

to reduce production and transportation costs, optimise business processes, introduce new business models and significantly increase the competitiveness of industrial enterprises," Baitov said.

From 2015 to 2019, new mining and metallurgical enterprises with the latest equipment, meeting the standards of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, were launched.

"These are enterprises such as Kazminerals Aktogai and Bozshakol, Bakyrchik GOK, Sary-Arka copper processing and others. A new, modern automated YDD ferroalloy plant with a capacity of 180,000 tonnes per year was launched at the first stage. Three ore-thermal furnaces with a rotary bath comply with the best international standards, where the latest achievements of world production of ferrosilicon, equipped with elements of Industry 4.0, are applied," said Baitov.

The country's mining and metallurgical industry makes up 6.7 percent of the GDP, 25 percent of industrial manufacturing and 24 percent of total export products. The industry is represented by more than 800 enterprises and provides 185,000 jobs.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution or the Industry 4.0 term means a significant introduction of cyber systems into everyday life and work, as well as the automation of production processes.

Head of state appoints new akim of Shymkent

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev appointed July 30 Yerlan Aitakhanov the new akim (mayor) of Shymkent city. Previous akim Gabidulla Abdrakhimov was dismissed from his position.

Before the appointment, Aitakhanov served as akim (mayor) of the Otyrar District in the Turkistan Region and the deputy akim of the South Kazakhstan Region. Aitakhanov was born in 1971 and holds BA degrees in Law and Economics, with a PhD in Economics. He started his career in the banking sector.

Aitakhanov held Aug. 1 his first meeting as Shymkent akim. At the meeting, he encouraged akimat (administration) employees to address issues related to the distant districts of Shymkent, such as electricity, gas, light and road access. He also urged a prudent use of state budget funds.

"The President of the country pays great attention to the development of Shymkent. (Kazakh



Yerlan Aitakhanov

President) Kassym-Jomart Tokayev gave specific instructions to improve the quality of life of citizens. My task is to improve the welfare of residents of remote areas and provide them with decent infrastructure," Aitakhanov said.

The Head of the President's Administration Krymbek Kusherbayev said July 30 that Abdrakhimov was removed because he

did not fulfill the essential tasks of the position.

"As the head of state, Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev emphasised, now the most important thing is the dialogue between the people and the authorities. You know that Gabidulla Abdrakhimov had enjoyed the support and trust of the leadership of our country. He was appointed to the highest and most responsible posts in our country. Unfortunately, he did not realise it (the responsibility) soon enough... This contradicts the instructions of the head of state and, as a whole, undermines the authority of the state. Today, the political trust credit granted to Abdrakhimov has been exhausted," Kusherbayev said while presenting the new akim.

Abdrakhimov had served as the akim of Shymkent first from August 2015 to October 2017, leaving for a position of the Nur Otan ruling party secretary. He then served again as the mayor of one of the three cities of national importance in the country, along with Nur-Sultan and Almaty, from June 2018 to July 2019.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

A Kazakh delegation recently visited Tokyo to explore cooperation prospects and review joint projects in engineering, energy, agriculture, logistics, petrochemicals, light industry, robotics and information and communication technologies. The delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Yermeke Kosherbayev, met with Japanese companies including Chiyoda Technol, Hitachi Construction Machinery, JOGMEC, Marubeni, Nikke Group, Nippon Express, Sojitz, Sumitomo, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation and Terra Drone. The delegation briefed the Japanese businesses on Kazakh measures to improve the investment climate and expand opportunities for investors. During the meeting, Nippon Express, the world's fourth largest logistics company, announced the August opening of Central Asia's representative office in Kazakhstan. Hitachi Construction Machinery, which has been present in Kazakhstan since 2004, has also been working to open a regional mining equipment maintenance centre.

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU) has opened the Abu Nasr Al-Farabi centre in the Topkapı Culture Park Museum in Istanbul. The opening of the ethnographic museum in the Turkish capital marks the 1,150th anniversary of Al-Farabi, a world-renowned philosopher and Oriental thinker. The important date will be commemorated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2020. The centre will play a key role in preserving Al-Farabi's legacy, whose works served as the foundation for scientific development worldwide. "The opening of the Al-Farabi House Museum in Turkey is another important milestone in the popularisation of the legacy of the Great Son of the Great Steppe, who played a significant role in the history of human civilisation and the treasury of Turkic and Kazakh culture," said KazNU Rector Galym Mutanov.

Nur-Sultan will host the 2020 International Economics Olympiad (IEO) among schoolchildren on the Astana International Campus at the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC). The IEO council, which consists of 24 countries, unanimously approved Kazakhstan's application during its July 25 open voting as part of the IEO event held July 24-31 in St. Petersburg. More than 100 high school seniors from more than 20 countries participate in the Olympiad every year. The event will contribute to one of the AIFC Bureau's main missions – to develop human capital and improve financial literacy in the region through thematic events and support initiatives in finance, economics, education and new technologies.

Jakarta, Indonesia recently hosted the presentation of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS). The IOFS was launched in 2016 at Kazakhstan's initiative. IOFS Director General Yerlan Baidaulet invited the Indonesian side to join the organisation and take part in the IOFS General Assembly's second session Aug. 27-29 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. During his visit, Baidaulet met at the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture with Food Safety Agency Director General Agung Hendriadi, Special Envoy of the Indonesian President for the Middle East and OIC Alvi Shihab and Halal Product Assurance Agency head professor Ir. Sukoso. Hendriadi noted the importance of ensuring food security for Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country. He commended the Kazakh efforts to promote the organisation and said the Indonesian side will consider joining the organisation and participating in the upcoming assembly session.

Eurasian Intergovernmental Council discusses integration, status of current agreements

By Elya Altynsarina

Nur-Sultan – Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member states prime ministers discussed ways to increase integration, the status of agreements and future cooperation at the Aug. 9 Eurasian Intergovernmental Council (EIC) meeting in Cholpon Ata, Kyrgyzstan, according to the Kazakh Prime Minister's office.

The prime ministers of Kazakhstan Askar Mamin, Belarus Syarhey Rumas, Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, Kyrgyzstan Mukhammedkaly Abylgaziev, Russia Dmitry Medvedev and Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission Tigran Sargsyan attended the meeting held on the shore of the famous Issyk-Kul lake.

Participants discussed trade and economic cooperation, the removal of obstacles in the EAEU domestic market, the regulation of the alcohol and financial markets, the cooperation of member state custom services and other issues.

Mamin said EAEU members are working to implement EAEU treaty provisions on cooperation and to draft strategic directions to develop EAEU economic integration until 2025. The prime minister also urged the union to prioritise industrial cooperation, create a digital map of industrial enterprises across member states and develop a joint programme to develop the economy of simple things. This sector can in-



L-R: Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Belarusian Prime Minister Syarhey Rumas, Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Mukhammedkaly Abylgaziev, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission Tigran Sargsyan.

crease the gross product of up to 1.5 percent of GDP, he said.

Mamin also said the EAEU has the potential to integrate into the international transport network and said simplifying transit procedures through union territory and the EAEU Unified Transit System, currently being developed,

will help that integration. Mamin said the union must develop cooperation in financial markets, in protecting the rights and interests of consumers of financial services and investors, in trade and in investment cooperation. He suggested using the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) to help

build that cooperation. Kazakhstan has created a technology hub within the AIFC. The hub has the capacity to build infrastructure to unite all regional participants in the financial technology market. The hub is also an incubator for new financial technology products. To enhance cooperation in

this area, a plan of joint activities between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the AIFC for 2019-2021 was signed in the framework of the memorandum of cooperation between the EAEU and the AIFC.

In total, 12 documents were signed during the meeting.

Guarantor states of Syrian talks in Kazakh capital reaffirm commitment to eliminating terrorist groups in Syria



By Elya Altynsarina

NUR-SULTAN – Russia, Iran and Turkey, the guarantor states of the Astana Process Syrian peace talks in Nur-Sultan, issued a joint statement following Aug. 2 talks in the Kazakh capital reaffirming their commitment to co-

operate to eliminate in Syria all groups designated by the United Nations as terrorist organisations.

These groups include DAESH/ISIL, Al-Nusra Front and all other individuals, groups and entities associated with Al-Qaeda or DAESH/ISIL and other UN designated terrorist groups.

The sides also agreed to protect

civilians according to international law and to protect the military personnel of the three guarantor states within and outside the Idlib de-escalation area.

The statement also says that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict and reaffirms the commitment to advance the Syrian-led and Syrian-owned,

UN-facilitated political process in line with the UN Security Council resolution 2254 and the decisions of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi.

The parties praised a July 31 mutual release of detainees within the framework of the working group of the Astana format. The guarantor states also said

the working group is an effective tool to build confidence between the Syrian parties and agreed to increase its activities.

The joint statement stresses the need to increase humanitarian assistance to all Syrians throughout the country without preconditions. The guarantor states called on the international community, the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies, to enhance assistance to Syria by developing early recovery projects, including the restoration of basic infrastructure assets – water and power supply facilities, schools and hospitals as well as the humanitarian mine action. They also discussed holding the International Conference on the Humanitarian Assistance to Syria.

The joint statement followed the 13th round of Astana Process talks hosted by the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Russia was represented in the talks by Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Syria Alexander Lavrentiev; Turkey was represented by Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Önal and Senior Advisor to the Iran's Foreign Ministry Ali Asghar Haji headed the Iranian delegation. The next round of Astana Process talks in Nur-Sultan will be in October.

Kazakhstan urges United States, Russia to resolve INF Treaty issues

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan remains hopeful the United States and Russia will negotiate and resolve their problems concerning the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty through existing bilateral and multilateral platforms, said the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs in an Aug. 4 statement on the Aug. 2 withdrawal of the United States from the treaty.

"The Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its regret over the decision of the United States to withdraw its participation from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles – one of the most important factors in maintaining international security," reads the ministry's statement on the arms control treaty signed in 1987 by the United States and Soviet Union, banning their use of short and medium-range missiles.

The United States suspended its obligations under the treaty Feb. 1, providing "Russia a final opportunity to correct its noncompliance," said U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo in an Aug. 2 statement. "(The country withdrew from the treaty Aug. 2) because Russia failed to return to full and verified compliance through the destruction of its noncompliant missile system – the SSC-8 or 9M729 ground-launched, intermediate-range cruise missile."

Russia denies violating the treaty. The country suspended its treaty obligations Feb. 2 in response to the United States' treaty suspension, and Russian President Vladimir Putin stated Aug. 5 that "as of Aug. 2, the INF Treaty no longer exists."

Kazakhstan inherited the treaty's obligations and became a participant in the treaty process with significant INF sites on its territory following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Kazakh Min-

istry of Foreign Affairs emphasised the treaty's termination could "trigger a new arms race in many regions of the world and poses a serious threat to global peace and security," calling for the United States and Russia to resolve their disagreements over the treaty in a Feb. 5 statement following the countries' treaty suspensions.

"Kazakhstan has always stood for the preservation and strict observance of the treaty by all parties and supported its value as a unique historic agreement that allowed to eliminate a whole class of nuclear delivery vehicles and achieve significant progress in nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," its Aug. 4 statement reads.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Gross output in farming grows 10.5 percent in six months

By Assel Satubaldina

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh farming sector grew 10.5 percent in its gross output in the first six months of 2019 and produced 1.063 trillion tenge (US\$2.76 billion) worth of products, Kazakh Minister of Agriculture Saparkhan Omarov announced recently.

Beef production totalled 477,000 tonnes meeting 98 percent of the country's demand. Lamb production reached 150,000 tonnes and pork reached 86,000 tonnes.

There are 7.2 million heads of cattle, 18.7 million heads of sheep, 2.6 million heads of horses and 44.3 million birds, he added.

The country's national agriculture development programme envisions measures to create long-term sector development programmes in farming.

In the next ten years, the plan is to create 80,000 family farms in

beef cattle and sheep farming that will work with meat processing and feedlots. The programme is designed to boost the export potential of the Kazakh beef and lamb.

In 2018, Kazakhstan exported 19,900 tonnes of beef, 3,000 tonnes of lamb and 400 tonnes of pork. This year, the government plans to double the pork production, particularly targeting the Chinese market.

The target also is to facilitate import substitution of dairy products. The ministry seeks to bring milk production to 1 million tonnes.

Omarov said the construction of industrial dairy farms will facilitate progress.

"As part of the agriculture development programme, the ministry is implementing long-term sector programmes to develop farming. Each programme is decomposed into indicators across the regions to create production capacity," said the minister.

The ministry, he noted, is also working to remove restrictions and disagreements in veterinary and sanitary requirements for processed products in the export priority countries for Kazakhstan.

"The measures will help increase the volume of beef exports to 37 percent, lamb to 32 percent and pork to 43 percent. Competitive advantages of the Kazakh products, environmental friendliness can help boost agriculture growth," said Omarov.

The minister emphasised the need to establish the system to process and certify organic and Halal products.

"The law on the production of organic products was adopted in 2015, but there is no plan of the measures to implement the law. It is also problematic that there is no legislation for Halal production in Kazakhstan, though Kazakhstan initiated the creation of the Islamic Food Security Organisation [of the

Organisation for Islamic Cooperation]," he said.

The sector is also looking for strategic investors and seeks greater involvement of transnational companies.

Among the recent projects involving foreign investors is a camel production plant in the Turkestan Region with Chinese Golden Camel Group company and a dairy plant in the Pavlodar Region run by the French Lactalis company, the second largest dairy producer in Europe.

Iranian Empire Food launched the construction of a meat processing complex in the Almaty Region this year with a capacity of 100 heads of cattle and 1,500 heads of small cattle.

Another meat processing plant with a capacity of 5,000 tonnes per year will be launched this year in Nur-Sultan.

The work is ongoing to attract such investors as Chinese Grand

Pharm, German Baumann, Italian Inalca and Cremonini in the meat processing sector.

Omarov said the U.S. transnational companies will also invest in a modern meat processing complex to produce beef. The group of American experts has audited the current market and prepared an analytical report for the American companies.

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank will assist the Kazakh government in preparing the programme to support the development of the field.

In 2018, Kazakhstan's KazAgro Holding, the country's key lending institution in agriculture, increased the volume of finance up to 400 billion tenge (US\$1 billion). Of this, 114 billion tenge (US\$296.5 million), 30 percent of the total loan volumes, went to lending in farming.

In 2019, the holding plans to allocate nearly 134 billion tenge (US\$348.5 million) to the development of farming.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

The Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs (NCE) has proposed introducing three industries to the list of goods exempt from government procurement, reported atameken.kz. The chamber, along with the business community, has created a list of light and furniture industry items and building materials and is preparing their corresponding justifications for their request. Last year, Kazakhstan introduced an exemption tool in government procurement procedures for foreign cars, transformers and cables. In March, the government supported the Atameken NCE initiative to introduce exemptions in all roadmaps to develop sectors of the simple things economy. Since 2015, businesses have repeatedly called on government agencies to increase the share of Kazakh products in the public procurement system, according to Atameken Manufacturing Department Director Arman Mambetbayev.

In August, Kazakhstan is introducing a ban on exporting cattle hides by road from the country for a period of up to five years, reported the Kazakh Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development press service. At present, the ban applies only to exporting hides by road introduced in the first paragraph of the light industry roadmap for 2019-2021. The ban aims to prevent budget losses, regulate export and develop production with high added value and, as a result, increase tax payments and create new jobs, especially as the hides are transported without customs duties.

As part of the lending mechanism for prioritised projects (the economy of simple things), second-tier Kazakh banks approved 14 light industry projects through July for 2.8 billion tenge (US\$7.21 million), reported the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development. In conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, it is working to restore the procurement network and, as part of existing programmes, solve the financial support issue for raw material procurers and leather enterprises. As of May, 1,025 enterprises were operating in light industry, 96 percent of which are small businesses. Light industry manufactured products are divided among textile production (51 percent), clothing (38 percent) and leather and related goods (11 percent). In the first half of 2019, product volume grew by 16.7 percent. The growth in textile products and clothing is due to an increase in the production of cotton fibre, finished textile products and outerwear.

The Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs has organised a pilot project from July 30-March 31 to mark shoe products in Kazakhstan, according to an order by the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development. The purpose is to understand and analyse the appropriateness of introducing marking and its effect on shadow economy imports and counterfeit goods. The project will be carried out on a voluntary basis by issuing free marking codes. Atameken NCE compiled and provided the ministry with the list of companies participating in the project, which included both importers and manufacturers.

The National Bank of Kazakhstan initiated an independent asset quality review (AQR) Aug. 1 of the 14 largest banks in the country, which have approximately 87 percent of banking sector assets, reported the bank's press service. According to the bank, the assessment is being completed consistent with the European Central Bank methodology in compliance with common international quality standards. AQR will help to determine the bank's need for capital, assess the quality of loan portfolios and analyse lending practices. The plan is to complete the assessment by December. According to the results, the National Bank will devise an action plan to adopt corrective measures.

Machine building sector sees consistent growth

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh car manufacturing increased by 13.4 percent to 553 billion tenge (US\$1.4 billion) in the first half of 2019. During that period, 128 projects worth 367 billion tenge (US\$948 million) were launched and an additional 10 projects worth 54 billion tenge (US\$140 million) are slated to start by the end of the year.

Machinery production, which was approximately one trillion tenge (US\$2.5 billion) in 2018, has also increased three-fold during the years of industrialisation.

Machine building is a priority for the country's industrial and innovative progress, said Vice Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Amaniyaz Yerzhanov at an Aug. 1 government meeting.

"Machinery import is worth approximately \$13 billion. Domestic production is worth more than \$3 billion. We need to work more in this direction," he said.

Electrical, oil and gas engineering and car manufacturing equipment are the top three imported products.

"The ministry will continue its work on the development and promotion of machinery products and the creation of favourable conditions for investors," he added. Local companies are continuing to create high-tech products using modern technology and equipment. Electrical engineering has shown stable production growth and in-depth localisation.

The agricultural engineering sector has increased production since 2018 facilitated by government support measures, including a value-added tax exemption on product sales.

The increase in mining engi-

neering production is related to manufacturing spare parts for drilling and sinking machines, which occupy 73 percent of mining engineering.

The ministry and Kazakhstan Machine-Building Union developed the machinery industry development roadmap for 2019-2024 to increase productivity, domestic consumption and export-oriented products and reduce import dependence.

"The development of the machine-building industry is an indicator of the economy. The machinery industry makes up 40 percent of sector turnover in Germany and 27 percent in Russia. Unfortunately, our country has not reached this level. However, the machinery industry has been developing in recent years. The imports are declining and the number of enterprises is growing. We observe a demand for products both domestically and abroad. We should pay more attention to this sector," said Union Chairperson Meiram Pshembayev.

Production and labour productivity are expected to increase two-fold and exports, 1.2 times.

"The road map envisages the adoption of a law on industrial policy. It is also intended to create the Industrial Development Fund of Kazakhstan at the ministry. There is a proposal to introduce tax preferences for enterprises to modernise existing capacities and further increase the export potential of domestic enterprises," he added.

More than 2,600 machine-building enterprises with 64,000 employees operate in the country. Average labour productivity per employee is \$12,400. According to the ministry, one job in engineering stimulates the creation of approximately seven-eight jobs in related industries.

Government approves new legislative, executive roadmap to attract investment

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh government approved July 30 a new roadmap outlining legislative and executive measures to attract foreign investment, Zakon.kz reports.

The roadmap also outlines measures to be taken within the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) to attract investment.

The roadmap's legislative section includes measures to alter taxation and liberalise the visa and migration regimes. It also includes legislation measures related to contracts concluded with foreign partners.

The executive work outlined in the roadmap includes the formation and maintenance by Kazakh Invest of a single pool of investment projects; active involvement of state institutions in attracting direct and portfolio foreign investments; the adoption of measures addressing the development of international flights in Kazakh cities; the creation of a media hub for business media; the development of the annual communication plan for targeted work with key audiences of investors and the building of direct contacts with potential partners.

In relation to the AIFC, the

roadmap includes a section on the possibility of launching an initial public offering regarding the AIFC "Leaders of Competitiveness – National Champions 2.0" programme participants exchange. It also includes measures related to the inclusion in certain contracts of recommendations regarding the applicable contract law of AIFC law and the judicial (arbitration) clause of the AIFC or IAC Court. It also includes measures related to work regarding the unification of tax benefits for the AIFC as well as measures related to the Astana Hub, Astana EXPO 2017 and Nazarbayev University. Also, it previews the operating of the Investor Services Center at the AIFC Expat

Center using the single window services method.

"Economic development is directly related to attracting investment. It is necessary to look for new niches, create mechanisms for attracting investments and provide all support measures. The main task is to double the volume of investment in the economy," Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin said July 10.

With the roadmap being approved, the Ministry of National Economy was instructed to summarise the information provided and inform the Government about the measures taken regarding the roadmap implementation at least once every six months.



GDP grows 4.2 percent January to July

Continued from Page A1

Kazakhstan's monthly inflation rate was 0.2 percent in July, said National Bank Chairman Yerbolat Dossayev at the same meeting. The annual inflation rate is 5.4 percent as of July, which is "within the inflation corridor of 4-6 percent."

"Despite the seasonal decline in prices for fruits and vegetables, the deflationary processes typical of the summer period were not observed," he said.

State budget revenue growth was 114.5 percent in January-July, First Vice Minister of Finance Berik Sholpankulov told the government.

Deposits in national currency increased 5.5 percent, and deposits in foreign currency decreased 19.8 percent in January-July. Deposit dollarisation thus fell to 41.6 percent in this time period.

Approximately 55,000 houses were commissioned in Kazakhstan in January-July, said Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Roman Sklyar at the meet-

ing.

"There is an increase in the commissioning of houses, compared to last year, in seven regions," he said. "The regional akimats (administrations) will need to intensify their efforts."

Just more than 16,600 applications to the 7-20-25 affordable housing programme for 188.3 billion tenge (US\$486.55 million) were accepted, of which 9,813 applications for 112.7 billion tenge (US\$291.21 million) were approved by banks.

Banks and microfinance organisations wrote off fines and penalties from unsecured consumer loans of 33.6 billion tenge (US\$86.82 million) for 1.2 million people as of July 30 as part of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's recent debt relief initiative. Debt repayments of unsecured consumer loans for socially vulnerable groups will be completed by the end of August, so that 508,000 people will receive 105.5 billion tenge

(US\$272.6 million) of state support.

Mamin concluded the meeting by noting the government's priorities are to improve living standards, raise incomes, create jobs and attract greater investment.

"The plan for specific measures (on socioeconomic development) approved at the (July 15) expanded government meeting will have a positive impact on the further development of our economy," he said.

Later in the day, Tokayev chaired an economic policy meeting at the Akorda presidential residence, also attended by Mamin, Dossayev and Minister of Labour and Social Protection Berdibek Saparbayev. At the meeting, the head of state stressed the need to determine the prospects for mid-term economic development given negative trends on the international markets as well as to ensure the improvement of the living standards of the Kazakh citizens whose interests should be considered as the top priority.



BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Implementing 13 projects in the capital will attract more than 27.6 billion tenge (US\$71.33 million) of investment into Kazakhstan's economy, reported the city akimat (administration). In education, 11 projects will create more than 10,000 school spots, 1,000 places in kindergartens and 1,500 jobs. Singapore International School will construct a campus, including dormitories, and TAMOS Education will attract more than four billion tenge (US\$10.34 million) in investment to construct a private school with a physics and mathematics emphasis. SABIS will build an international school by 2023, creating 1,000 school and 250 kindergarten places and 200 jobs. Its construction will cost \$15.5 million. EURO AST KZ2019's projects will also create 500 school and 120 kindergarten places. In the previous school year, Nur-Sultan had 108 schools with a shortage of places for children. Akim (Mayor) Altai Kulginov noted that, when choosing a school construction site, it is important to account for population density and potential connections to engineering networks and infrastructure.

The Kazakh Anti-Corruption Agency will create a service allowing businesses to review their partners on integrity, said the agency's Integrity Department Director Daniyar Sabirbayev at a recent briefing. As part of its anti-corruption project for supporting businesses, the agency learned complaints about dishonest business partners began to outnumber those about dishonest government officials. The service will be an objective tool for assessing whether business partners pay their taxes or have the appropriate licences, for example, and to incentivise better business behaviour. The action is needed "to make it easier for entrepreneurs to navigate the business environment," he said.

Kazakhstan will develop a mobile application to independently assess its road quality, said Anti-Corruption Agency Integrity Department Director Daniyar Sabirbayev at a briefing. The Kazakh agency recently opened the Sapaly Zholy (Quality Road) project office, which is developing an app to evaluate road quality through phone vibrations and aiming to engage residents in road quality control. The app, which will launch in September, will become "the first project allowing for civilian control and monitoring of road quality in Kazakhstan," he noted. Kazakhstan's roads were recently renovated under the first phase of the 2015-2019 Nurly Zhol programme using 337.5 billion tenge (US\$872.24 million) from the national budget. More than 6,800 kilometres of national roads will have been reconstructed by year's end.

Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund is constructing five buildings in the Turkestan Region, reported the region's akimat (administration). They include the Palace of Schoolchildren, Congress Hall, 7,000-seat central stadium and Khoja Akhmed Yassawi Museum, which will open next year. The Turkestan Region, established in June 2018, is the youngest among the nation's 14 regions. It measures 11.6 million hectares and is home to nearly three million people.

British-based Genus Breeding Ltd. will help to increase the meat productivity of Aberdeen Angus and Hereford breeds by improving the genetic quality of livestock at AkTep's feedlots in more than 500 farms in the Aktobe Region, reported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs press service. According to preliminary calculations, the annual increase in profits from each newborn calf will be 50,000-100,000 tenge (US\$129-\$258) in the first years of the project. "The project will reduce the actual volume of feed used and the growth time of cattle and decrease carbon dioxide emissions. AkTep company has the right to use the British company's logo in advertisement products to increase the Kazakh company's international competitiveness and to attract foreign investors to expand production," reads the release.

AIFC FinTech Hub participates in Startup Nation festival in Thailand

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – Fintech Hub, which is part of the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), participated in the recent Startup Nation festival in Bangkok, Thailand. Fintech Hub presented three startups, which became finalists in a global Visa programme representing financial technology (fintech) startups.

"The values of such an event are the exchange of experience, expansion of horizons, the opportunity to tell the world about themselves and meetings with experts who can give good advice," said Rahmet App CEO and partner of ChocoFamily holding Nurken Rzaliev.

"We are delighted to participate in the biggest startup festival in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region. The AIFC will strive to further strengthen relationship with the National Innovation Agency of Thailand for the benefit of our fintech startups and collaborate toward strengthening fintech ecosystem between South-East Asia and Kazakhstan," said AIFC Chief Development Officer Kairat Kaliyev.

The event was organised by the National Innovation Agency of Thailand and included conferences and exhibitions featuring startup development in a wide range of areas. The festival is the



Members of one of the start-up companies.

largest event of its kind in ASEAN. Overall, more than 60,000 visitors and more than 400 participating startups attended.

Fintech Hub presented three startups at the International startup pavilion. All three startups were the finalists of the Visa

Everywhere Initiative, a global Visa programme supporting financial technology startups. TripViator (VISA Everywhere

Initiative finalist) is a marketplace that helps book tours, excursions and events around the world using cashless payment. TripViator facilitates booking tours from qualified and licensed tour operators supported by genuine customer reviews and offers a best-price guarantee and provides a safe way to pay for tours around the world.

Bankmarket (VISA Everywhere Initiative finalist) is a financial marketplace for the new generation, which allows banks and non-banking financial institutions to meet the many and complex needs of customers. Bankmarket.uz is offering a one-stop shop for financial services and products, news and financial education, robo-advisors and chatbots, Remote Client Identification and Mobile payment.

Rahmet App (VISA Everywhere Initiative finalist) represents ChocoFamily, the biggest e-commerce holding in the Central Asia region with \$150 million in gross billings in the last year and impressive 12.4 percent share of all e-commerce market in Kazakhstan. They are the leading Fintech, health-tech company with 1,800 merchants and 35,000 active customers.

In May, representatives of the National Innovation Agency of Thailand visited the AIFC Fintech Hub to discuss potential cooperation to develop the Fintech ecosystem between Kazakhstan and Thailand.

EBRD projects in Kazakhstan focus on small business, women's entrepreneurship and investment environment

Continued from Page A1

Overall, the EBRD and six partner financial institutions – Amur Credit, Bank Kassa Nova, Bank Centre Credit, ForteBank, micro-finance 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 Women in Business programme is oriented at supporting women-owned or women-led businesses. It is a financing line that we give to the banks and then the banks under our guidance lend on to women businesses. It



Betsy Nelson

comes connected with a number of aspects, which gives them access to finance, which is one of the challenges of women's businesses. We often have connections to trainers or advisers or consultants who can work with them to help them develop breakthroughs for their business if they want to grow them. For example, if somebody wants to export or add more value to the process that they have, we'll get them a consultant who can work with them to achieve that. We help women network and have access to services," she said.

The bank also started a mentoring programme with the Association of Businesswomen of Kazakhstan.

"Women have a lot more to do. They've got their families; they've got their homes and they've got their jobs. And they don't really have time to network as much. They also don't have

time or ability to connect to other businesswomen because there aren't a lot of women's networks. So, the mentoring is starting to create this. And we're seeing real enthusiasm with the mentors to try and take it to a larger scale. We know that we've given women the opportunity to train and to develop. I think we've got 500 women in the last couple of years that have been through some sort of training or enhancing skill," she said.

Gender equality and equality of opportunities are one of the EBRD's strategic priorities. The equal opportunities initiative promotes equal opportunities in the workforce related to recruitment, retention, promotion, wages and work-life balance and the presence of women on corporate boards.

"I think there are a lot of women out there that don't want to be entrepreneurs. They don't have a business idea on how to make their own business. One of the women I met in Nur-Sultan actually started a nursery because she needed a safe place to take her children when she went to work, and she now has a nursery business. By necessity she had an opportunity to create a business. Many women want to have a job or even a career and be able to move up in a more structured environment. We talk a lot about women entrepreneurs. But I think we have to recognise women as a whole getting into the workforce. And I think the government does have a role to play. I think some of it is they have a lot of state-owned companies, so they have a perfect opportunity to create a level playing field for women to enter the workforce and to be promoted," she said.

Nelson also emphasised the Kazakh government's efforts to create a better environment for businesses. The establishment of the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) serves as a good example.

"Kazakhstan has built a world-class platform which hopefully will turn into a world-class business. The AIFC is a fascinating place. What they have achieved

in setting this thing up at a super high standard is absolutely amazing in less than a year. The chal-

lenge now is to get businesses and people to come in and use it. They have 200 companies registered

but they need a lot more. And they need to start having people use the exchange," she said.



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

WE AGREE.



human energy®

CHEVRON, the CHEVRON Hallmark and HUMAN ENERGY are registered trademarks of Chevron Intellectual Property LLC. © 2019 Chevron U.S.A. Inc. All rights reserved.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Celebrating Kazakhstan's rich history helps move nation toward a successful future



The entrance to the Boraldai Saka burial mounds in the Almaty Region.

When the Ruhani Zhanjyru initiative to modernise Kazakhstan's national identity was launched by Kazakhstan's First President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in 2017, it was recognised as a courageous step. It came, after all, at a time when many other countries seemed, as now, to be looking inwards and often backwards.

Given this background, it takes boldness and confidence to buck such a widespread trend. But that is exactly what the Ruhani Zhanjyru (Modernisation of Kazakhstan's Identity) programme did with its public statement that Kazakhstan intended to modernise not just its economy but also its identity – and would do it by continuing to engage with the world. The importance attached to this initiative was reinforced when President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in his inaugural address, made it one of the cornerstones of his government's programmes. It showed he was determined to build on his predecessor's legacy and to harness Kazakhstan's past to forge a better future.

For while the programme is about creating a modern identity fit for the challenges of the new century, it is not about turning its back on what has gone before. On the contrary, central to the initiative is a commitment to celebrate the country's history, culture and tradition – and to share it with the wider world.

This commitment has already

led to increased efforts to preserve and restore religious and historical sites, such as the capital's Green Mosque. Destroyed during the Soviet era, the restoration of this 19th century mosque is part of the programme's Sacred Geography initiative.

In Almaty, too, there are plans for new museums, including around the fascinating Boraldai Saka burial mounds. At the same time, the old city's historic buildings and architecture are getting the investment they deserve.

We are seeing the same efforts across the country. Cultural, religious and historical sites are being restored and their relevance and importance to Kazakhstan and global history celebrated. After all, Kazakhstan's position linking Asia, Europe and the Middle East means what happened here often had a profound impact far from our lands.

This impact – and the rich and fascinating history in itself – is one of the reasons why Kazakhstan is finding itself increasingly a tourist destination. As part of Ruhani Zhanjyru, new visitor centres to capitalise on cultural tourism are being opened in the Turkestan region and the Ulytau District of the Karaganda region as well as Almaty.

But while the Ruhani Zhanjyru has rightly given new priority to the country's history, it is not, as we have said before, backward-looking or narrow in its approach. It places it within the context of

a modern, dynamic and evolving country and people.

The 100 New Faces initiative tells this story through the lives and aspirations of our present citizens, young and old. New global audiences, too, are being introduced to talented contemporary Kazakh musicians, writers and artists. Collections of modern Kazakh writing, for example, are being prepared for publication in the main world languages.

Importantly, too, under its umbrella, there is an emphasis on maximising the adaptability, openness and drive of our citizens to equip them for the challenges of the future. There is a strong focus on education, whether it is foreign language proficiency or computer literacy.

It is about ensuring minds and borders are open, not closed. The gradual move to the Latin alphabet, which will bring the Kazakh language into the group of languages accounting for about 70 percent of business communications in the world, is a symbol of this readiness to change if it is in the long-term interest of the country.

Kazakhstan, ever since independence, has been open to ideas and investment, ready to learn, prepared to join together with those who share our values and ambitions to find common solutions. We are showing, too, that a country which understands its history and values well does not need to be fearful about change or learning from societies beyond its borders.

Inclusive innovation consortia programme promotes social innovations

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – Entrepreneurs and start-ups seeking to improve the quality of people's lives, especially for groups with limited access to resources, have an opportunity to participate in the inclusive innovation consortia grant programme. Launched by the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science and the World Bank, the programme promotes and develops commercial innovations in Kazakhstan by providing grants as part of the Fostering Productive Innovation Project (FPIP).

The objective is to support establishing and developing enterprises with a strong positive social and possibly environmental impact.

"With independence and objectivity, ISCB experts give scientific and commercial recommendations, based on their background and experience, on how to help projects succeed," international consultant Professor Mehdi Majidi, a member of the International Science and Commercialisation Board (ISCB), which evaluates grant applications and selects candidates, explained in an exclusive interview for this story.

"The candidates thus receive world-class expertise that is available only to multinational companies, a key factor for Kazakh start-ups to compete in international markets. The Kazakh project management unit (PMU) has been very good at keeping track and focusing on how to disburse funds to select applicants while applying rules and regulations of procurement and investments," he said.

He noted the projects make social impact a priority far beyond economic impact.

"Inclusiveness is a more practical part of sustainable development and not everyone knows how to deal with it. We have initiated it and been successful at getting good and innovative ideas in terms of social benefits. Making inclusiveness initiatives part of FPIP leads to a fair distribution of wealth, job creation and cooperation. Universities, faculties and scientists are now interacting with commercial players. The interrelation that FPIP creates with different parts of society enhances social structures and wider distribution of wealth," he added.

Socioeconomic development today involves people's participation in improving their own lives. Multidisciplinary interaction and collaboration are needed to bring about this improvement.



Mehdi Majidi

"We encourage recipients in this and we show them the way. Even a few success stories can have a big impact. Imagine that instead of bringing know-how, technique and applications from outside, small companies work together to make Kazakh society better at realising the economic as well as social impacts of these actions. The trend is to measure success not only in financial results, but on the betterment of society," he said.

The list of projects receiving inclusive innovation consortia grants includes a complex for rehabilitating children with autism, medical software platform for screening four different eye conditions and affordable, mobile separator for cleaning crops that greatly increases farmers' income.

The list of projects receiving inclusive innovation consortia grants includes a complex for rehabilitating children with autism, medical software platform for screening four different eye conditions and affordable, mobile separator for cleaning crops that greatly increases farmers' income.

Majidi, who has been working on the FPIP project for the last three years, appreciates the Kazakh government and ministers' support for the initiatives aimed at improving standards of living.

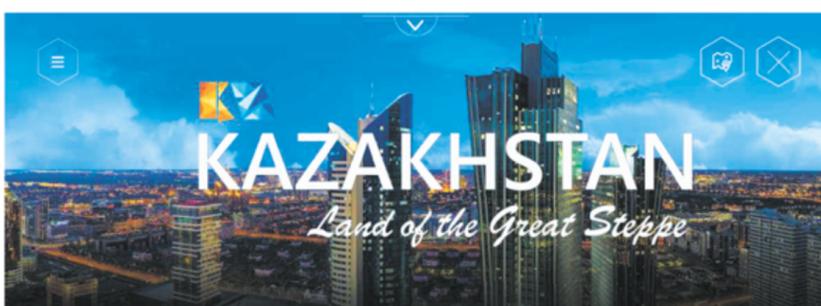
"Key to the success of this project is that ISCB is an independent group with world-class expertise. For applicants, what started as an idea is now an actual commercial venture competing in the international market. Anyone can have ideas. This project has created the possibility of turning them into concrete solutions," he said.

There is a need to raise public awareness of what the projects have created, in turn encouraging others to apply and submit new ideas.

The success of similar projects is generally measured by financial and economic impact, but the social benefits are also important.

"Awareness of social impact is very important, as it encourages more participation and general appreciation, all factors that can be used as a role model for other countries. As an example, the concept of inclusiveness is often misunderstood, but we have been able to initiate it in Kazakhstan and be successful with the support of Kazakh ministers and other government stakeholders. The success of inclusiveness projects here could potentially become a best practice and replicated elsewhere," he said.

The World Bank, which sponsors the project, considers it one of its most successful, he added. The main reason is, first and foremost, the Kazakh government buy-in and its support, supervision and flexibility in adapting to new ideas, followed by a professional project management unit team and finally an independent international advisory board.



KAZAKHSTAN

Land of the Great Steppe



DISCOVER KAZAKHSTAN WITH A NEW APP

Google play



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>

THE ASTANA TIMES

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to announce that readers in Kazakhstan can now subscribe to the print edition of **The Astana Times**. The newspaper will be delivered to your door twice per month.

If you're interested in receiving **The Astana Times** in print, along with enjoying our online stories, act now! Contact **KazPost** near you and set up the subscription using our new subscription index **64572**.

We hope all of you continue to enjoy reading and sharing our stories.

Sincerely,
Roman Vassilenko
Editor-in-Chief
The Astana Times

THE ASTANA TIMES
astanatimes.com

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: 1369

PRINT RUN: 6,000

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Tiny house rental business emphasises design over size

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – The tiny house movement has reached the world's largest landlocked country, enabling inhabitants of homes under 100 square metres to lead simpler lives.

Although home sizes tend to grow with higher incomes, iHouse Almaty Founder Dinara Zhashibekova finds that true luxury is finding "a quiet spot where you can rest your mind, body and soul without the necessity of maintenance, paying off your mortgage for many years and stressing out about it."

Zhashibekova was initiated into the construction of smaller homes in 2013 when she came across prefabricated homes, manufactured off-site in advance for easy shipping and assembling.

"That clicked with me. It is something that I had always been interested in, since the time when my husband and I built our first home in the early 2000s. Within the next six months, things happened pretty quickly. I opened a company, went to Moscow and bought the franchise for the construction idea, which is a structural insulated panelling business," she said.

Her company built several hous-



Dinara Zhashibekova

es in Almaty's Nauryzbay District and the nearby town of Kaskelen before Kazakhstan's 2014 currency devaluation hit Happy Home Construction hard and left it bankrupt. Passionate about stylish, simple and functional homes and even more determined to realise her ideas, she found the resources to build her first container house in 2017.

"I was not planning iHouse Almaty as a rental business, that happened on its own," she said on how her degree in hotel and restaurant management was unexpectedly put to use. "I just had it as a demo house to show people that you can live with 25-40 square metres but in a beautiful place and that you could actually have something for less money but with better build quality and materials. My idea for a tiny home was that you could have your space and, when you

need to, you can close it down to leave and travel."

Mirroring Zhashibekova's journey, the movement for tiny houses gained popularity in the United States following the 2008 financial crisis. Built to last as long as traditional houses and with similar building techniques and materials, smaller homes are distinct in emphasising design, such as multifunctionality, over size.

"The whole idea behind tiny homes comes from the States," the entrepreneur explained. "I guess people want to take out mortgages less and less. I really respect this turn of events, and I think it applies to people in Kazakhstan as well. It is much easier to make a house that is more than 200 square metres, but try living with 40 square metres and having everything you need while, at the same time, making it beautiful and having everything inside be functional in a way that you do not clutter your home and have a sleeping space, kitchen space and dining area."

Netflix television series "Tiny House Nation" and "Tidying Up with Marie Kondo" have gained worldwide popularity by recognising the power of homes over people's emotional state, shaping their social interactions and power dynamics.

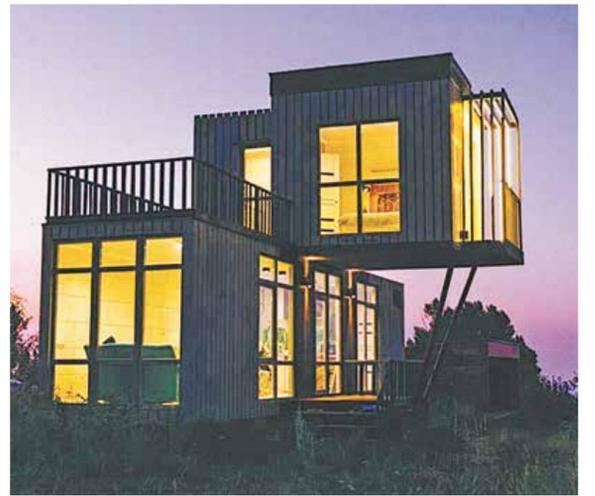
"What I learned is that 40 square

metres, or even less, is more than enough. You do not need much space to make you happy. You can be surrounded with your favourite things or maybe you can come to understand that you do not need to clutter your space with things you do not need, only keeping the essentials. You get to look inside yourself and spend time with people that you love," she noted.

Working in the construction business, Zhashibekova observed that large homes are rarely built with function, energy efficiency or financial prudence in mind. More importantly, some people find that they lead happier lives in smaller spaces.

"Having lived in a house for 20 years now, I realised that it is becoming more and more difficult to visit people living in apartments," she said on her personal housing preferences, noting that tiny houses are not suited for everyone. "To share my space with neighbours above, to the side and below me is unacceptable anymore. I think that the more hectic life becomes, the more space you need and the more time you want to spend in nature and close to the earth."

Located 10 minutes away from the city in the microdistrict Zhailau, the tiny house rental business iHouse Almaty (@ihousealmaty on Instagram) has become



a quick getaway destination from the restlessness of city life, where guests "can definitely expect to be surrounded by love and care, felt in every item and detail in the house."

"I talk to almost each and every one of my guests," said Zhashibekova. "Sometimes, I observe the way they arrive and leave. I see that their pace is slower, their look is more relaxed and their faces are lighter and brighter. There is no more tension in the way they

look, and their movement becomes much softer."

"I hear from my guests that (while living in iHouse Almaty) they decided to fix their relationship or realised this and that, that there is something that they do not need in life or that there is an important decision to take. I think that is amazing!" she added.

Zhashibekova is seeking out partners, investors and land owners to realise more tiny house projects in Kazakhstan.

Machine-building enterprises produce equipment worth \$1.4 billion



Photo credit: Infornika.kz

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh machine-building enterprises produced 553 billion tenge (US\$1.4 billion) in goods in the first half of 2019. The products are nearly 100-percent localised and offer a wide range of equipment, up to three and half times cheaper than imported items.

The country's machine-building enterprises produce an entire range of agricultural machinery, according to the Kazakh Union of Mechanical Engineers. Don Mar Lisakovskiy manufactures grain reapers which are nearly 100-percent localised.

AgromashHolding Kostanai manufactures products with varying degrees of localisation. Its seeders are 90-percent localised; harvesters, over 40 percent, and manufactured components and assemblies, including trolleys for reapers, pick-ups, tractor counterweights, quickly wearing parts, tilting cameras and pulleys, up to 100 percent.

The then Minister of Agriculture Umirzak Shukeiyev visited the enterprise in 2018 to become acquainted with its production. He noted the ministry will support only those manufacturers that are actually engaged in production, rather than bolting.

"We reduce the cost of agricultural machinery by 52 percent for our farmers. Therefore, we must demand localisation from producers. What do you think? There will be a contract and those people who just bring and collect it will not en-

ter it. We will monitor everything and only work with those who are involved in real production, such as AgromashHolding," he said then.

SemAZ produces MTZ tractors, Kokshetau manufactures KAIK sowing complexes, trailers, balers, attachments and other implements, and AVAGRO makes sprayers.

More than 2,500 permanent jobs have been created in the agricultural machine-building field in addition to those the industry creates in related areas through the multiplier effect.

Kazakh tractor and harvester manufacturers have signed an industrial assembly agreement, which imposes mutual obligations on them to localise production in return for preferences.

Should companies fail to comply with localisation requirements, they are obliged to return all state incentives. Kazakhstan's machine builders are constantly working to increase localising spare parts and components to enhance competitiveness and create additional jobs at their plants.

Subsidies are given to farmers who purchase domestically-produced equipment, who then have the opportunity to buy items which are two-three and a-half times cheaper than imported ones.

The union has brought together more than 490 engineering enterprises working in the oil and gas, mining and metallurgical, agricultural, electrical, railway and automotive industries. Many sub-sectors appeared as the result of industry support programmes.

Kazakhstan, France expand partnership in railways development

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) national railway company and French multinational railway supplies company Alstom agreed July 30 to cooperate on the development of digital technologies for railway, including signalling, centralisation and blocking.

The agreement came during a visit to Nur-Sultan by French Minister of Economy and Finance Bruno Le Maire.

The French minister was briefed by the production departments of Elektrovoz Kurastyru Zauyty, an electric locomotive production plant in the capital which a joint venture between KTZ and Alstom. He was present-

ed locomotive number Z8A0008, which was manufactured under an agreement with the Azerbaijan Railways. According to the agreement, 50 locomotives will be manufactured in Kazakhstan for the Azerbaijani company.

"This plant is the most visible evidence of economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and France. The partnership in the development of railways is an important strategic direction for our country. It is a great honour for me to attend the solemn ceremony of sending a locomotive for export to Azerbaijan. We intend to continue our partnership in the railway field," said the minister.

He also highlighted the importance of cooperation in railway signalling equipment, saying,

"We would like Alstom to equip Kazakhstan's railway stations with alarm systems."

The memorandum signed during La Maire's visit between Kazakhstan Temir Zholy and Alstom concerns the development of digital technologies in the field of railway signalling systems, centralisation and blocking as well as the future implementation of technical solutions for upgrading the signalling systems at priority railway stations.

"The memorandum... pursues the main goal – cooperation in digitisation and automation of processes in railway transport. The first step is to automate or signal large stations with a hundred or more arrows. In the future, we will cooperate on the digitisation of railway transport.

As you know, several projects of our company were included in Digital Kazakhstan national programme," Kazakhstan Temir Zholy's Managing Director Batyr Kotyrev said.

"Today, our devices have been in operation more than 35-40 years. They comply with the requirements of traffic safety. But everything in the world is developing, and they are morally obsolete. Therefore, there are already modern systems in the world. We have built 2,500 kilometres of new railways over the past few years, and we have already used similar modern solutions that meet all the requirements of the digital railway system. Now we are considering the possibility of using alarm systems in collaboration with Alstom," he said.

\$139 million in metallurgy, renewable energy projects launched in Karaganda Region

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Two projects on metallurgy and renewable energy worth \$139 million were launched in the first half of the year in the Karaganda Region with Kazakh Invest support, reports Invest.gov.kz.

Four more Kazakh Invest-supported projects worth \$438 million are under construction and installation, two of which will be completed this year. Among the projects are Linde Group's industrial gas production plant and Solarnet's renewable energy project, which are expected to create 1,800 jobs in the region.

"Since the beginning of the year, nine new investment projects worth 280 billion tenge (US\$728.28 million) on renewable energy, chemistry, manufacturing, metallurgy and agriculture are under implementation. Manufacturing and mining are our priority sectors. We will also focus on the logistics and food industries," said Karaganda Region Deputy Akim (Governor) Almas Aidarov.

Kazakh Invest Chief Executive Officer Baurzhan Sartbayev discussed these upcoming projects and investment attraction more broadly during his July visit to the Karaganda Region, discussing

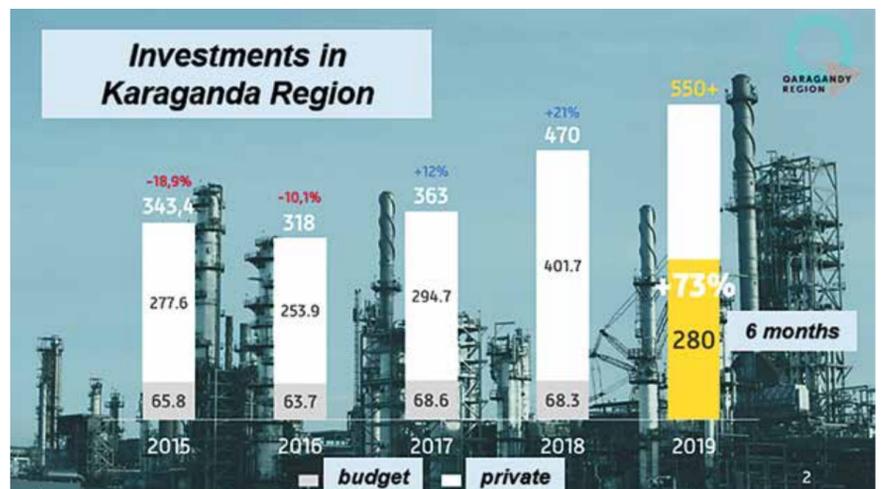
providing structure and modernising production under the Business Roadmap 2020 programme during his visits to production plants of industrial explosives and ball valves in the region's Saryarka special economic zone.

Fixed capital investment increased 25 percent in the Karaganda Region last year, and the aim is to attract 550 billion tenge (US\$1.43 billion) of investment by the year's end. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has called for greater investment at-

traction to Kazakhstan's agriculture, in particular, over the next three years. Accordingly, Kazakh Invest will support projects on the production of starch, confectionery, meat and dairy.

"An entire cluster (of production) can be developed within these areas," said Sartbayev during his visit to the region. "For instance, by-products of potato starch production can become excellent feed for livestock. It is thus intuitive to establish a feedlot or dairy farm near such a plant."

Kazakh Invest national company promotes the sustainable socioeconomic development of Kazakhstan by attracting investment to priority sectors of the economy and supporting investment projects. It is implementing 82 projects worth \$15.2 billion, developing 99 projects worth \$34 billion and recently implemented four projects worth \$217 million, all of which created more than 45,000 jobs. Fifteen of these 185 projects, worth \$2.5 billion, are in the Karaganda Region.



BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

FinReview report confirms country attracted \$250 billion in 10 years

By Assel Satubaldina

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan has attracted \$250 billion in foreign direct investments (FDI) in the last ten years, according to FinReview's recent analytical review of the country's investment policy.

Twenty-seven projects worth \$3.1 billion were launched in 2018 creating 6,000 jobs. The majority of them are in the Almaty Region, followed by the Karaganda Region and Nur-Sultan.

Overall, nearly \$320 billion in FDI has been injected in the Kazakh economy over the years of its independence. The largest volume of foreign investments came in 2012 with \$28.9 billion, followed by \$26.5 billion in 2011 and \$24.3 billion in 2018.

The gross FDI in the first six months of 2019 is estimated at \$6 billion, compared to \$6.7 billion last year.

The share of the FDI in the country's gross domestic product was 14 percent last year, an increase from 12.9 percent in 2017. The Kazakh government plans to bring the figure to 19 percent by 2022.

Twenty-seven projects worth \$3.1 billion were launched in 2018 creating 6,000 jobs. The majority of them are in the Almaty Region, followed by the Karaganda Region and Nur-Sultan.

Economic diversification is among the priorities for Kazakhstan, the world's ninth largest country by landmass possessing abundant mineral resources that have supported the country's economic growth.

Last year witnessed an increase in the share of investments in finance and insurance from 1.9 percent to 5.4 percent, in professional, scientific and technical areas from 0.9 percent to 2.8 percent and in construction from 1.6 percent to 2.4 percent.

The report said the country's legal framework, creation of special economic and industrial zones as well as the assistance of international financial and development organisations gave a new start to the development of the Kazakh economy.

Simplified business procedures enabled Kazakhstan to jump eight spots in the 2019 World Bank Doing Business report that analysed 190 countries, to the 28th position.

Among the new measures to support investors are a single window system allowing documents to be submitted at a single entity and the ASTANA-1 customs declaring electronic system.

FinReview also noted the importance of the development of special economic and industrial zones.

Kazakhstan plans to launch 320 projects at special economic zones (SEZ) and industrial zones by 2021, Kazakh Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Roman Sklyar announced recently. There are 12 SEZ and 23 industrial zones in the country.

One hundred and forty-seven projects will be launched at SEZ worth \$5.2 billion and 173 projects at industrial zones worth \$1.3 billion by 2021.

Approximately 180 projects have been launched at the SEZ since 2002, including 46 with foreign capital creating 15,500 jobs. The tax returns were \$396 million and investments reached 910 billion tenge (US\$2.4 billion).

"The special economic zones are meant to implement open economy principles due to the liberalisation and boost in external economic activity. Their advantages are the special customs, tax and exchange rate regimes,"

said the report. Kazakhstan spent 314.3 billion tenge (US\$819.2 million) to build the special economic zones. Astana Technopolis, Turkestan and Khorgos International Centre of Trans-boundary Cooperation located at the Kazakh-Chinese border are among the most recent.

The most effective SEZ is the Ontustik SEZ, said the report. It is also among the biggest in the country located in Shymkent, Kazakhstan's third largest city and thriving economic centre.

Established in 2005, its priority area was the textile industry and in 2017, chemical and petrochemical industries were added to the list.

The most effective SEZ is the Ontustik SEZ, said the report. It is also among the biggest in the country located in Shymkent, Kazakhstan's third largest city and thriving economic centre.

Established in 2005, its priority area was the textile industry and in 2017, chemical and petrochemical industries were added to the list.

The zone is home to some of the country's biggest companies, including Bal Textile, the largest manufacturer of carpets, Azala Cotton, the only cotton yarn factory in the country, and Khlopkopromcellulose, a cellulose manufacturer.

With the expansion of priority areas, two big projects are expected to launch at the SEZ. One of them is an ethyl tert-butyl and methyl tert-butyl ether and powdered polypropylene production plant. The project cost exceeds 28 billion tenge (US\$73 million) and will launch in 2021.

The report noted the support for small- and medium-sized businesses that generated more than 28 trillion tenge (US\$73.8 billion) in 2018. The number of SMEs also grew 8.3 percent to 1,241,328.

Kazakhstan spent 210.5 billion tenge (US\$555.2 million) to support businesses within four years of the national business support programme.

In 2018, the Development Bank of Kazakhstan funded 63 projects worth 5.3 trillion tenge (US\$13.8 billion).

The Kazakh Export, the country's export insurance company and key development institution in supporting the growth of non-commodity exports in priority sectors of the economy, provided insurance support worth 90.2 billion tenge (US\$235.1 million).

Damu Business Development Fund allocated 495 billion tenge (US\$1.29 billion) to support 22,400 SMEs.

The report also noted the country's efforts to promote domestic products in foreign markets and increase their competitiveness inside the country.

In June, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev created the Ministry of Trade and Integration that took over the functions of the Ministry of National Economy in the formation and implementation of domestic and foreign trade policies, international economic integration and consumer protection, of the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development in technical regulation, standardisation and ensuring the uniformity of measurements and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination of export promotion activities.

Local manufacturer makes premium halal leather shoes affordable



Z SHOES Founder Dastan Makhambetov (L).

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Z SHOES is a year-old Kazakh company that domestically produces premium quality, affordably priced halal natural leather shoes and accessories for men, women and children. The company envisions the Made in Kazakhstan label becoming synonymous with quality and is doing its best to contribute to the effort.

Mining engineer and PhD Dastan Makhambetov founded the brand last year and opened the first store in the capital. He noted "sooner or later, the country will give preference to domestic producers."

Z SHOES quickly became known among city residents for its quality and attractive prices. The company opened two stores in the capital and four more in bigger cities and towns like Kyzylorda, Shymkent, Ust-Kamenogorsk and Zhezkazgan. Stores in Kokshetau, Pavlodar and Taraz are next in line. "We are constantly working to best match the market trends, giving customers the opportunity not only to buy quality shoes, but to create trendy looks. (We offer) a professional, individual approach and the willingness to always listen to the customer," according to its website. Z SHOES takes quality to an-

other level, as it is the first Central Asian brand to meet halal standards. Footwear produced in its factory fully complies with Shariah principles and norms, as the production, storage, transportation of materials and the manufacturing process align with the requirements of its technical regulations.

The spring – summer collection is designed with special attention to detail ensuring maximum comfort. The insole is equipped with Memory Foam material that takes the shape of the foot. The soft orthopaedic soles use natural hypoallergenic materials and EVA copolymer, making them very flexible.

The young company even started with offers extending the usual 14-day warranty to 90 days. Are the quality and price too good to be true? The manufacturers indicate they try to keep prices the lowest possible, adding customers should never expect 50-70 percent discounts at the stores.

Z SHOES gives their styles Kazakh names, as if giving each pair a soul. The shelves carry designs like Nurbek sneakers or Diana brogues. The company also takes individual orders. Updates are available on their Instagram account @zshoeskz and online store zshoes.kz.

PetroKazakhstan shares long history, early days of modern oil production in Kazakhstan

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – This year marks the 120th anniversary of the start of oil production in what is now Kazakhstan. Over more than one century, Kazakh oil production technology and infrastructure have experienced great change. PetroKazakhstan's veterans recently shared with The Astana Times their experiences witnessing the growth and development of Kazakhstan's oil sector.

A representative office of the Soviet Union geology department opened in Kyzylorda in 1927, laying the foundation for oil production in Kazakhstan. In 1982, Yuzhkazgeologiya, Kazgeophysica and the Institute of Geology and Oil of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic's Academy of Sciences developed a programme for comprehensive exploration in the South Turgai Basin.

One of the first oil fields of the company was Kumkol. Its first deep well was drilled in 1983, and a year later, the explorers opened the first oil fountain. In June 1987, the first oilrig was built in Kumkol. In winter, the company founded the Kumkolneft Oil and Gas Production Department headed by Murat Salamatov with the support of chief engineer Zhenis Zhalgasov and chief geologist Kenkhan Aidarbekov.

Although the newly found oil field lacked infrastructure and cadres and had harsh climate conditions, Salamatov managed to develop it earning the name of "oil general." Kumkol was put into operation in two years instead of the standard 10 years usually required for the development of the field.

"The history of Kumkol's forma-



tion does not cease to amaze everyone who somehow connected their fate with it. What happened at the stage of its development can now be illustrated only with great imagination. Ascetic life in trailers and yurts, work in a piercing frosty wind and under a blazing sun, with sand and salt on the lips, but with a single and ardent desire to open inaccessible subsoil. All this united our team of pioneers, and sometimes it seemed that the hearts of these selfless people could themselves melt the subsoil," said Salamatov.

In the second half of 1980, the company started exploration of the Arysium oil and gas condensate field, Kyzylkiya, Akshabulak, Nuraly, the Aksai and Konys oil and gas fields and Dosjan, Karavanchi, Maibulak, Bektas, Kenlik and Aschisai oil fields.

"In parallel with the development of Kumkol, large-scale exploration work was launched at dozens of fields," remembered Technical Director Galym Baimanov.

The company created infrastructure, including roads and oil pipelines in the field, and housing and

other conditions for workers that are still used.

"First, the village for 40 places was built, then for 120. Finally, for 600 and a canteen, a gym and other facilities. In the city, the Munaishy microdistrict was erected. All this worthily serves today," recalled PMK-4 Head Marat Kozhabekov.

"We drafted a plan for the 190-kilometre Kyzylorda-Kumkol highway, which cost \$90 million," said Murat Uderbayev who had served

as the Road Management Administration Director during those times.

In 1994, Salamatov was appointed First Vice Minister of Oil and Gas of Kazakhstan, and Robert Berdyuzhin was appointed Yuzhneftegas (PetroKazakhstan) president. The focus shifted to expanding geological exploration, reducing construction in progress and increasing oil worker salaries.

In 1995, Kazakhstan's First President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, visited the field and stressed that hydrocarbons would bring the region prosperity and security, recommending reaching commercial levels of production of at least three million tonnes of oil a year as soon as possible. In 1996, the field reached that goal and in 2000 increased it to five million. The company employed more than 4,500 people in a region with the population of 610,000.

In 1996, the Kazakh Cabinet of Ministers issued a resolution to sell the company to Hurricane Hydrocarbons Limited. In 1997, it was renamed Hurricane Kumkol Mu-ai and in 2001 its name changed again to PetroKazakhstan Kumkol



Resources. In October 2005, the Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) and KazMunayGas purchased 67 and 33 percent of the company's share respectively.

According to the oil industry veterans, in the last 20 years the sphere changed significantly covering technologies, infrastructure and the quality of cadres.

"The quality of sector management has improved; and we are seeing new, more promising oil and gas transportation routes. New fields similar to Kashagan were discovered and developed, about which we could only have dreamt as before we didn't have the people and finance for that. Innovation has reached some amazing levels, for example, the KazTransOil IPO has raised the oil industry's image to the highest global level," said Abdullah Abenov, who worked for years in the company and retired as the company's deputy chair of the Board for Capital Construction. He has 34 years of work experience in the industry.

"There was a time when we didn't even have enough computers. Thanks to the implementation of new programmes, approaches and techniques, we have been able to raise production to the highest level. Today, specialists need to be very highly qualified, which can open many doors for youngsters," said

Zhargasbai Agimanov, an advisor at the company's Exploration and Development Department, Scientific Research Project Institution, who has 40 years of work experience.

"During the first oil production years at South Turgai, all associated gas was flared, which generated a negative reaction from the state authorities and public... Due to the criticism, every member of the oil team felt like an outcast, responsible for harming environment and putting the public at risk. This is when the question of accelerating gas utilisation became an issue. We developed and approved a programme to generate electricity using gas turbines powered by associated gas and reinjecting associated gas back into the strata, which created opportunities for additional oil production through the maintenance of seam pressure. The project was implemented in a very short period of time, 18 months to three years, which helped PetroKazakhstan save significant funds and resolve its main ecological issues in the region," said Abenov.

"PetroKazakhstan's achievements as one of the leading oil companies in the region are the result of many years of hard work by all generations of our employees. I am proud of my contribution to the company's development in discovering and developing the first oil fields," said Agimanov.



Nation&Capital

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

PEOPLE

Kazhgaliyev National Conductors Contest laureate is among 100 New Faces

B2

CULTURE

Astana Ballet theatre to host presentation of modern Russian literature

B3

SPORTS

Rakhmonov becomes first Kazakh MMA fighter to sign UFC contract

B7

Barys HC wins fifth Kazakh President's Ice Hockey Cup



By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Nur-Sultan Hockey Club Barys won Aug. 11 the 2019 Kazakh President's Ice Hockey Cup, reports Olympic.kz. "Congratulations to the players and coaches of the team with your great victory!" said Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in his Twitter account. Barys defeated Kazan's Ak Bars 6:1 on Aug. 7, Nizhnekamsk's Neftkhimik 5:3 on Aug. 8, Yekaterinburg's Avtomobilist 3:2 on Aug. 10 and Ufa's Salavat Yulaev 2:1 on Aug. 11 to secure first place for the fifth time at the 10th annual tournament. The hockey clubs Avtomobilist, Ak Bars, Salavat Yulaev and Neftkhimik secured second, third, fourth and fifth place, respectively, and were presented with their awards by Kazakh Prime Minister and Kazakhstan Hockey Federation President Askar Mamin. "It was a difficult schedule with four games in five days, but the whole team worked very hard," Barys hockey player Dustin Boyd, the tournament's best scorer, told Vesti.kz. By the time of the Aug. 11 match between Barys and Salavat Yulaev, the former was guaranteed to win the Kazakh President's Cup, having gained the most points throughout the tournament. "In each match, our task was

to improve our game and form. The score was not as important as the course of the game itself," Barys Captain Darren Dietz, the tournament's best defender, told Sports.kz. "The score was opened by Barys player Nikita Mikhailis in the first period and equalised by Salavat Yulaev player Maxim Mayorov in the second period. Everything was to be decided in the final 20 minutes, but there were no goals. Overtime did not change the score, but Barys later came out stronger in the series of shootouts," Sports.kz described the Aug. 11 match. The Kazakh President's Cup is a warm-up for the regular hockey season Sept. 1 to Feb. 27, after

which the 2019-2020 Kontinental Hockey League season play-offs will determine the winner of the 2020 Gagarin Cup March 1 to April 30. "You must understand that this is a pre-season tournament. We need to work more before the start of the regular season in the KHL, which is our top priority," Boyd told Vesti.kz. Barys will play in the Chernyshev Division as part of the Eastern Conference in the 12th KHL season, facing each of the other 24 teams twice, in a home game and an away game. It will also play two games against each of its divisional rivals and four games against non-divisional teams.

Golovkin to fight Derevyanchenko for his old world title

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh professional boxer Gennady Golovkin will now have the chance to win back his old title with a fight against Ukrainian professional boxer Serhiy Derevyanchenko as a result of an Aug. 5 decision by the International Boxing Federation (IBF), reports ESPN. Mexican professional boxer Canelo Alvarez was stripped of his IBF middleweight title Aug. 1 for not reaching a deal with mandatory challenger Derevyanchenko. The International Boxing Federation (IBF) ordered Aug. 5 Golovkin and Derevyanchenko to face off for the vacant title. "The IBF is, therefore, ordering that a bout take place between the two highest ranked contenders to

fill this vacancy," IBF Championships Chairman Carlos Ortiz Jr. wrote in a letter to the attorneys of Golovkin's and Derevyanchenko's promoters, calling for the negotiations for a Golovkin-Derevyanchenko fight to begin immediately. The boxers have until Sept. 4 to make a deal and another 15 days to submit signed contracts to the IBF for their Oct. 5 fight, which will be Golovkin's second bout of his \$100-million, six-fight deal with broadcaster DAZN. If negotiations go as planned, the fight will be available to DAZN subscribers in all its markets, including Kazakhstan. The winner of the vacant title will have to make his mandatory defence against the leading available contender within six months. **Continued on Page B7**

Nur-Sultan to host 2019 UNWTO Urban Tourism Global Summit

By Saltanat Botey

NUR-SULTAN – The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the Nur-Sultan Akimat (city administration) will organise the eighth UNWTO Global Summit on Urban Tourism under the Smart Cities, Smart Destinations theme in the Kazakh capital Oct. 9-12. The summit will contribute to the UN New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The summit will bring together representatives from national tourism administrations, city authorities and related stakeholders to exchange expertise and set a shared vision to advance urban tourism. Participants will discuss sustainability, accessibility, innovations and inclusion of tourism in the urban agenda contributing to the progress of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The gathering will focus specifically on Goal 11, which is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. "According to the UN, in 2015, 54 percent of the world's population lived in urban areas and, by 2030, this share is expected to reach 60 percent. Along with other key pillars, tourism constitutes a central component in the economy, social life and the geography of many cities in the world and is, thus, a key element in urban development policies... Tourism is intrinsically linked to how a city

develops itself and provides more and better living conditions to its residents and visitors," reported the summit's website emphasising the importance of the chosen topic. The summit will focus on how developing smart cities can address urban challenges. The participants will discuss sustainability, accessibility, urban management, innovation and technology, stressing the importance of including tourism in the wider city agenda as a contributor to inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban development. During the summit's first day, the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) will give a masterclass on trends in the convention industry, focusing on topics such as how to be a successful destination for meetings and organise sustainable meetings. The second day will start with an opening ceremony including Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altai Kulginov, Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili and other higher officials. The participants will adopt the Smart Cities, Smart Destinations Declaration. This will be followed by the mayors' meeting, where "mayors from around the world will share insights on how to translate a smart city into a smart destination," and other panel sessions and on the topic. **Continued on Page B6**

Hilton sees expansion opportunities in Central Asia, plans eco-friendly future

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – This year, Hilton celebrates its 100th anniversary of hospitality with nearly 5,900 hotels in 114 countries. In Kazakhstan, the brand is represented by three hotels in Nur-Sultan – Hilton Astana, Hampton by Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn – and one hotel in Almaty, the Double Tree by Hilton. The Astana Times spoke with Simon Vincent, Hilton's Executive Vice President and President for Europe, the Middle East and Africa to learn more about its expansion in the Central Asia market and energy-saving measures of the company during his first visit to Kazakhstan in mid-July. Responsible for 526 hotels in 66



Simon Vincent

countries, Vincent is focused on the economy and the culture in the countries where they operate. "The objective of my visit is also to celebrate some of the successes that our team members have

achieved over the last five years since we've been opening the first hotel," he said. A friendly welcome and consistent service can be recognised as the main benefits of staying at Hilton hotels. "Most importantly, our brands do represent quality," explained Vincent. "Our brands command a premium in the marketplace. Customers will pay more to stay at a Hilton hotel than a competing hotel. And that's principally because they recognise the value that they get in terms of the welcome, the service, the quality of the product and the overall quality of the experience." The company has a loyalty programme for 94 million members globally who receive benefits including a member discount, free

standard Wi-Fi, when they book directly through preferred Hilton channels. Hilton has 17 brands ranging from budget to luxury. Central Asia has always been "a pivotal region in the trade between the east and the west," he said. Hilton has plans to enter the markets of Tajikistan and Pakistan. "There's a lot of emerging economies, there's a lot of wealth in natural resources in this region. Therefore, there are a lot of opportunities for hotel companies to develop their products in these countries. Our business is all about supply and demand. We see a rising demand for good quality, internationally branded hotel beds in Central Asia... We see an opportunity to develop our brands and our portfolios," he said. **Continued on Page B2**



Hilton Astana.

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

ASTANA OPERA

- Aug. 17 at 6 p.m.** Scarlet Sails, musical
- Aug. 21 at 7 p.m.** Evening of piano music
- Aug. 24 at 6 p.m.** Die Bajadere, operetta
- Aug. 25 at 6 p.m.** Song is a Woman's World, concert
- Aug. 28 at 7 p.m.** A Gallant Double Bass Was Singing..., concert

PEOPLE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Kazhgaliyev National Conductors Contest laureate is among 100 New Faces

By Aidana Yergaliyeva

NUR-SULTAN – Yerlan Baktygeriyev, laureate of first Kazhgaliyev National Conductors Contest, is among Kazakhstan's 100 New Faces. Among his accomplishments, he led the Astana Academic Philharmonic symphony orchestra.

Born in the Zhambyl Region in 1978 to the family of an Afghan war participant and an accountant, no one could have anticipated Baktygeriyev's musical inclinations and talents.

"There were no musicians in our family. Only in childhood, when I went to visit my uncle, he noticed my ear for music and interest in music. It was at that moment that [my] life turned its face to art," he told 100esim.rukh.kz.

Baktygeriyev's participation in the competition opened many doors. He subsequently received a mentorship invitation from Fuat Mansurov, chief conductor and artistic director of the Tatarstan Symphony Orchestra; conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre of Russia; people's artist of Kazakhstan, Russia and Tatarstan; academician and professor.

Baktygeriyev attended Zhubanova National Music School, later graduating from Kurmangazy Almaty State Conservatory. He then received an offer to be a part of an orchestra in Astana (now Nur-Sultan).

"I wrote a lot and orchestrated kuis (instrumental compositions) for the orchestra of Kazakh folk instruments, folk songs and classical works," he said.

In 2001, he was named laureate of the first Kazhgaliyev National Conductors Contest.

"This was truly a huge impetus for my career to become a professional conductor. Most interest-



Yerlan Baktygeriyev

ingly, there was no age limit at the competition. That is, I had to compete with my teachers, who are much stronger and better than me," he said.

Baktygeriyev's participation in the competition opened many doors. He subsequently received a mentorship invitation from Fuat Mansurov, chief conductor and artistic director of the Tatarstan Symphony Orchestra; conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre of Russia; people's artist of Kazakhstan, Russia and Tatarstan; academician and professor.

"Being his student was not easy. Fuat Mansurov was a truly unique person. In one person, there were many things combined. He was a master of sports in mountaineering, a mathematician, he knew eight languages perfectly and so on. It was a big school for me. I also owe my achievements to the Bolashak Scholarship Programme," he said.

Baktygeriyev worked at the Karaganda Symphony Orchestra in 2008. From 2013-2015, he served as the chief conductor and artistic director of the Astana Academic Philharmonic symphony.

"I toured a lot, performed in large venues with world stars and also put on a concert performance of two operas, 'Golden Mountains' by Nurgisa Tlendiyev and 'Alpamys' by Yerkegali Rakhmadiyev. In addition, I organised a concert with the TURKSOY international organisation dedicated to composers of the Turkic world," he said.

In 2015, he returned to Karaganda for health and family matters.

"Since I am a father of many children – I have seven children – I decided to take up their upbringing and started my own business. Now, I have my own small bakery; it employs four people. In addition, I am engaged in needlework with a team of 15 craftspeople. We sew bags of leather and suede with Kazakh ornaments. In this way, I have smoothly moved from art to business," said Baktygeriyev.

"I hope in the future I will return to the stage to please my listeners with new achievements!" he added.

Kazakhstan's national unity model can be an example to other countries, says Turkish community leader

By Saltanat Boteu

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan's public consensus and nationwide unity model is unique and valuable and sets an example for many countries, Kyzylorda Region Turkish community leader Gulchin Geidarova told the Astana Times in an exclusive interview.

The region's Turkish ethno-cultural centre opened in December 2004. According to the centre's head, ethno-cultural centres are created as part of the model to strengthen interethnic harmony in the country, to preserve and develop the traditions and customs of ethnicities living in Kazakhstan and to educate young people about them.

The centre promotes the development of multilateral cultural ties between Kazakhstan and Turkey, including participation in cultural and educational activities, the study of the Turkish history, language, culture, traditions and customs as well as the study of the state language.

The centre's members take part in regional and city events. The centre also includes the Bahar dance group whose members contribute to social and economic development of the region in science, education, healthcare and agriculture, said Geidarova.

Approximately 1,500 people of Turkish descent live in the region, all of which are the centre's members. The majority live in the Karmakshi district, Baikonur and Kyzylorda.



"Young people are studying the Kazakh language. Representatives of the Turkish ethnicity are studying in the Kazakh language in higher education institutions. (They) have won the state language competitions at the national, regional and city levels," said Geidarova.

Geidarova was born and raised in the region's Internatsyonal village in a large family with six children. After graduating from high school, she entered the school of Asian studies and became a university professor.

Her parents were deported to Kazakhstan's territory from

the Caucasus in November 1944. "When our ancestors were deported to the Kazakh land during the difficult times, they were taken to the Kazakh people and shared bread and water. They saw them (the Turkish people) as brothers, built a house next to themselves, and gave them an honoured place in their house. Open hearted, generous Kazakhs helped our ancestors to live in Kazakhstan and continue their life," she said.

Geidarova has participated in several trips of the Uly Dala Yeli (A Country of Great Steppe) expedition, which are useful for young

people in educating them about their ancestors and culture.

"Getting acquainted with the history of your native land is spiritual enrichment. We visited Turkestan and Arystanbab towns. I got a lot of interesting information about our common history, the history of the Turkic-speaking countries. This information is particularly useful for young people who are required to know their story. Through the monuments of history and ancient culture, people return to past. There is an invisible thread that links monuments with a century of history to the present," she said.

Hilton sees expansion opportunities in Central Asia, plans eco-friendly future

Continued from Page B1

The company also helps develop human capital and support youth by work with universities and federal education institutions to bring young people into the hotel business to help them develop and progress.

"People are at the heart of our business. And, therefore, we spend a lot of time making sure that we recruit the best talent that we develop that talent and those people have career opportunities. We are a significant global employer. We are officially as of this year the number two among one of the best places to work in the world. We're only as good as the talent that we recruit. People are absolutely at

the heart of everything we do," he said.

Hilton also plans to halve its environmental footprint by 2030 and focus on energy efficiency, including water, heating, the emission of carbon and the elimination things like plastics.

"Hilton Astana as our new hotel got a very sophisticated building management system that is very energy efficient. But equally, this hotel is committed to reducing plastics and eliminating plastic straws. It's all part of our overall purpose. We encourage people to be environmentally aware and conscious of the impacts of their travels on the environment. We're looking to help them achieve an envi-

ronmentally friendly state," he said.

Vincent said that the company observes the golden age of travel now despite some global challenges that all industries and businesses face.

"We see tremendous opportunities in the global footprint and our expansion plans. People want to be connected... people want to travel. They want experiences. We've seen that over the course of the last five or six years with our growth and notwithstanding the fact that the world is going through some challenging times both geopolitically and economically. We're still seeing sustained growth in our pipeline of new hotels. Our brands are very strong

in the way that they perform. And the economics of running hotels are still very attractive to investors," he said.

Vincent also noted the company is working to continue the vision of founder Conrad Hilton to spread the light and warmth of hospitality.

"We are doing that in a meaningful way on a global basis. Hiltons have an amazing impact on the world and we like to talk about the Hilton effect. Over the last century, we have employed 10 million team members, served more than 3 billion guests and had a \$1 trillion economic impact. It is an amazing fact. We want to leave a strong legacy in the next hundred years as our founder Conrad Hilton first introduced," he said.

August 29
International Day
Against Nuclear Testing
One Day Can Change a Lifetime.

Help us reach our goal of 1 million signatures.
Tell the world's leaders you deserve and demand
a world without nuclear testing.

It's time to act.

Sign The ATOM Project Petition online
and make your voice heard today.

#NuclearTruthKZ ✘

TheATOMProject.org

CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Astana Ballet theatre to host presentation of modern Russian literature

By Diana Vassilenko

NUR-SULTAN – The Astana Ballet theatre will present Sept. 19 Russian actor Konstantin Khabenskiy and writer Alexander Tsyppkin who will read sad and funny stories about daily life.

The evening's programme is called Best & Seller and is part of the Bezprintsipnye Chteniya (No Principles Readings) Project, which involves prominent actors and writers reading modern Russian literature on stage.

"Alexander Tsyppkin's story collection presents a wonderful chance to understand today's Russia from within. It comprises a multitude of diverse stories, which are amazing, juicy and always kind. One can trace this young author's lineage to de la Fontaine's fables, Balzac's 'Human Comedy' and the wit of Sacha Guitry who, too, was born in St. Petersburg. This one is a very contemporary and very Russian book that reminds us that Russians can and love laughing, first of all, at themselves," said former adviser to the President of France Jacques Chirac, Director of the French Institute in St. Petersburg and Cultural Attaché of the



Alexander Tsyppkin



Konstantin Khabenskiy

French Embassy in Russia Hélène Perroud in her review on Tsyppkin's first and immediately bestselling short story collection "Long Live Die-hard Women."

Many short stories from Tsyppkin's third short story collection among others will be read during the Best & Seller performance in Nur-Sultan. His previous short story collections instantly became best sellers, with more than 200,000 copies sold.

The Best & Seller programme is part of the No Principles Read-

ings project developed by Tsyppkin in 2015 with Russian producer Anastasia Prits. Maxim magazine editor-in-chief Alexander Malenkov and Russian Booker laureate Alexander Snegirev also participated in the development of the project.

The works of the three founding writers of the project, as well as of Narine Abgaryan, Marina Stepanova, Andrei Astvatsaturov, Masha Traub, Sasha Filipenko and several other authors, have been read since the start of the project. The project

aims to promote contemporary Russian literature in Russia as well as abroad.

Tsyppkin's stories have been read by some of Russia's leading actors, such as Ingeborga Dapkunaite, Konstantin Khabenskiy, Danila Kozlovsky and Anna Mikhailova. Khabenskiy is known as a versatile actor both on stage and on the screen. He started his career as a stage actor and became popular all over Russia after starring in TV series and more than 50 films. That success led to Khabenskiy being one of the best-known Russian actors abroad.

Best & Seller is the third reading performance programme by Khabenskiy and Tsyppkin. The first two were "Long Live Die-hard Women," and "The House of Goodbyes."

Tsyppkin and Khabenskiy have travelled to more than 10 countries with their first programme named after Tsyppkin's first book "Long Live Die-hard Women." All three performances took place more than a hundred times in Russia, Germany, Switzerland, Israel, the United States and Canada, with all shows being sold out.

Tickets for the show can be purchased at astanaballet.com.

Astana Opera announces new series of concerts

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – Local musicians will present famous and rarely performed works by Kazakh, foreign and contemporary classical composers this August at the chamber hall of the Astana Opera House in the capital.

Pianist Assel Abilseitova will present a "Sounding Images" concert Aug. 21, reported the theatre's press service.

Abilseitova is a graduate of London's Royal Academy of Music who performs in Kazakhstan and Europe as a soloist and a chamber ensemble musician.

The concert programme includes classical music works by Tles Kazhgaliyev, Claude Debussy, Isaac Albéniz, Alberto Ginastera, and young Kazakh composers Aizhana Nurkenova and Aigerim Seilova, who have received international recognition.

Soprano Galiya Baigazinova will stage a musical evening titled "Song Is a Woman's World" Aug. 25. International competition winners, including tenor Almat Izbambetov, sopranos Assem Kiykpayeva and Nazym Nurgazyeva from the Saryarka folk music ensemble will take part in the concert.

"A woman is one of the main characters in global arts. Great painters, poets and composers of all times dedicated their works to women. The folk ensemble and soloists perform popular Kazakh folk songs and vocal masterpieces written by Shamshi Kaldayakov, Mynzhassar Mangitayev, Ilya Zhakanov, Nurgisa Tlendiyev, Yerkegali Rakhmadiyev, Yeskendir Khassangaliyev, Tolegen Mukhamejanov and many others," reads the release.

Astana Opera orchestra musicians and international competition winner Almas Baigozhin, will present "A Gallant Double Bass Was Singing" concert Aug. 28. As a low instrument, double bass has a solo part.

The programme features "String Quartet in D Minor," a composition created by Kazakh composer Gaziza Zhubanova and works by Giovanni Bottesini, Frank Proto, Ruggero Leoncavallo and Manuel Ponce.

Karaganda Academic Theatre

of Musical Comedy will stage performances at the main hall Aug. 17 and 24 as part of its tour.

The Astana Opera House premiered seven plays including Gioachino Rossini's opera "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," Michel Fokine's one-act ballets "Chopiniana" and "Scheherazade," Pyotr Tchaikovsky's opera "Eugene Onegin," Gioachino Rossini's opera "La Scala di Seta," Giacomo Puccini's opera "La Bohème" and Adolphe Adam's ballet "Giselle."

The seventh theatrical season will start with Mukan Tulebayev's opera "Birzhan – Sara" Sept. 5. The premieres of Giuseppe Verdi's opera "Don Carlos" is scheduled Oct. 11 and 13 and Léo Delibes' ballet "Coppélia" Nov. 22 and 23.

The company will present Gioachino Rossini's opera "La Scala di Seta" in Saint Petersburg Oct. 20.

This year, the Astana Opera House premiered seven plays including Gioachino Rossini's opera "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," Michel Fokine's one-act ballets "Chopiniana" and "Scheherazade," Pyotr Tchaikovsky's opera "Eugene Onegin," Gioachino Rossini's opera "La Scala di Seta," Giacomo Puccini's opera "La Bohème" and Adolphe Adam's ballet "Giselle."

The theatre's company staged performances in Italy, Spain, Russia, Uzbekistan and the cities of Kazakhstan as part of the Rukhani Zhangyru programme.

Kazakhstan to participate for second time in Junior Eurovision Song Contest

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – The finalist of "The Voice Kids" in Russia Yerzhan Maksim will represent Kazakhstan at the Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2019, said Kazakh Minister of Information and Social Development Dauren Abayev in a July 29 Facebook post.

"I am pleased to announce that Kazakhstan will take part in the Junior Eurovision Song Contest for the second time in the city of Gliwice, Poland Nov. 24," he wrote. "This was made possible thanks to Khabar Agency's membership in the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Our country will be represented by the promising young vocalist Yerzhan Maksim, whose performance skills have resonated with millions of listeners in Kazakhstan and abroad. I am sure that, come

November, Yerzhan will give us a wonderful occasion for pride and universal joy."

Kazakhstan made its debut in last year's Junior Eurovision Song Contest, which also marked the

first time the country participated in any Eurovision event. Daneliya Tuleshova's "Seize the Time," performed in English and Kazakh, came in sixth place with 171 points.

Twelve-year-old Maksim won

first place in Batumi Dolphin Fest 2016, second place in Slavianski Bazaar 2017 and second place in Kazakhstan's national final for the Junior Eurovision Song Contest last year. The song he will perform at this year's contest will be announced later.

"A very important day is ahead of me," wrote Maksim on representing Kazakhstan this year in a July 29 Instagram post. "I will try to justify your expectations, thank you very much for your wishes. Go Kazakhstan!"

The seventeenth edition of the annual Junior Eurovision Song Contest in Poland's Gliwice Arena is organised by Telewizja Polska and the EBU. Poland won the 2018 contest in Minsk, Belarus with Roksana Węgiel's "Anyone I Want to Be" and will be hosting the contest for the first time Nov. 24. Nineteen countries will participate, with Spain participating for the first time since 2006.

Kazakhstan also bid to host this year's event at Nur-Sultan, but the rules would have had to have been changed for the country, an EBU associate member and thus non-full member state, to host the contest if selected.



Yerzhan Maksim

Bronze Age grave and gold items found in Karaganda Region

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – Archaeologists found the remains of a young man and woman and gold jewelry from the Bronze Age while

studying Kyzyltau Cemetery in the Shetsky District of the Karaganda Region. The grave is from the first third or quarter of the second millennium BC, reported the regional press service June 29.

"The burial ground consists of

five mounds. We are now studying the fourth one. We found a burial with male and female skeletons buried face-to-face. The young couple probably belonged to a noble family or they were from the royal family. The grave is rich.

The female has two arm bracelets twisted into a spiral and ornamented pendants in the shape of the sun. She wore gold temple rings," said archaeologist Igor Kukushkin.

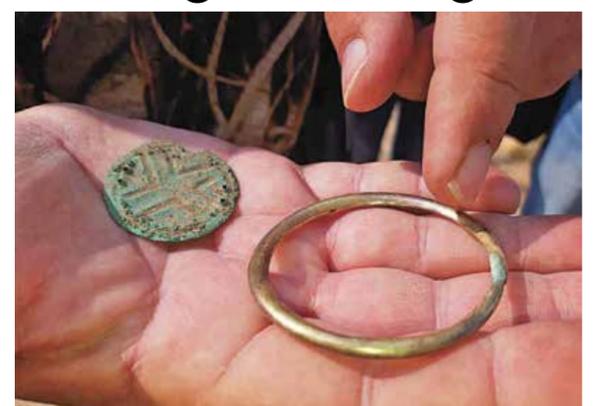
Bone samples were sent for radiocarbon analysis.

"The Begazy-Dandybaev culture is considered to be the most powerful in central Kazakhstan. The large clans and tribes lived here. The chariots appeared during this era. The chariot warriors were leaders in this turbulent time," he noted.

The finds include bronze bracelets, hair accessories with leaf-shaped pendants, beads, knives and a bone psalium used to control horses.

Archaeologists also found ceramic dishes this year in one of the burial sites, said Deputy Director of the Karaganda Regional Museum of Local History Dauren Zhussupov.

"This is the first unusual mound at the Karazhartas-2 burial ground. We studied it this year. First, the mound is completely built of stone. Its diameter is 21 metres and its height is two metres. Second, the mound is characterised by its design and is made of several fences. The finds were not found in the grave pit. As a result of the study, approximately 40 fragments of ceramic dishes, a grindstone and a tip of



a trihedral bronze arrow were found. The ceramics date back to the early Iron Age. No human remains were found here. The burial was without inventory and bodies," he added.

Reconstruction of the mound will be completed this autumn, showing how it looked before and after it was rebuilt.

A stone pyramid was discovered at the Karazhartas burial ground in 2017. It is one of the largest and most complex structures of the Late Bronze Age in Kazakhstan.

"We did restoration work on the pyramid in 2018. The head of the region set the task to create an open-air archaeological park.

We developed a three-year programme. This year, five expeditions work here," said Yerkebulan Agimbayev, head of the regional department for culture, archives and documentation.

A group of archaeologists from Buketov Karaganda State University has been excavating the monuments in Taldinsky archaeological park since 2016. This year, the work started in June.

Approximately 200 archaeological sites are located within 100 kilometres of the park. All the sites will have plates with descriptions and QR codes for more information offered in three languages, Kazakh, Russian and English.



Photo credit: Press service of Karaganda city administration.

COUNTRY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

90 percent of repairs in Arys are completed

By Dilshat Zhussupova

NUR-SULTAN – Ninety percent of reconstruction and repair in Arys was complete as of Aug. 2, after the town was heavily damaged June 24 by a large explosion at a munitions warehouse nearby, reports Primeminister.kz.

The explosion, which authorities have determined was caused by a violation of fire safety rules during the warehouse's construction and repair, and resulting fires killed two soldiers and a civilian and caused widespread damage before it was contained by firefighters, reported the Kazakh Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Internal Affairs' Emergency

Situations Committee. Eighty-five percent of houses in the town were damaged to one degree or another after the warehouse explosion, said First Vice Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development Kairbek Uskenbayev.

Just more than 6,610 of the 7,516 damaged single-story buildings in Arys have been repaired, with the remaining 905 buildings to be ready by Aug. 10. The repair of 67 multi-story buildings will be completed by Aug. 20. The repair of engineering infrastructure is complete, and social infrastructure, including 66 hospitals, schools, kindergartens and sports facilities, will be ready by Aug. 20.

The explosion forced the evacuation of Arys' residents. The

construction and repair of the town's key infrastructure have allowed 6,500 families to return to their repaired homes as of Aug. 2.

"On behalf of First President – Elbasy (Leader of the Nation, a constitutional title) Nursultan Nazarbayev and Head of State Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, all the regions of the country, national companies and representatives of large businesses took part in the restoration of Arys," said Kazakh Prime Minister Askar Mamin, expressing his gratitude to the people involved in the town's restoration during his Aug. 2 visit to the Turkestan Region. "Tremendous (construction and repair) work has been carried out in a month by more than 10,000 builders."

Kazakhstan's city and regional administrations are responsible for the repair of a given area in the town and were tasked with completing repairs by Aug. 20. Approximately 400 of 472 registered businesses in the town sustained damage to their infrastructure, and the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development and the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs were tasked with completing the repair of commercial infrastructure this month. The Ministry of Defence and the Turkestan Region Akimat (administration) were also tasked with ensuring the removal of weapons from warehouses in the region.

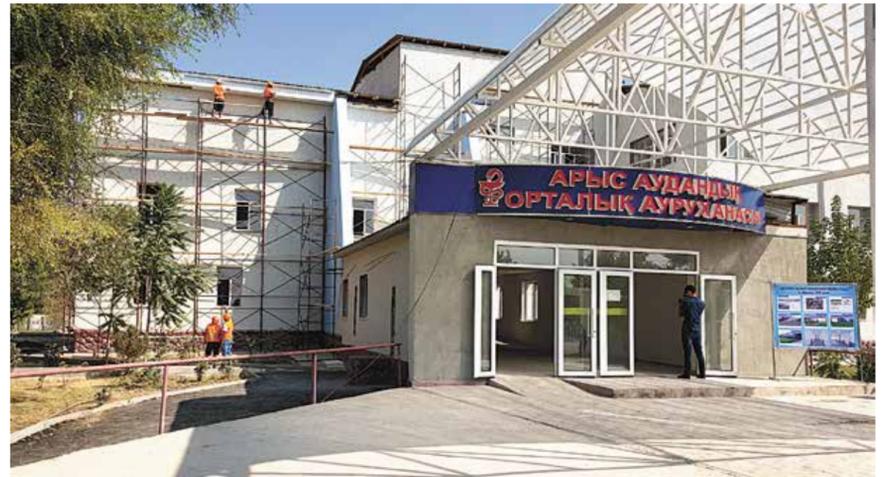
Lastly, the Ministry of La-



bour and Social Protection of the Population and Turkestan Region Akim (Governor) Umirzak Shukkeyev were tasked with ensuring that the distribution of a one-time compensatory payment of 100,000 tenge (US\$259.22) to each of Arys' 63,464 residents, a social support measure set by

Mamin in a June 29 visit to the region, will be distributed this month.

An eight year old boy who had been injured during evacuation from Arys died at a Nur-Sultan hospital Aug. 2 bringing the overall tally of the accident to four.



Anticorruption Agency calls for improved automated vehicle weight measuring systems

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh Anticorruption Agency is seeking to improve automated vehicle weight measuring systems that were installed since 2010, but are out of use due to technical issues. The agency noted the importance of preventing road damage from overweight vehicles and collecting funds for road repair.

The government planned to use the system to eliminate the human factor and corruption risks, as it measures a moving vehicle's weight and other parameters without involving transport control inspectors.

"To eliminate corruption risks, the introduction of special automated measuring systems began in 2010. It was assumed that it would automatically detect violations of the weight and dimensional parameters of moving vehicles without the participation of transport control inspectors. However, due to technical flaws, the installed systems are still not used," said the agency's prevention department head Anar Zharova at a recent agency meeting.

As the systems are not used, transport control authorities rely on mobile control points, which can be corrupted. She emphasised the importance of the automated systems and digitalisation to reduce human interaction, when bribery or other corruption actions can occur.

"Instead of developing automated systems, the main emphasis is on

mobile control points that continue to be in the zone of corruption risks. Our criminal investigative practice directly confirms this. In this regard, we recommend that the authorised body in the field of transport control continue to work to eliminate the causes and conditions of corruption with the maximum automation of all processes and the exclusion of direct contacts," she added.

In conjunction with public and local executive body representatives, the agency is completing on-site examinations of roads that have undergone repairs.

"As a part of the measures being implemented, a timely solution is to see the further digitalisation of the road industry. In this aspect, the proposal is from the Sapaly Zhol (Quality Way) project office. Adaldyk Alany opened with the support of the agency based on the National Centre for Quality of Road Assets. The project team initiated the creation of an information system that will automate the process of roads' quality examination conducted by mobile laboratories. The data collected in the information system will be available to the public," said Zharova.

The programme allows each citizen access to complete information about road conditions in a particular region.

"Along with reducing corruption risks, this will significantly improve the quality of roads. An important component in this issue is the effectiveness of the transport control system," she added.



National Oncology Research Centre construction to be completed by 2021

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Construction of the National Oncology Research Centre in the capital is scheduled for completion by March 2021, reported primeminister.kz following Prime Minister Askar Mamin's July 27 visit to the site.

The centre is being built at the direction of First President of Ka-

zakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. Mamin reviewed the report regarding the construction roadmap and layout design.

The 16,000-square foot facility, with six floors including the basement, is being built on a more than 49,000-square metre parcel. To date, installing temporary buildings and structures, demolishing existing administrative and residential buildings, digging pits, dewatering and pile driving has been

completed and work has begun on laying the foundation.

Mamin's visit also included a discussion on transferring the tract from Nazarbayev University to state ownership.

The new centre will use advanced technologies to diagnose and treat cancer, including laser, radiation and cell immune therapies, using the experience of established cardiological and neurosurgical clinics.

The Ministry of Healthcare and

Varian Medical Systems International AG signed a memorandum of cooperation Dec. 17 to equip the country's medical centres with modern tools. The agreement involved outfitting the national cancer centre and 10 regional centres with radiation and proton therapy devices.

Last year, the Kazakh government adopted the 2018-2022 Comprehensive Plan for Combating Oncological Diseases, which aims to improve the quality of medical services and purchase new equipment for oncology clinics.

More than 35,000 new malignant tumour cases are reported in Kazakhstan each year. Approximately 170,000 individuals have registered malignant tumour-related diseases, reported elorda.info.

New ministry will focus on environment, preventing poaching and managing water resources

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – The newly established Kazakh Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources will focus primarily on developing the county's Environmental Code, establishing mechanisms to fight poaching and deforestation and managing water resources and geological problems, according to an Aug. 3 announcement during the ministry's first meeting.

The ministry is expected to sub-

mit a proposed environmental code to Parliament by the end of the year. It has also started to develop a long-term strategy for water security of Kazakhstan. The strategy includes the development of water management infrastructure to ensure a safe drinking water supply and the introduction of digital technologies in water accounting.

The work of the department will also focus on combating poaching and deforestation. In the near future, measures will be developed to

strengthen the criminal liability for poaching and deforestation offenses.

The geological industry is another priority area of the newly formed ministry. Within a month, measures will be developed to stimulate investors in geological exploration, and geological scientists will be involved in the development of the Geological Exploration Programme.

The new ministry received the duties of other ministries. In particular, the Ministry of Energy transferred its authority to the state policy of envi-

ronmental protection, solid waste management, protection, control and supervision of the rational use of natural resources. The Ministry of Agriculture transferred to the new department powers regarding the usage and protection of the water fund, water supply, sanitation and forestry. The Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development transferred the powers for geological exploration, study and reproduction of the mineral resource base.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev formed July 17 the Ministry of Trade and Integration, as well as the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, the Akorda press service reported. The latter ministry head is Magzum Mirzagaliyev, the former vice minister of energy.

Improving business taxation, cancelling apartment owners' land tax among proposed reforms

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh Interdepartmental Commission on Legislative Activities discussed the concept of a draft law July 30 introducing amendments and addenda to certain legislative taxation acts to attract investments, develop the business environment and improve tax administration.

The changes are grouped in seven blocks. The first involves simplifying tax payments to individuals and abolishing the land tax for apartment building owners, according to Vice Minister of National Economy Madi Takiyev.

"Taxes on property and land from individuals will be combined without changing the elements of taxation – object of taxation, tax base, rates, calculation and payment procedure. Two taxes will be paid in a single payment," he said.

To ensure the timely receipt of taxes to the fourth level budget, the draft proposes postponing the payment deadline, including transport tax, until April 1.

The second block focuses on expanding the tax base. It suggests strengthening the fiscal function of excise taxes and collecting value added tax (VAT) from foreign companies that provide electronic services to Kazakh individuals. The draft

also proposes introducing a ban on deducting the corporate income tax expense in cash in more than 1,000 monthly calculation indices (MCI) (2.5 million tenge or US\$ 6,517).

The third block focuses on attracting investments. It introduces an investment tax credit, reimburses investor-participant costs to build infrastructure in special economic zones, the possibility of filing investment disputes with the Astana International Financial Centre and raising the status of the investment ombudsperson's decisions with its mandatory consideration.

The fourth block focuses on stimulating production and transit by exempting dealers from VAT on

vehicles or agricultural machinery purchased from domestic manufacturers without VAT, as well as producing vehicle components. It also provides preferential taxation for manufacturing cotton fibre, processing sugar beets and producing confectioneries and yeast and extends the current procedure for calculating the single land tax for the agricultural sector through 2023.

The fifth block of amendments includes measures to clear bad loans from mortgage companies, exempt shares sold from individual income tax gains and increase the investment attractiveness of mutual investment funds.

The sixth block includes a capital expense deduction for subsoil users to purchase sulfuric acid and exemption from the mineral extraction tax to utilise groundwater extracted with hydrocarbons.

The final block includes norms to improve tax and customs administration.

SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Teachers, waiters among most popular and in demand jobs in Kazakhstan

By Diana Vassilenko

NUR-SULTAN – The most numerous professions in Kazakhstan are secondary school teachers, accountants and store clerks, according to a labour market statistical analysis of the first-semester of 2019 data conducted by the Human Resources Development Centre of the country. The most in-demand jobs are security guards, waiters and orderlies.

The estimated amount of hired workers in 2018 was 6.6 million, 3.38 million of whom were men and 3.32 million were women. According to this year's data, every 20th hired worker is a teacher. There are 352,300 secondary education teachers in the country. Every 25th hired worker is an accountant for 268,000 accountants in total. Supervisors, sales clerks and shop assistants come third, at 256,000.

“One of the tools for analysing the supply and demand of the labour market is the state Internet website – the electronic labour ex-



Photo credit: Kazakh TV

change (ELE). This website contains all the job openings posted by employers; this is the leading

labour website of the country. Unlike other well-known job search resources, job centres themselves

work with ELE. All curricula vitae (CV) that are submitted through employment centres appear on

the website. That way we can find out which openings we have in abundance,” the centre's Director of Human Resources Forecasting Department Dmitry Shumeyko explained how the 2019 analysis was conducted.

According to Shumeyko, when filling out a resume and posting opening announcements on the ELE website, there is a single unification system of the jobs in strict accordance with the national classifier of occupations, which was also developed by the Human Resources Development Centre. According to this classifier, there are approximately 11,000 occupations in Kazakhstan. This systematisation greatly simplifies the collection and analysis of data on the supply and demand in the labour market.

Based on the data collected from the website, security guards ended up being the scarcest job in terms of the ratio of the number of CVs submitted and openings on the ELE website, with more than 4,000 openings left open. The top five professions with a similar situation were orderlies, cleaners, waiters and movers.

“The job of a security guard is unfortunately not a highly-skilled job. This causes a big staff turnover – the more skilled the employee, the rarer he will change his job. That is the main reason. On the

contrary, there are some professions with an excess of qualified workers and not enough openings. In terms of qualified workers with a higher education degree, lawyers and economists top the list,” said Shumeyko.

Data processing also allowed identifying the scarcest professions by region and city. In some areas, the results were unusual. For example, in the Akmola Region, the highest demand is for bus drivers, and in the Almaty Region, it is for hand-mould moulders. The Atyrau Region is in need of scaffolders, whereas the West Kazakhstan Region is in need of firefighters. The Mangystau Region needs painters. Nurses, loaders, unskilled workers and security guards are in-demand in all regions. Nur-Sultan primarily needs security guards, Almaty needs taxi drivers, and Shymkent needs cleaners.

People can go to local employment centres and find information about which professions are in-demand and which are not. Based on the demands, people seeking jobs will be directed to necessary professional training courses. The labour market data is constantly updated and publicly accessible. It serves as a useful guide for future school graduates in making decisions concerning their further education pathways.

Programme allows students to earn tuition funds for volunteering

By Yekaterina Yeliseyeva

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh Ministry of Information and Social Development will launch in September a programme allowing Kazakh students to receive course credit and funds to pay tuition in exchange for volunteering.

For example, if a student teaches the Kazakh language for 20 hours, they would be allowed to skip certain Kazakh language lessons. The list of subjects from which a student can be exempted is still developing.

The Social Student Loan Project will be administered by the information and social development ministry and Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science.

“The student picks an activity and the location of the organisation, where he wants to volunteer. He registers and has an interview, after which he begins the activity. Upon completion, the organisation evaluates the job done and gives the student a grade. Then, an e-voucher for volunteering is issued, and the financial centre pays the student 1,000 tenge (US\$2.6) per each hour of so-

cially beneficial activities. In addition, the student receives academic credit,” said President of the Ministry of Education and Science joint-stock company Financial Centre Askar Ibramov.

For example, if a student teaches the Kazakh language for 20 hours, they would be allowed to skip certain Kazakh language lessons. The list of subjects from which a student can be exempted is still developing.

Ibramov said the programme contains two types of vouchers. With the first type, a student receives 20,000 tenge (US\$51.7) and two academic credits. With the second, a student receives 50,000 tenge (US\$129.2) and five academic credits. Students can use the money to cover part of their tuition.

The platform is meant to encourage student volunteering in inclusive education promotion, elder care, tutoring (Kazakh language, English, and computer science), organisation of community and sports clubs for children and working with children with deviant behaviour. Students will be able to volunteer at orphanages, retirement homes, education centres and other social institutions.

All students can register for the platform, said Vice Minister of Information and Social Development Daniyar Yesin.

So far, 1,400 people have registered with more than 60 volunteer organisations involved. According to local executive bodies, there are more than 200 volunteer organisations with more than 50,000 active volunteers. One can visit qazvolunteer.kz to register.



Capital considers building rehabilitation centre for children with disabilities

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Capital Akim (Mayor) Altai Kulginov recently raised the question of opening a new centre for individuals with disabilities after visiting the city's social services centre. Its specialists provide services for children with psychoneurological pathologies and musculoskeletal system dysfunctions and individuals with disabilities as well as those who are physically or mentally unable to care for themselves.

His visit coincided with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's call for a more attentive approach to families of children with disabilities by decreasing their financial burden and supporting activities to assist them. He signed a decree June 26 to exempt the families from paying loan debts and listened to the demand for special organisations. As a result, the capital akimat

(administration) is discussing the possibility of opening a new centre.

The existing facility is staffed with qualified doctors, and it has classrooms and exercise areas.

“We are happy to visit this centre. Specialists, such as defectologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, massage nurses and healing fitness therapy instructors, work with children

here. We can feel the responsive attitude of the doctors. They even take children to the racetrack. However, there is one major issue. Not many people know about such centres where they can take their children to classes and receive professional services. We need to solve this problem so that everyone is aware of such places and has the opportunity to visit them,” said a parent.



Enbek state programme adds new mechanisms for gaining employment

Staff Report

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan's Enbek state programme has added new mechanisms for gaining employment, reported First Vice Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population Yerzhan Zhilkibayev on July 29. New jobs are available through 14 state programmes addressing the country's labour market.

“Today, about 8.7 million people participate in the labour market. In order to maintain the unemployment rate at 4.9 percent, and furthermore every year to reduce it by 0.1 percent, we must create 370,000 new jobs each year. Regarding job creation, 14 state programmes are being implemented here in Kazakhstan. These are Nurdy Zhol, Nurdy Zher and others,” he said.

In addition to the contributions of other programmes, the Enbek programme most directly targets the unemployment problem by offering training, retraining, grants and loans. The Job Creation Map database is expected to help track its progress.

“The Enbek programme is mainly aimed at active measures to promote employment: training, retraining, grants and loans. For

the first half of this year, 12,000 jobs were created precisely thanks to the Enbek programme. Now we have created the Job Creation Map database, where we will clearly keep track of what jobs are created in the regions, and we will adjust our plans accordingly,” said Zhilkibayev. Enbek means labour in Kazakh.

Additional Enbek programme priorities are creating proactive employment centres, rather than the need for individuals to physically

come to the centres, and promoting their services. The latter is necessary, as many citizens are unaware of the benefits available through the programme, he noted. A series of “The portrait of a grant holder” promo videos will be posted on social media to address the issue.

The programme particularly targets socially vulnerable groups such as parents of multiple children and youth.

Through the Enbek state programme, Kazakh unemployment

could drop to 4.5 percent, noted Minister of Labour and Social Protection Berdibek Saparbayev earlier this year.

“In order to correct the balance, we developed this programme that covers the period up to 2025, particularly how many workers will leave and how many will enter the job market. We need to open approximately 350,000 jobs. As a result, we will reduce unemployment from 4.8 to 4.5 percent by the end of this programme,” he said.



Photo credit: bnews.kz

TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Air Astana launches baggage allowance by number of pieces on international flights

By Zhanna Shayakhmetova

NUR-SULTAN – Air Astana changed its free checked baggage allowance on international routes Aug. 7 from weight to number of pieces. Beginning Aug. 21, passengers can check a certain number of bags with a free per-bag weight of up to 23 kilogrammes in economy class and up to 32 kilogrammes in business class. Passengers may purchase an additional baggage allowance with a 30-percent discount no later than 24 hours before the flight.

Cabin baggage should weigh no more than eight kilogrammes for economy class, and business class passengers may carry two pieces of luggage on board.

Cheap fares without baggage are available only on international routes.

“It is important that we offer as much consumer choice as possible. This principle has now become a standard practice in larger markets such as Europe and the U.S. The piece concept of full baggage is in fact just one component of My



Air Astana CEO Peter Foster

Choice. My Choice is a pricing option whereby a passenger may select his or her type of fare on international routes depending on his or her personal travel needs,” said Air Astana CEO Peter Foster in an interview for this story.

My Choice offers basic, classic and plus fares with a certain number of benefits in economy class and business saver and business flex in business class. Regarding domestic routes, Air Astana has made “a firm and unbreakable commitment to always sell domestic fares including checked baggage,” he added.

The piece concept is used by inter-

national carriers including Aeroflot, Asiana Airlines, Lufthansa, S7 and Southern China Airways.

Air Astana has always operated by meeting international safety standards. The airline has been on the auto operational safety register since 2007.

“We just successfully completed the audit a couple of months ago. Our engineering and maintenance are certified by the European Safety Agency (EASA). Our cadet pilots are all trained in Europe; they return from their training with licences and internally, the company has a very robust process of safety review. We do everything possible to ensure the safety of our aircraft,” he said.

Recently, the company received Skytrax World Airline Awards Best Airline in Central Asia and India for the eighth consecutive year.

“Central Asia and India, of course, is a huge area on the planet with a large number of excellent airlines. This is a testament to the fact that we continue to be very highly committed to high levels of customer service. At the same time, our prices are very reasonable. Kazakhstan’s

market is a liberal market. There are five airlines operating on domestic routes and there is a very liberal traffic rights regime for foreign airlines to come here. We continue, as we are doing today, to introduce as many pricing options as we can for customers,” he said.

Foster also spoke about Air Astana’s low-cost airline FlyArystan, which has carried more than 200,000 passengers in slightly more than three months of operation.

“FlyArystan has been a great success so far. Half of those passengers have travelled for tariffs of 10,000 tenge or less, which is \$26 at today’s exchange rate. It is a genuine low-cost option. You know the fares; the average fares are half of those that Air Astana charges and lower, of course, than the other domestic competitors. The launch has been extremely successful and the response from the travelling public has been very good,” he said.

FlyArystan will introduce two aircraft in September and October to double the number of flights and three aircraft in the first half of next year.

FlyArystan transports 200,000 passengers in three months

By Diana Vassilenko

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakhstan’s first and only low-cost airline FlyArystan, which launched its first flight May 1 from Almaty to Nur-Sultan, recently carried its 200,000th passenger.

The airline also reported the passenger load factor has been 94 percent, and 93 percent of the airline’s flights have been on time. More than half of the tickets sold were sold for less than 10,000 tenge (US\$26.03).

“One of the main features of low-cost operations is higher aircraft utilisation with multiple take-offs and landings each day, which means less time on land in airports. Owing to this, we manage to operate up to 14 flights per day on two Airbus A320 aircraft. After increasing the FlyArystan fleet to four aircraft in the fourth quarter of 2019, we plan to significantly expand the company’s route network. That will mean even more low fares to more cities on more routes across the country,” said FlyArystan Sales and Marketing Director Janar Jailauova in a company press release.

The airline, which has started

with roundtrip flights from Almaty to Nur-Sultan, which operate twice a day, currently offers roundtrips from Almaty to Karaganda, Pavlodar, Shymkent, Taraz and Ural'sk. The FlyArystan fleet consists of two Airbus 320-232 aircraft in a configuration of 180 seats, with an average age of six years. The airline plans to carry at least a million passengers by the end of 2019. By 2022, the airline plans to increase the fleet to at least 15 aircraft, which will be based in multiple Kazakh cities.

Tickets can be purchased in advance for the winter until March 28, 2020, with more than 130,000 seats available for a price less than 10,000 tenge (US\$26.03) through flyarystan.com.

The prices depend on the seat, the type and weight of luggage, the ability to change or cancel booking for free and whether one selects priority seating. The prices also depend on the proximity of the destination, with tickets to and from Taraz starting at 3,999 tenge (US\$10.41), and tickets to and from Ural'sk starting at 12,999 tenge (US\$33.83) one-way, including fees. Meals and drinks can be purchased on-board and will be discounted if pre-ordered online.

Improved infrastructure has increased tourism at Kolsai Lakes, say officials

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – The number of tourists visiting Kolsai Lakes National Park in the Almaty Region has increased 400 percent since 2009 following infrastructure improvements, reports 24.kz.

The annual number of tourists

visiting Kolsai Lakes National Park was 41,000 in 2018, as opposed to 10,000 in 2009. The numbers are expected to further increase by one and a half times this year.

Head of the Department of the Regional Centre for Tourism and Information Meirambek Kuanyshuly and Director of the Kolsai Lakes National Park Amirzhan

Mambekov attribute the increase to recent infrastructure development, particularly the construction of a highway leading to the region.

The highway from Almaty to the park was built this year as part of the Nury Zhol programme. The region administration is also taking further measures on Kolsai Lakes’ infrastructure advancement

by planning to conclude an agreement with the national company Kazakh Tourism and to revise the park’s master plan.

If the planned revision is approved, the number of tourist destinations available at the park will be increased. The park currently has four tourist destinations.

The regional administration is also providing press tours to the lakes.

“Every year we host five press tours. This spring, the journalists were taken to the Charyn Canyon and to the Relic grove. Now, here are the Kolsai Lakes. In the near future, we plan to organise press tours to five national natural parks, among them Zhongar-Alatau and Ile-Alatau, where the ancestor of all modern apples of the world, the apple tree Sivers, grows,” Kuanyshuly said.

Kolsai Lakes National Park was created 12 years ago. It is more than 160,000 hectares wide and employs 130 people.

“I really liked the nature of Kolsai Lakes. I never thought that there could be such reservoirs on the tops of mountains. I consider this region one of the most beautiful places in the world,” said Philipp Miranda, a traveller from Portugal.



Businesspeople, officials advance plans to continue Alakol Resort’s development

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – The Kazakh government is investing in the Alakol Lake coastal zone and its infrastructure. Entrepreneurs and state body representatives recently discussed the prospects and challenges of developing the resort.

East Kazakhstan Region Akim (Governor) Danial Akhmetov participated in the talks during his working trip to the Urdzhar district. He noted the regional akimat (administration) will begin implementing several large infrastructure projects in the next year. Akhmetov emphasised representatives of small and medium-sized businesses must fulfil their obligations and pay taxes.

Improving the Alakol Lake coast has been ongoing since 2016, significantly expanding the recreation area. At present, 333 tourist facilities provide services to guests, including 175 holiday homes and two hotels. The area also has 29 shops, 56 booths, ten cafés, four

bars, two restaurants, eight canteens, two pharmacies and a water park.

A recent audit found 38 entrepreneurs who have not paid taxes, said East Kazakhstan State Revenue Department Deputy Head Yerzhan Ktanov. In 2018, businesspeople paid 67.5 million tenge (US\$174,400) in taxes to the district budget and this year, the figure is expected to increase 48 percent to 100 million tenge (US\$258,400). Instances still remain, however, where recreation facility owners provide inaccurate information about their income and accordingly, evade taxes.

Plans are underway to execute projects worth 30 billion tenge (US\$77.5 million), said Urdzhar District Akim Serik Zainuldin. Authorities will begin with shore protection by placing wave breakers parallel to the shore 100-150 metres from the coastline. The project, based on the experience Kazakh contractors gained while building the Aktau seaport, will also involve strengthening ap-

proximately two kilometres of the coast.

Authorities plan to build water supply networks and intake facilities, as well as sewer networks, treatment facilities and filtration

fields. A 110-kW electricity transmission line will be added to ensure stable electrical transmission from Makanchi village to Koktal.

The Urdzhar Airport runway will be lengthened up to 2,100 me-

tres and widened up to 45 metres, providing aircraft the ability to enter the lane from two directions. Up-to-date light-signalling equipment with high-intensity bulbs will be installed.

Authorities will also be building a new terminal with a capacity of 70 passengers per hour and refurbishing the administrative premises of the existing building. The airport will subsequently be able to accept narrow-body aircraft with up to 70-80 seats.

“For two years, we have invested a lot of money in the development of the coast. In the next four years, we will invest even more so that not only domestic but also foreign tourists can come here and relax in comfort,” said Akhmetov.

He noted the resort has a road-way problem which will also be corrected.

“Today, there is one problem – the road from Ust-Kamenogorsk through Kalbatay through Semey to Ayagov – but within two years, the repair will be completed. A 2.6-kilometre cycle track will be built from the village of Kabanbai to the Alakol Lake. All necessary state support is provided to entrepreneurs; therefore, businesspeople must pay taxes with full responsibility,” he added.



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Rakhmonov becomes first Kazakh MMA fighter to sign UFC contract



Shavkat Rakhmonov

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh MMA fighter Shavkat Rakhmonov became July 31 the first Kazakh MMA fighter to sign a contract with the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), Khabar 24 reports.

“The UFC is currently the number one (championship) in the world. Everyone who watches MMA wants someone from Kazakhstan to go there, to raise our flag, to win

battles with dignity. The Kazakh people would like to see their fighters there. And I, myself, would like to get there. If we get to the UFC, then we will show good fights, the main thing is that the UFC allows its fighters to maintain good health and provides opportunities. We will try,” said Rakhmonov about his plans for the UFC fights.

Rakhmonov’s manager Sayat Abdrakhmanov also noted other Kazakh fighters are likely to follow.

“Shavkat became the first, but I’m sure he will not be the last representative of our country in the UFC,” wrote Abdrakhmanov in an Instagram post.

Rakhmonov’s first UFC fight is scheduled for November. His record is 12 early wins in 12 MMA fights overall, of which seven were knockouts. Earlier this year, he won the M-1 Global Welterweight Champion Belt and completed his first title defence in June. Rakhmonov’s first professional MMA fight took place November 2014.

Rakhmonov’s latest fight, which became the main battle of the M-1 Challenge 102 tournament, took place in Nur-Sultan. His opponent was Brazilian fighter Thiago Varejao Lacerda. Rakhmonov finished the fight early, knocking out his opponent in the first round. Before the fight, Rakhmonov spoke highly of his opponent.

“He is one of the strongest in the M1. He is also one of the most dangerous fighters, at least in my career. I watched his fights, and they look good enough. He has a decent shock technique, he is physically

strong. It is clear that he is a major fighter,” said Rakhmonov in his June 28 interview with Vesti.kz.

Rakhmonov’s first UFC fight is scheduled for November. His record is 12 early wins in 12 MMA fights overall, of which seven were knockouts.

Rakhmonov also said he would proudly represent Kazakhstan in the UFC fights.

First Kazakh female MMA champion Maria Agapova also had a chance to win a UFC contract July 31, but she lost the fight to U.S. fighter Tracy Cortez, after three rounds with 26-30, 26-30, 27-29 points gained by Agapova and Cortez, respectively, each round. For Agapova, it was the first fight she lost, as previously she won six fights out of six.

First Central Asian Triathlon Association race to be Oct. 5 in Shymkent and Tashkent

By Saltanat Botcu

NUR-SULTAN – The Central Asian Triathlon Association (CATA) will host its first race under CATA auspices Oct. 5 in Shymkent, Kazakhstan and Tashkent, Uzbekistan, according to an announcement following the Aug. 2 second CATA Congress in Almaty.

The event is considered part of the celebration of the Year of Kazakhstan in Uzbekistan.

The race will begin with a 1.1-kilometre swim stage in Shymkent. Participants will then bike 121 kilometres from Shymkent to the Uzbek capital where the race will end with an 11-kilometre run along Tashkent streets, reported olympic.kz.

The participants also set Sept. 22 as the start date of the CATA paratriathlon as a part of the first Asian Cup in Aktau.

During the Aug. 2 congress, CATA members, Uzbek National Triathlon Federation’s First Vice President Farrukh Nasyrov, Kyrgyz Triathlon Federation’s President Chyngyz Alkanov also discussed the organisation’s short-term goals.

Honorary guests, Iranian Triathlon Federation’s President Mahdi Goudzari and Afghan National Triathlon Federation Deputy Sports

Minister Naser Ahmadi also attended the congress.

The association plans to make the Central Asian region one of the leaders in the development and popularisation of the triathlon on the Asian continent. To do this, it plans to cover all CATA activities in the media, create a regulatory framework, increase involvement in triathlon up to one percent of the population of each CATA member country and prepare professional triathletes and paratriathletes to be included in the world’s top 30 and Asian top five rankings.

The association members unanimously voted for the entry of the National Triathlon Federation of Afghanistan and Iran into the CATA. Nasyrov and Alkanov were also elected as a vice president and a senior vice president of CATA accordingly. The participants also decided to establish the Legal Committee, the Media Committee, the Competition Committee and the Paratriathlon Committee. The association approved a domain name of the official CATA website www.catriathlon.org.

The CATA was founded in 2018 at the initiative of Kazakh Triathlon Federation President Karim Massimov. Until the second congress, the association members included Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Kaipanov wins silver medal at international tournament in Poland

By Nazira Kozhanova

NUR-SULTAN – Nurkhodzha Kaipanov won Aug. 4 the silver medal in freestyle wrestling at the Vaclav Tsiolkovsky International Tournament in Warsaw, Poland, reports Olympic.kz. It was the ninth medal Kazakh wrestlers won at the tournament.

The Kazakh wrestler lost to Turkish wrestler Haydar Yavuz in the weight category up to 70 kg in the final bout. Kaipanov was called the dark horse of the tournament by Eduard Bazrov, former champion of Russia in freestyle wrestling who trains the Kazakh junior freestyle wrestling team.

“We have already noted experienced fighters and team leaders. But, as for the surprises, Nurkhodzha Kaipanov who is barely 20 years old is one of them.

This year, he won the championship of Kazakhstan and became the youngest winner of the Asian championship in the history of the country. He already had his own style, such a Kazakh school of freestyle wrestling ... And it seems to me that Kaipanov can surprise and shine at the World

Cup and, in the future, become the leader determining the design of the Kazakh wrestling school,” said Bazrov.

Two more Kazakh athletes, Sayatbek Okasov and Daulet Niyazbekov, competing in the weight category up to 65 kg, won bronze medals. Earlier, in the

97 kg weight category, Alisher Ergali won the gold medal of the competition. Nurislam Sanayev (57 kg), Nurgali Nurgaipuly (92 kg) and Galymzhan Userbaev (79 kg) won silver medals. Eraly Abdrashev (92 kg) and Rasul Kaliev (61 kg) won bronze medals.

Thus, the Kazakh freestyle wrestling team won nine medals at the international tournament in Poland.

Freestyle wrestling at the Polish tournament traditionally tests applicants for the World Cup. Teams from Russia, Ukraine, Poland and Kazakhstan, among others, will participate in the tournament. Aryan Tyutrin, Ramiz Gamzatov, Taras Markovich, Andrey Yatsenko, Magomedrasul Idrisov, Gadzhi Nabiev, Valery Andreitsev, Pavel Oleinik, Murazi Mchedlidze and other freestyle wrestlers fought for medals at the Polish tournament.

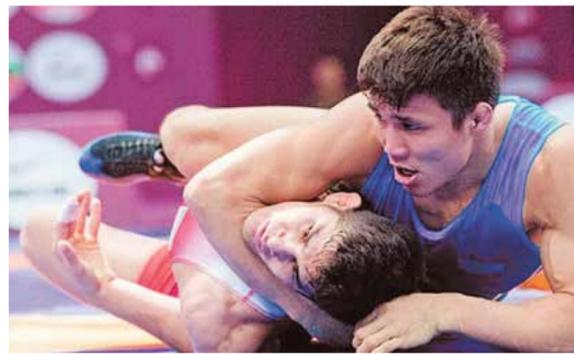


Photo credit: olympic.kz.

Golovkin to fight Derevyanchenko for his old world title

Continued from Page B1

Golovkin (39-1-1, 35 KOs), 37, is a former unified middle-weight world champion with IBF, World Boxing Association (WBA), World Boxing Council (WBC) and International Boxing Organisation titles. He defeated Canadian professional boxer Steve Rolls (19-1-0, 10 KOs) in his June 9 DAZN debut and had hoped for a third rematch with Alvarez (52-1-2, 35 KOs), who declined to fight, for his second DAZN appear-

ance. Derevyanchenko (13-1, 10 KOs), 33, is ranked as the number one and number five contender by the IBF and WBC, respectively.

Formed in 1983, the IBF sanctions world championship boxing bouts, alongside the WBA, WBC and World Boxing Organisation. Golovkin previously won the IBF title by beating Canadian professional boxer David Lemieux in 2015 and lost the title Aug. 3, 2018 for not reaching a deal with mandatory challenger Derevyanchenko.

Seventh Tour of Almaty professional bike race will take place Aug. 30-31

By Diana Vassilenko

NUR-SULTAN – Central Asia’s largest professional cycling race, Tour of Almaty, will take place Aug. 30 and 31. The race will be the seventh time Kazakhstan’s largest city has hosted the event.

“Though we kept the two traditional stages, we slightly modified the route this year. As before, we attempted to cover different terrains – part of the race will take place on paved roads, and the final part will be in a mountainous area, with the finish line being at the Medeo (the highest mountain sports complex at an altitude of 1,691 metres above sea level),” said Vice President of the Kazakhstan Cycling Federation Amanbek Kulchikov.

The first stage of the tour will be 118.6 kilometres and go through the Industrial Park with the start and finish being near the Almaty Arena. The relative shortness of the stage will be counterbalanced with the uneven and unpredictable terrain. At the request of Almaty residents, the central streets of the city, which are often busy, will not be part of the cycling route on the first day.

On the second day, the race will follow the traditional route, which covers the most scenic parts of the area. The cyclists will make 4.5 laps on the Eastern Bypass Road

and Al-Farabi Avenue, after which they will head towards the Medeo high-mountain rink where the race will end. The second stage totals 160 kilometres.

“When the Tour was in its development stage, The Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) schedule was very tight, and we could only fit our tour in the middle of autumn. This led to many difficulties, such as the unstable Almaty weather and the ‘time clash’ with the World Cup, the time period when all the major cyclists are either busy with preparations for the race or are participating in it,” Kulchikov said.

“Tour of Almaty’s reputation has grown considerably due to the rising interest of Almaty residents and the eager participation of the city akimat (administration) in the organisation of the tour, and now the UCI is willing to meet our time demands, and we are able to invite even more prominent cyclists from all over the world,” he said.

The dates of the tour were changed from the end of September, when most prominent cyclists are occupied with the World Cup, to the end of August, and this enabled more participants to take part in the race.

According to UCI regulations, only professional teams, pro-continental teams, continental teams, as well as national teams can take part in an international profession-

al road cycling race. Four Kazakh teams will participate in the Tour of Almaty, including Astana Pro Team, Apple Team, Vino-Astana Motors and the Kazakh national

team. In total, 21 international cycling teams of various categories will participate in the 2019 race.

This year, the tour will be broadcast by Qazaqstan Radio and Tele-

vision Corporation, and the second stage will be broadcast live on the Eurosport channel.

Anyone can apply to be a volunteer and take part in the organisa-

tion of the tour until Aug. 10 on the official website of the Tour of Almaty, tourofalmaty.kz. Information on how to view the race is also available on the website.



Photo credit: tourofalmaty.kz.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2019

Nur-Sultan cuts budget on LRT construction by \$350 million

By Assel Satubaldina

NUR-SULTAN – The Nur-Sultan Akimat (city administration) recently cut \$350 million from the budget to build a new light rail train system, Nur-Sultan Mayor Altai Kulginov announced recently.

The city reduced the allocation for the project from \$1.8 billion to \$1.45 billion.

Kulginov also said the reduction cut the number of stations from 18 to 11 and increased the train interval from three minutes to ten minutes.

Officials will also consider reducing the rolling stock from 19 to 12 units, which can save approximately \$40 million.

“As a result, the measures can save \$1.2 billion, over \$800 million was saved for servicing the project loan and \$350 million in construction and installation works. Given these changes, we consider it appropriate to contin-



ue the construction project,” said Kulginov.

The news comes a few months after the city akimat announced a temporary suspension to the project.

Kazakhstan and the Chinese State Development Bank agreed in 2015 the bank would provide a \$1.5 billion loan to build the system. The signing of the agreement was then witnessed by Chinese President Xi Jinping and the First Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

All contractors were from China as well. The funds were taken by Kazakhstan for 20 years at 2.5 percent per annum. Nearly \$344 million of those were used and \$257.6 million were frozen at the Bank Astana that was liquidated in 2018.

Officials then said the postponement is due to the delay in a supply of the loan from the Chinese Development Bank.

“The LRT construction in Nur-Sultan city has really dragged on and it is being built not for the first year. The problem is that the

first tranche funds loaned for the construction have remained in the liquidated Bank Astana. The city akimat, National Bank and the Ministry of Finance are working to get those funds back,” said Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister Zhenis Kassymbek in his July statement.

Kulginov said the international obligations, the capital demand in an alternative transport and the volume of the work done to prepare the infrastructure were among the key factors behind the decision to resume the project involving the investments from inside the country.

The city officials expect the LRT will address the city’s growing traffic problems, environment and passenger safety issues.

The network will connect the city’s international airport, the EXPO 2017 area, Nazarbayev University, Abu Dhabi Plaza and the House of Ministries. It will terminate at the new railway station. Nearly 500,000 people are expected to live in this area by 2030.

1,634 apartments to be provided for families with many children

By Zhanat Tukpiev

NUR-SULTAN – The capital will provide 1,634 apartments for families with three or more children by the end of the year using the capital communal housing fund. It includes 731 rental properties for 233 families with many children, 105 orphans as well as housing for World War II veterans, individuals from socially vulnerable groups, civil servants and those on the waiting list for housing.

“There are plans to provide 1,640 apartments including 718 rental houses in 2020. The Housing Construction Savings Bank launched a loan programme for single-parent families, large families and families with children with disabilities. We have issued more than 2,000 orders for participation in this programme,” said Anuar Saipov, deputy head of the city’s department for employment and social protection.

More than 47,099 capital residents, including 22,538 from socially vulnerable groups, civil servants, and orphans, are on the housing waiting list. Zhilstroyserbank central office Deputy Director Zhanar Izimbetova noted 1,129 applications

have been submitted since a new direction was implemented July 17 as part of the Nurly Zher programme.

“The programme has certain requirements such as Kazakh citizenship, the divorce must have been registered at least three years ago in the case of an incomplete family, the absence of housing at the time of application, registration in Nur-Sultan for two years and the family income should not exceed 42,500 tenge (US\$110) per family member,” she said.

To date, 399 applications have been submitted in the capital and 80 approved. Nationwide, 1,129 applications have been submitted and approximately 190 approved.

Izimbetova also spoke about the programme for relocating large families from the capital to neighbouring regions with guaranteed apartments and employment.

“Those who wish can move to the Pavlodar and the North Kazakhstan regions. We helped to relocate 102 families, or 610 people to the Pavlodar region. They have a three-room apartment according to their family composition. We helped to relocate mainly large families. They have a rental property with the right of subsequent buy-out,” she said.

Archaeological park to be created in the city

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh authorities recently announced plans to reconstruct the ancient settlement of Bozok and create an archaeological park in the capital.

“I was glad to meet with Minister of Culture and Sports Aktota Raimkulova. We signed a joint development plan for the Bozok state historical and cultural museum-reserve. We plan to develop design estimates for the objects of the museum-reserve (visit centre, archaeological park) in 2020, after proceeding to the development of road infrastructure,” Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altai Kulginov said, Tengrinews reports.

The medieval settlement of Bozok, located five kilometres from the city, is the thousand-year-old predecessor of the Kazakh capital.

The settlement of Bozok has a unique historical significance. Historians have proved that originally it was a fortified city and a military headquarters along the route of the Steppe Silk Road.

In 1997, when it was decided to transfer the capital from Almaty to then Akmola, Kazakh archaeologist

Kemal Akishev, who previously revealed the Golden Man to the world, set about studying the history of the central regions of Kazakhstan. The ancient settlement of Bozok was another of Akishev’s discoveries.

“In 1998, in the autumn, we started searching for this archaeological site. But we discovered it only in 1999. And starting from that year, we began excavations at this site. Each year, our archaeological team was engaged in the study of this monument,” said Director of the Institute of Archeology Maral Khabdulina.

The ruins are typical of other settlements found in the steppe. They include up to one metre earthen ramparts which surround the flat surfaces of square-shaped platforms and are located on an area of 30 hectares. The etymology of the Turkic word “boz” has several figurative meanings, including untouched land, virgin lands or feather grass.

Currently, Bozok is in the city. The territory of the ancient city is on the main axis of Astana and fits into the architectural interpretation of the capital: the past with Bozok and the present city’s central square with the Ak Orda and buildings, which will be constructed in the future according to the city plan.

Capital to name roadway Writers Alley in honour of First Asian Writers Forum

By Diana Vassilenko

NUR-SULTAN – City officials are considering renaming an alley near Zhastar Palace “Qalamgerler Alleyasy,” which translates as “Writers Alley.” The renaming is in honour of the First Asian Writers Forum to take place Sept. 4-6 in Nur-Sultan.

“Two hundred and two creative people from all over the world will come to the event, among them Nobel laureates, writers, who have contributed to world literature and

other creatives,” said Language Development and Archival Affairs Department Head Tleugali Kishkashbayev at a public hearing in the capital’s maslikhat (local representative body). “If we have Nobel laureates, their names will remain forever on this alley. This is a kind of heritage for future generations, for all the children. The names of writers should be immortalised.”

The alley, which did not already have a name, is off Zhakyp Omarov street, which is in the city’s cultural centre and in one

of Nur-Sultan’s busiest and most populous sections, Kishkashbayev said. The Abai Monument, Saken Seifullin Museum, Zhastar Palace and the Kalibek Kuanysbayev Kazakh State Academic Music and Drama Theatre are all within walking distance.

Abai Kunanbayev was a Kazakh poet, composer and philosopher. Saken Seifullin was a pioneer of modern Kazakh literature, poet and writer, and politician. Zhastar Palace hosts numerous cultural events. Plays written by Kazakh writers can

be viewed at the Kazakh State Theatre, among others. The Writers Alley will start from Beibitshilik street and end at Republic Avenue.

The proposed name change has the support of the Union of Writers and prominent Kazakh creative intellectuals as well as the Nur-Sultan’s Onomastic Board, said Kishkashbayev. Maslikhat deputies have also expressed support for the proposal but it will need to be officially adopted at the next maslikhat session before being enacted.

Astana LRT opens school for bus drivers

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – Astana LRT has opened a driving school at the capital’s Transport Specialist Qualification Centre to reduce the shortage of bus drivers, improve the professional level and decrease the average age of the current drivers, and popularise the specialty. Students will be able to earn driving licenses in all categories.

“A driver’s license of this (D) category allows one to drive pas-

senger buses and is issued to people who do not have medical contraindications who have reached the age of 25. Teachers and instructors of the centre have many years of experience and will teach candidates all the intricacies of driving D category vehicles,” reported the Astana LRT press service.

In addition to reducing driver shortage, the organisation noted the school seeks to improve access to the speciality and increase its prestige. It will educate at the highest level to ensure service and road safety.

Before being hired, each potential candidate must undergo training at the centre. Drivers are checked for traffic rule knowledge and safe driving techniques, and psychological testing is completed, including determining the individual’s attention, reaction speed and stress resistance. Based on the recommendations of the centre’s experts, a decision is made to allow a driver to transport passengers.

Astana LRT was established in April 2011 under the Astana Department of Passenger Transport and

Highways. It is working to establish a new transport system in the capital involving Light Rail Transport (LRT) and Intellectual Transport System (ITS). The organisation’s main goals include modernising transport and implementing innovative projects in the industry using new technologies, transport and infrastructure management.

Astana LRT consists of three branches – Centre for Astana Transport Operators, Competency Centre for Transport Experts and Service for Transport Control. It also conducts transport research, analysing the city’s road network and passenger flow. The organisation interacts with international consultants from leading companies such as Bureau Veritas, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), PwC, Swarco, Systra and Typsa.

100 new electric buses to hit the roads

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

NUR-SULTAN – One hundred additional electronic public buses will begin operating in the capital by the end of the year.

“The working group formed under the city accelerator is engaged in improving public transport. We are moving to a green economy. The number of people in the city is growing annually and so is the number of cars. It is necessary to reduce emissions into the environment. By the end of the year we will acquire 100 electric buses. And this is only the beginning,” Nur-Sultan Akim (Mayor) Altai Kulginov said.

More than 3,000 people work in passenger transportation in Nur-Sultan. Every day, 900 buses operate and 1,700 people work as drivers. Over the past five years, more than 700 buses have been purchased. The new buses have ramps for transporting people with special needs, equipped with up-to-date video surveillance systems. For comfortable movement, the akimat (city administration) is also carrying out street repair work.

“You have a very responsible

job,” Kulginov said addressing the transport workers of the capital. “Pensioners, students, children, habitants and guests of the capital use public transport every day. You need to think about the safety and comfort of passengers. Stable operation of passenger transport is an indicator of the quality of life of the population. In order to make passengers and drivers feel comfortable, the fleet is updated annually. For example, the rolling stock of the city is updated by 70 percent. Specialists repair buses in a timely manner.”

The akim of the capital highlighted the importance of increasing the priority of public transport and said the introduction of separate bus lanes has decreased transportation times.

“If people are willing to use public transport, this will be an indicator of the development of the city. Thanks to bus lanes, you can now reach your destination faster than by car. In addition, the introduction of an electronic ticket system has increased the profitability of fleets by 40 percent. But along with this, if last year 13,000 complaints were received about the quality of service, this year it is already over 21,000 (an

increase of 60 percent). We need to correct this number. We are working to create comfortable conditions for all users of public transport, and the most important thing is to ensure the safety of passengers,” said Kulginov.

Kulginov also congratulated the workers of the capital bus fleet on their professional holiday – Transport Workers Day. He also handed out letters of thanks and best wishes to transport workers.

