



## Bahraini King Pays First Visit to Astana, Political and Commercial Ties Expand



President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan (l) and King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain in the Ak Orda residence discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations.

By Malika Rustem

ASTANA – King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain paid his first official visit to Kazakhstan on April 13-15.

Accompanied by a high-level delegation of more than 200 officials and business leaders, the

King was welcomed on arrival in Astana by Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Issekeshov and other senior officials.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev welcomed King Hamad in his Ak

Orda residence on April 14 to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations. The two leaders also discussed trade and investment.

In his opening remarks, the President said Bahrain is one of the most important partners for Kazakhstan among the Arab states.

“During the short time Bahrain has turned into an advanced industrial state. Your country is known around the world as one of the biggest financial centres in the world and the homeland of the Islamic Bank,” the President said during the meeting.

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## PM Massimov Visits Russia, Discusses Draft Treaty on Eurasian Economic Union

By Artur Abubakirov

ASTANA – Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov met with his counterparts from member states of the Customs Union (CU) and Common Economic Space (CES) on April 15 in Moscow to discuss the ongoing process of Eurasian economic integration.

During the meeting, Prime Ministers Massimov, Dmitry Medvedev of Russia and Mikhail Myasnikovich of Belarus discussed deepening Eurasian economic integration, as well as reviewed preparation of the treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)

in the lead up to the meeting of presidents and a session of the Supreme Council in Minsk at the end of April.

“In particular, the parties discussed a number of issues relating to the oil and gas industry, agriculture, road and rail communications,” the Kazakhstan Prime Minister’s office reported.

“Today, we have discussed all disputable issues and after finalising the document will be ready for signing by the heads of state,” Massimov said at the press conference after the meeting.

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## Astana, London Sign Agreements on Cargo Transit from Afghanistan

By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – Britain’s Senior Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Baroness Sayeeda Warsi visited Astana April 14-15 for high level and wide ranging talks with Kazakhstan officials, resulting in the signing of bilateral agreements expanding the legal basis for British military-related transit from Afghanistan.

Following talks with Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov at the foreign ministry, Baroness Warsi and Deputy Foreign Minister Alexey Volkov

signed agreements on the transit of British cargo through the territory of Kazakhstan. The documents, requiring ratification in Kazakhstan, are of great importance for the effective and timely withdrawal of British troops from Afghanistan this year.

“The withdrawal of troops does not mean the end of our involvement in Afghanistan,” Baroness Warsi said in an exclusive interview with The Astana Times after the talks as she sought to reaffirm London’s continued commitment to the region and to the stabilisation of the situation in that country.

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## Twenty Years of Evolving ADB Support for Economic Growth in Kazakhstan

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – The Asian Development Bank (ADB) works in developing countries in Asia and the Pacific region to alleviate poverty and support sustainable growth. Country Director Matthew Westfall spoke with The Astana Times about what the ADB stands for and its role and objectives in Kazakhstan.

“The ADB was founded in 1966, driven by a desire to improve people’s lives in developing Asia and the Pacific,” Westfall explained. The organisation’s headquarters are in Manila, Philippines and its mission in Kazakhstan is one of 28 such offices around the region.

“In partnership with our developing member countries and other stakeholders, we try our best to target resources effectively, with a sharp focus on alleviating poverty and helping create a world in which everyone can share in the benefits of sustained and inclusive growth. It’s a big task, fraught with challenges, but we carry on important development that strives to make the world a better place,” Westfall said.

The ADB does this through investing in infrastructure, health care services, financial and public administration systems, as well

as helping nations prepare for the impact of climate change and better manage their natural resources. ADB assistance comes mainly through loans, grants, policy dialogue, technical assistance and equity investments, Westfall said. The bank provided about \$21.57 billion in financing across the Asia and Pacific region in 2012.

“The end game for us is a region where our developing member countries have been able to evolve and graduate into thriving, modern economies that are well integrated with each other and the world,” said Westfall.

Following is a question and answer with Matthew Westfall.

**What are the ADB’s main objectives in Kazakhstan? Since 1994, what have been the most significant projects the ADB has supported in Kazakhstan?**

The ADB’s partnership with Kazakhstan began after the collapse of the Soviet Union and has been underway for 20 years. In the early years of this partnership, the ADB provided much-needed support in agriculture, education, finance and delivery of social services to help the country’s transition from a centrally-planned economy to a free market system.

By 2004, the ADB’s public sec-

tor lending activities paused as oil revenues filled the government’s coffers and the need for external finance declined. However, the global economic crisis in 2007 prompted the government to once again access external concessional resources, and our activities quickly picked up. We responded with a \$500 million counter cyclical loan, followed by support for operations in road transport, small and medium-sized enterprise development and the private sector.

More recently, the ADB and Kazakhstan jointly launched an innovative knowledge and experience exchange programme, which aims to help the country diversify its economy and achieve more equitable and sustainable growth.

Our country partnership strategy for 2012-2016 has been designed to help make the economy more competitive and diverse in order to sustain growth and create jobs, defining a new development partnership that is relevant and responsive to Kazakhstan’s goal of transitioning to a high-income country.

Our public sector lending operations are increasingly selective, focusing on modernising infrastructure and utilities and improving access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises.

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## President Stresses Importance of Maintaining Inter-Ethnic Unity in Country

By Blaise Hopkinson and Jan Furst

ASTANA – Stressing the importance of maintaining inter-ethnic unity in the country and Kazakhstan’s close ties with neighbours Russia and China, President Nursultan Nazarbayev told delegates at the April 18 opening of the 21st Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan that while Kazakhstan did not choose its neighbours, it can choose to maintain excellent relationships with them.

“That is why there will always be a close relationship with our neighbours,” the President said in his opening remarks, attended by hundreds of leading figures representing Kazakhstan’s ethnic diversity.

Founded by President Nazarbayev in 1995, the Assembly is playing an integral role in the im-

plementation of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, which the President said “reflects the wisdom of our great multiethnic nation.”

He added the strategy reflects the principles of the country’s unique culture of peace and spiritual accord.

Held at the Palace of Peace and Accord, the opening ceremony provided a rich visual spectacle with many of the delegates attired in the traditional costumes of their ethnic origins and regions of Kazakhstan. The Assembly is bringing under one umbrella the activities of more than 820 ethnic and cultural organisations from across Kazakhstan.

Turning to Central Asian affairs, President Nazarbayev noted that the state of international affairs underlines the need for Kazakhstan to maintain positive relation-

ships with key neighbours Russia and China.

He declared that “today, Kazakhstan and Russia are good neighbours, allies and strategic partners.”

The President also underscored this year’s 60th anniversary of the beginning of the Virgin Lands programme: “We commemorate all who worked to raise the harvests of cereal and building of granaries in the country. I congratulate all those who built infrastructure in harsh environments and barren steppe.”

“Today, more than 300,000 of our citizens are Ukrainians. Ukrainian soil is strewn with many holy remains of thousands of Kazakhs, who heroically died in the battles for Ukraine’s liberation from fascism.”

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The Assembly is playing an integral role in the implementation of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy.

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## NATION

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Activists, Ministries Work to Promote Healthy Lifestyles



To promotion healthy lifestyle, the Astana Centre for Healthy Living organises the Festival of Health.

By Azamat Syzdykbayev

The World Health Organisation was established April 7, 1948 and since then, on that day, the world celebrates World Health Day. Director of the Astana Centre for Healthy Living Marat Kurmanov recently talked about the state of health affairs in the capital.

**What are the tasks of the centre today?**

Its objectives are the same: promoting healthy lifestyles and good nutrition, reducing the level of socially transmitted diseases, the study of indicators of behavioral risk factors, ensuring the health of schoolchildren and adolescents, the prevention of road traffic injuries, fighting tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, monitoring screening studies and protection of reproductive health. I have been leading this service since 2010 and I'd like to say that leading a healthy lifestyle is not as easy a

task as it might seem at first glance.

**What are the most pressing tasks regarding health problems today?**

The majority of our adult population is overweight and this phenomenon is behind most cardiovascular diseases in the country, which is the leading cause of mortality. If you look at the statistics, you see that more than 40 percent of Kazakhstan's people today are overweight and about 18-20 percent are obese. Our main programmes are aimed at promoting a balanced diet, including fruits and vegetables and preventing inactivity. Today, people spend a lot of time sitting at the computer and watching TV. This sedentary lifestyle leads to excess weight and impairment of the cardiovascular system. Starting April 1, we will be living in the decade of healthy eating. Our website, which has more than two million users, also promotes healthy eating. Another press-

ing problem is adolescent suicide. Kazakhstan is still among the top three countries in adolescent suicide.

**What are the causes?**

The problem is very complex; single parent families, conflicts with parents and teachers and social psychological problems within the family are all contributing factors. Where can children find help in such cases? In addition, we should take into account the fragility of the child's psychology complicated by their awkward age. We have organised psychiatric services and developed and introduced research tests for a universal psycho-diagnostic apparatus. Now, we can identify the warning signs of adolescent suicide in advance and notify specialists. We conduct this research testing on a voluntary basis, but this year, the Ministry of Defence decided to use this psycho diagnostic system during conscription.

**Will it be introduced in secondary schools?**

The use of any methods of research in our country is regulated by the law. Thus, persons under 18 cannot be examined or tested without permission from parents or legal guardians. We cannot violate the law, but if the pedagogical councils and parent committees recommend it, we will cooperate with them.

**Recently, the public fund Ules, together with the Department on Drug Trafficking and the Centre for Healthy Living held its second event aimed at combatting drug addiction. How acute is this problem?**

Actually, addiction is a very serious phenomenon, taking into account the fact that in Kazakhstan, there is wild hemp, for example in the Chu valley. In addition, drug addicts try to buy substances from

pharmacies to help convert one type of drug into another. This is a global problem. Also, we must take into consideration the fact that our country is located on the drug trafficking corridor connecting Afghanistan to Europe. But at the same time, I must say that at least in the capital, the situation with drug addiction improves every year. This is manifested by a steady decline in the number of addicts subject to medical check-ups. We adopted the programme Astana: A City Without Drugs and our centre is closely cooperating with the CADAP and CADCA, two international organisations that are engaged in drug use prevention.

Besides, bad habits cannot be treated as separate problems. We should promote more than victory over one particular bad habit. Whether it is alcoholism, smoking or drug addiction, we must promote living a healthy lifestyle. We organise events such as the Festival of Health, the nationwide contest "The Territory of Dance," a youth rap-festival, the bard festival "String Drops" and many other entertainment and sporting events. All of them are aimed at engaging creative young people and encouraging a healthy society.

All this is done to increase the average life expectancy of our population. Gradually our effort is paying off. In 1991, the average life expectancy was 58, now it is 70. Of course, it is unrealistic, for example, to persuade the entire population to give up smoking. But our main objective is to prevent people from starting.

**What is done in the regions to promote healthy living?**

In fact, new stadiums, football and other sports grounds are being constructed in all regions of the republic. Therefore, our young people have a choice: to hit the skids or start to develop their abilities. An additional incentive for young people is the possibility to succeed in national sports, achieve affection and the attention that top athletes command. We organise mass sporting events that include thousands of people to promote healthy lifestyles.

## NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

On April 10, Kazakhstan's Senate passed a bill ratifying amendments to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer adopted in Beijing on Dec. 3, 1999. The ratification will decrease financial losses for small and medium-sized businesses while introducing limits on the consumption of substances depleting the ozone layer, minimising the risk of grey schemes and smuggling, harmonising national legislation within the Customs Union and helping implement the concept of Kazakhstan's transition to a green economy by attracting new technologies. The Senate also ratified the Kazakh-Chinese Intergovernmental Agreement on Cooperation for the Construction of the Dostyk Joint Hydrosystem on the Khorgos River. To become laws, the bills need to be signed by the President of Kazakhstan.

Presidential decree 786, on the state programme of water resources management of Kazakhstan and the introduction of additions to presidential decree 957, on approval of the list of state programmes, was adopted on April 4. The government was tasked with developing and approving the action plan on implementing the programme in one month and submitting the results of monitoring programme implementation as prescribed by the presidential decree 931, on certain issues of further functioning of state planning systems in Kazakhstan, to the Presidential Administration. Central and local executive bodies as well as state bodies directly subordinate and accountable to the President of Kazakhstan were instructed to implement the programme.

Five inter-regional oncology centres equipped with modern equipment will be established this year as part of the government's cancer programme, Deputy Minister of Healthcare Erik Baizhunosov reported at the sitting of the Nur Otan Party chaired by Mazhilis (lower chamber of Parliament) Deputy Aitkul Samakova on April 17. In particular, a centre of nuclear therapy of international standards will be opened in Semey for treating people with thyroid cancer, pancreatic cancer and other cancers of the glands. "All oncology centres will be equipped with modern equipment and diagnostic tools. These measures are intended to significantly improve cancer treatment in the country and help increase awareness and the early detection of diseases and thus make people undergo screening programmes," the deputy minister said.

In the North Kazakhstan region, veterans of World War II will receive 117,600 tenge (US\$645.90) each on the eve of Victory Day. According to the region's press service, veterans and equivalents will be rendered social assistance in the amount of 57.7 million tenge (US\$316,888) dedicated to the celebration of Victory Day. "In accordance with the order of the administration of the North Kazakhstan region, 344 veterans of World War II will receive social assistance in the amount of 31.9 million tenge (US\$175,194), making it 92,600 (US\$508.65) tenge for each veteran," the press service said. With the addition of another 8.6 million tenge (US\$47,234) to charity events, the veterans will have 25,000 (US\$137.30) tenge each added to the initial amount. "Thus, the total payment to each veteran will equal 117,600 tenge."

Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council Bektas Beknazarov, Chairman of the Estimation Committee for Control over Execution of the National Budget Kozy-Korpesh Dzhamburchin, Chief of the Presidential Security Service Anuar Sadykulov, members of the government and some governors of regions took an oath to the people and the President of Kazakhstan on April 17. Addressing participants of the ceremony, the President noted that each word of the oath carries a huge responsibility. "Within the framework of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy and our goal to become one of the top 30 most-developed countries in the world, the country faces great challenges. Each of us should bear our duties and responsibilities at the highest level. Your duty is to improve the country's economy, increase the people's welfare in each region and preserve the unity of the people. If each of us works efficiently, we will achieve all the goals set before us," the President said.

## President Stresses Importance of Maintaining Inter-Ethnic Unity in Country

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Thousands of Kazakhs studied in Ukraine. You know that I'm one of those [students]. [In Ukraine], I learned the art of metallurgy," the President noted.

"Therefore, we, Kazakhs, feel sympathy for the Ukrainian people and express brotherly hope for a quick restoration of stability and unity of the Ukrainian society. We are confident that the Ukrainian people should solve internal problems without external interference, through peaceful negotiations with all parties involved," the President said.

The Kazakh President also emphasised that stability and unity are important to Kazakhstan's development.

"It is, therefore, necessary to adopt a number of new measures to further promote the Kazakh model of tolerance and harmony," he said.

The President also spoke about the current global situation and the Kazakh position in some key world issues.

"The world has entered a period of great change," he said. "International relations are undergoing a major crisis. The information about the possible termination of cooperation of leading nuclear powers in the area of physical protection of nuclear materials really concerns me. This could seriously undermine the entire process of nuclear non-proliferation in the world and erase the progress made in this area over the last decade, including the recent Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague."

"We closed the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site backed by the will of the people and acquired a nuclear weapons-free status. We, the Kazakhs, remain faithful to the ideals of peace free from the threat of nu-

clear self-destruction," Nazarbayev underscored.

The Kazakh leader believes that the G-Global platform could help resolve some key issues in today's current political climate.

"Current global challenges can be overcome if there are profound changes in international law, foreign policy and methods of interstate relations. Therefore, our proposal on the principles of G-GLOBAL today can be useful to the world community. I am sure that they would help the world develop but not in a chaotic order as now, but in constructive one," he noted.

"The Assembly has many international connections. I urge you all to use [these] international contacts to promote the idea of G-GLOBAL. Also, the Assembly should have its own distinct action plan to participate in the preparation for such major international events in our country as the World Exhibition EXPO 2017 in Astana and the Universiade-2017 in Almaty. At these events, we need to show the world our culture, tolerance, the multi-ethnic people of our country and our achievements in peace and harmony," Nazarbayev urged.

To mark the historic 21st anniversary of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, the President also instructed the government and the Assembly to formulate a national action plan to govern the anniversary year.

He also noted that there are not many countries in the world in which most citizens speak at least two languages, saying that Kazakhstan's multilingual profile contributed significantly to the welfare and prosperity of the country.

The President further confirmed that 2015 would be guided by the slogan "Astana - the city of peace and accord."

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**WE AGREE.**

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# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Speaker of Kazakhstan's Mazhilis (lower chamber of the Parliament) Kabibulla Dzhakypov held a number of bilateral meetings with his colleagues from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia on the sidelines of the April 17 meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Interparliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg. Issues in Kazakh-Russian cooperation were addressed at a meeting with Chairman of the State Duma of Russia Sergey Naryshkin and Chairman of the Federation Council of Russia Valentina Matviyenko. The two parties noted the importance and necessity of further developing cooperation between the parliamentarians of Kazakhstan and Russia. At a meeting with Speaker of the Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan Asilbek Jeebekov, promising directions of interparliamentary cooperation between the two countries were discussed. The fourth session of the Interparliamentary Cooperation Commission of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Parliaments, scheduled for June 2014 in Bishkek, and the upcoming session of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA) in Baku were addressed. Dzhakypov and Chairman of the Majlisi Namyandagon (Supreme Assembly) of Tajikistan Shukurjon Zuhurov reached an agreement on strengthening cooperation at the meeting.

Speaker of Kazakhstan's Mazhilis (lower chamber of the Parliament) Kabibulla Dzhakypov was elected Chairman of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) at the session in St. Petersburg on April 17. This is the EurAsEC's second Kazakh chairman in a row. Issues regarding the harmonisation of national legislation of the EurAsEC member states governing social conduct, the environment and industrial safety and the regulation of foreigners' visits to the territories of EurAsEC member states were addressed at the meeting. Special attention was paid to harmonising social laws. In particular, draft laws governing social assistance and state-sponsored insurance were discussed. Having emphasised the importance of the EurAsEC Interparliamentary Assembly, Dzhakypov noted that its activities were aimed at harmonising the laws of member states to help develop economic integration and improve the social welfare of the region's people.

The Astana Economic Forum (AEF) was recently presented to heads of international financial and investment companies and world stock exchange experts on Wall Street, in New York. The presentation was attended by a wide range of top-level officials: Chairman and Founder of the Ljubljana Stock Exchange Drasko Veselinovic; Deputy Chairman, Managing Partner of CAPMEX and former director of the Vienna Stock Exchange Hannes Takacs; NASDAQ Chairman David Wilde; Secretary of NASDAQ and former Director General of the New Zealand Stock Exchange William Foster; former Vice Chairman of the Istanbul Stock Exchange Aryl Soren; General Director of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange Rudiger von Rosen; former Executive Chairman of the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange Nick Mohamed Dean; former Executive Chairman of the Egyptian Stock Exchange Mohamed Abdel Salam and others. Participants of the event were told about the initiatives and projects offered by Kazakhstan, and also discussed the programme of the upcoming seventh AEF. "From May 21-23, 2014, the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, will host the seventh annual economic forum," said Dinara Karshalova, representative of the Eurasian Economic Club of Scientists, addressing guests of the presentation. "Currently, the forum attracts more than 10,000 participants from more than 150 countries to work and actively search for solutions to problems of the global financial system. They include current and former heads of states, economists, politicians, financial experts, Nobel Prize winners and business leaders of the highest level," she said. At the meeting it was also said that the AEF provides a real chance to take part in the formation of the concept of the World Anti-Crisis Plan, as well as an opportunity to establish new professional relationships and gain access to innovative developments.

## Kazakh Envoy to U.S. Speaks at Scranton, Seeks to Expand Citizen Diplomacy



From left to right: former U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan William Courtney, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the U.S. Kairat Umarov, founder of the Atlanta Communications Group Nancy Neill, and Professor of St. John's University Jay Nathan.

By Daniel Massow

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA – Kazakhstan's Ambassador to the United States Kairat Umarov, addressing the audience of the inaugural Jay Nathan lecture series at the University of Scranton on April 2, said that despite early doubts in the West about Kazakhstan's viability as an independent nation and the security of its borders, today Kazakhstan is a sovereign state, and by most measures one of the most successful countries in Eurasia.

Umarov told more than 100 members of the faculty, student body and Scranton community assembled in the university's Weinberg Memorial Library that in the immediate wake of independence, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev made three core decisions that proved to be essential to its path to success: renouncing nuclear weapons, pursuing fundamental economic reforms and investing in the education of a new generation.

Kazakhstan's diplomat recalled that for more than 40 years, Kazakhstan had been the "epicentre" of Soviet nuclear weapons testing in Semipalatinsk, which affected almost 1.5 million people and contaminated an immense territory almost the size of New Jersey, more than five times the size of the Nevada Test Site, with radiation. Having dismantled the test site's infrastructure in cooperation with the U.S. and Russia, today Kazakhstan ranks 15th in the Nuclear Threat Initiative's Nuclear Materials Security Index. One of Kazakhstan's most recent contributions has been the decision to support the International Atomic Energy Agency's initiative to establish an international low-enriched uranium fuel bank in the country, Umarov said.

Defining nuclear nonproliferation as the pillar of the Kazakhstan-U.S. strategic partnership, Umarov said the bilateral meeting between President Nazarbayev and U.S. President Barack Obama on the fringes of the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague in March served to once again reaffirm the countries' shared commitment to nonproliferation and strengthening nuclear security.

He also spoke extensively about Kazakhstan's new national development strategy to guide the country toward the year 2050. The Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, Umarov noted, sets forth a bold vision of the country joining the ranks of the 30 most-developed countries by 2050 and affirms the goal of improving the quality of life of all people of Kazakhstan.

As the country moves ahead in realising its vision, "we clearly understand that we live in a very tightly networked world," the ambassador said. Noting that the G8 and G20 formats are not fully effective in dealing with global problems, he reiterated President Nazarbayev's call for the world to unite "in the face of common threats to bring about long-term and systematic approaches to shared challenges." The G-Global initiative put forward by Nazarbayev two years ago, Umarov said, offers a path toward a fair, transparent, multipolar and constructive world order.

Ambassador Umarov noted that Kazakhstan attaches significant importance to expanding the country's educational ties, exchanges and dialogue with U.S. universities. Thousands of young students from Kazakhstan have studied at American universities as part of the prestigious state-funded Bolashak programme. The selection process is highly selective, aiming to edu-

cate the future intellectual elite of Kazakhstan, Umarov added.

Kazakhstan's ambassador said it was symbolic that the University of Scranton's faith-based inclusive educational vision coincides with Kazakhstan's philosophy of ethnic and religious tolerance, which has its origins in its history and heritage of Silk Road traders. In Kazakhstan, home to more than 100 nationalities and ethnic groups representing 18 confessions, "we celebrate unity in diversity and our proud history of peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians," while "it is also a beautiful historic irony that in Kazakhstan today the Jewish faith flourishes where Stalinist gulags once stood," Umarov noted.

Umarov also spoke about Kazakhstan's efforts since the first days of its independence to promote tolerance and interreligious dialogue worldwide. As the world was recovering from the aftermath of 9/11, he told the audience, "Kazakhstan responded to international grievances of Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists and many others by convening on invitation of the head of state a Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions." The congress has now become a tradition, gathering every third year in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, with an ever-growing number of participants.

Other speakers on the panel included Professor Jay Nathan of St. John's University, Queens, New York; William Courtney, the first U.S. ambassador to Kazakhstan; and Nancy Neill, founder of the Atlanta Communications Group. It was followed by an hour-long lively discussion and a Q&A session that covered a wide range of topics about Kazakhstan's major export and import items, tourism industry, literacy rates, women's rights and more.

As part of ongoing efforts to promote people-to-people ties and educational and citizen exchanges between Kazakhstan and the United States, Umarov also met with University of Scranton President Kevin P. Quinn, Provost Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Patricia Harrington, deans and faculty members to discuss areas of potential cooperation between the University of Scranton and higher educational institutions in Kazakhstan.

Founded in 1888, Scranton is a private Catholic and Jesuit university known for academic quality and a technology-rich campus. For 20 consecutive years, the U.S. News & World Report's "Best Colleges" guidebook has ranked the university among the top 10 master's universities in the northern United States.

The university's Jay Nathan Visiting Scholar Lecture Series was created to offer an opportunity for international scholars and professionals to address issues that could enlighten and benefit students, faculty and the community at large. The lecture series' founder, Nathan, is a lifetime member of the Fulbright Association. In 2002-03, 2004, and 2005, Nathan was a Fulbright Scholar to Kazakhstan, serving as a visiting professor and Ph.D. advisor at the Lev Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Astana. He is an Honorary Professor of the Karaganda University of Economics and author of the book, "Kazakhstan's New Economy."

In 2012, Nathan endowed the Professor Jay Nathan Scholarship at the University of Scranton to provide financial assistance to graduate students enrolled in the university's Kania School of Management who are from Mongolia, Thailand, India, Poland or the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan.

## Bahraini King Pays First Visit to Astana, Political and Commercial Ties Expand

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The King underlined the importance of close cooperation with Kazakhstan and expressed his satisfaction with the signing of memoranda of understanding in the fields of diplomacy, food security, agriculture, finance, investment and education.

An important part of the talks was also easing the visa regime.

"Today we've discussed launching direct flights between our countries. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa instructed to ease the visa regime for citizens of Kazakhstan," the President said at a joint press conference after their meeting.

At the invitation of President Nazarbayev, the King took a sight-seeing tour around Astana. During the day, King Hamad also met with Prime Minister Karim Massimov.

Meanwhile, the "Kazakhstan-Bahrain: Strategic Partnership" business forum took place in Astana on the sidelines of the royal visit to Kazakhstan. More than 40 biggest Bahraini companies working in banking, food, oil and gas, petrochemistry, metallurgy and aluminum production, engineering, transport and tourism fields participated in the forum.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is interested in expanding its presence in Central Asia, and since both Kazakhstan and Bahrain play key roles in their respective regions, the cooperation with Kazakhstan will be mutually beneficial, Minister of Transport and chief of the executive office of the Bahraini Council of Economic Development Kamal Muhammed Ahmed said at the opening of the forum.

He noted the similarities between the two countries, both being rich in natural resources, and the two governments' similar desire to diversify their economies. The Bahraini official also stressed that the annual mutual trade worth \$1 million was way too little and far from the true potential.

The business forum showed there are many common points of interest.

"We know extraction and processing of oil and gas, aluminum, as well as its financial and banking sector, agriculture, tourism and food industry are among the strongest sectors in Bahrain's economy," Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Issekeshv said at the forum. He added that Kazakhstan, in turn, has huge potential for exporting wheat, barley and forage wheat to Bahrain, as well as for establishing a joint halal meat production. Issekeshv believes these areas could be the foundation for the creation of joint enterprises, both in Kazakhstan and in Bahrain.

"In terms of processing aluminum, your experience in aluminum industry has real prospects in creating production that will be in demand domestically, both in the north, in Pavlodar, and in the south region of Kazakhstan," Issekeshv said adding that Bahrain today processes around 800,000 tonnes of aluminum while Kazakhstan, with its vast ore reserves, processes only 25,000 tonnes.

"That is why we are ready to establish a special zone to process aluminum in Pavlodar to expand its extraction from 250,000 tonnes to 500,000 tonnes annually," Issekeshv said.

There are also prospects for cooperation in oil and gas production and transportation, as well as in the banking sector, especially given that Bahrain is a financial centre in the Gulf and given that Kazakhstan would like to press ahead with the establishment of a regional hub of alternative financing.

"We would be very much interested in Manama's systemic approach and successful experience as a regional Islamic finance centre," Issekeshv said.

At the forum, Bahraini business people said consolidation of

bilateral economic co-operation between Manama and Astana would provide the kingdom with many advantages such as boosting food security and benefiting from Kazakhstan's abundant mineral wealth.

**"We would be very much interested in Manama's systemic approach and successful experience as a regional Islamic finance centre." – Asset Issekeshv**

They expressed optimism regarding the outcome of the royal visit which was an exploratory trip for the delegation comprising businessmen and investors, especially as the Astana market is teeming with investment opportunities in all sectors. They said they also looked forward to attracting Kazakh investments into Bahrain.

According to Othman Sharif, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (BCCI) first deputy chairman, the opening into Asian countries would give Bahrain an economic advantage especially as Asian countries have many positive positions on matters and issues of mutual interest that are in common with Bahrain.

As a result of the business forum, a memorandum of cooperation between the Kazakhstan's Baiterek National Holding and Bahrain's Mumtalakat Holding was signed.

The forum also saw the announcement of a Kazakhstan-Bahraini Business Council that will soon be established to facilitate commercial contacts between the two countries.

# ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Twenty Years of Evolving ADB Support for Economic Growth in Kazakhstan

Continued from Page A1

Our private sector operations, on the other hand, target trade finance, transport, energy and agribusiness, as well as opportunities for selected equity investments in banks and equity and debt financing of investment funds.

Over time, as Kazakhstan continues on its impressive development trajectory, our growing knowledge partnership will take a more prominent role and will increasingly define our relationship in the years ahead.

**How would you characterise the investment climate in Kazakhstan at the moment?**

Kazakhstan's gross domestic product per capita has grown by more than 17 times in the past 20 years, from about \$700 to \$13,000, and the country has graduated from a lower-middle income country to an upper-middle income country.

This stellar performance has been the result of both sound macroeconomic policies and a favourable investment climate. The country has also successfully weathered challenges and implications of the global economic crisis and has managed to maintain its investment grade rating.

All that said, there is still much to be done. Improvements in infrastructure and human capital and greater transparency in legal and regulatory environment have all been flagged by investors as the most important reforms that will help increase Kazakhstan's competitiveness.

The importance of strengthening institutions and implementing reforms in the financial and other sectors is also critical. Risks remain in the banking sector, especially the problem of non-performing loans. Continued risk aversion of the banking sector could continue to restrict the private sector's access to credit and hamper investment.

We hope to see the private sector taking the lead in transforming the economy, which can increase



Matthew Westfall

productivity and diversity through innovation and entrepreneurship. For this to happen, a sustained improvement in the business environment to promote greater private investment is needed. Clear, firm and decisively executed policies that are important for building confidence in the private sector are needed, and this applies to both foreign and domestic investors.

**What are the positives and negatives of this huge, land-locked, resource-rich country?**

Kazakhstan is endowed with abundant oil, gas and mineral reserves. It has a forward-looking development strategy that focuses on industrialisation and the diversification of the economy, perhaps the two most critical aspects to ensuring that growth can be sustained over the long term. It has embraced an ambitious vision through the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, which will help guide the way. It also has a vast arable area for agriculture, as well as a young and educated population. And, its strategic location allows it to provide a land bridge between Europe and Asia. These are all important factors to achieving its vision of the future.

As we can see, Kazakhstan is transforming from a land-locked to a land-linked country. For example, Kazakhstan was previously dependent on Russia for its oil exports, but has been able to reduce this with exports to the Mediter-

anean via Azerbaijan and Turkey; by barge and rail to Batumi, Georgia; and by building a pipeline to China. Kazakhstan now serves as a transit country for natural gas from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to Russia and China. Diversification of transport routes is a way to protect against unforeseen circumstances. To diversify transport routes, Kazakhstan is heavily investing into pipelines, roads and railways, creating important links to its neighbours and the region beyond, via Turkmenistan and Iran to the Persian Gulf and via China to the Lianyungang port.

At the same time, the country's heavy reliance on oil causes downside risks, including a possible drop in energy prices and a weakening in external demand. This makes it all the more important for Kazakhstan to diversify its economy and reduce its dependence on oil and other extractive minerals. To diversify, the productivity and competitiveness of the economy has to be increased. Kazakhstan's productivity level is still low by developed countries' standards. Regional and rural-urban disparities within Kazakhstan remain significant. Growth and industrialisation need to be underwritten by strong governance and environmental sustainability.

**What are your economic predictions for the next 5-10 years?**

Kazakhstan's prospects are also strong. In 2014-2015, we project that the economy will maintain the pace and will grow at 6.0 percent and 6.4 percent, respectively. In the longer run, much depends on the success of industrialisation and development through innovation, improving infrastructure, encouraging investment, upgrading human capital [and] boosting productivity as well as targeted support to help priority sectors.

A recent study by the ADB finds that no country has achieved high-income status without its manufacturing sectors reaching at least an 18 percent share of total employ-

ment and output over a sustained period of time.

Industrialisation is not about manufacturing only; it is relevant for promoting economic sectors other than manufacturing, including agriculture and services. Given its natural advantages, Kazakhstan has a large potential in developing oil processing and agribusiness industries. Upgrading these sectors can create the jobs necessary to keep Kazakhstan's growing labour force employed.

We, through our country partnership strategy, will continue supporting the country's drive toward a more competitive and diversified economy by investing in energy, transport, SME programmes, the private sector, and deepening the knowledge partnership between the government and the ADB.

**"In 2014-2015, we project that the economy will maintain the pace and will grow at 6.0 percent and 6.4 percent, respectively."**

**Why was Astana chosen to be the host of this year's meeting of the ADB board of governors? What does this mean for the Kazakh capital and the ADB?**

The meeting will look at connecting Asia to the rest of the world, an idea inspired by the famous Silk Road, which for centuries was one of the world's most important trade routes.

Today, growing international trade in an increasingly globalised world means that a new Silk Road connecting Europe and Asia is a reality once again. This is an exciting opportunity for Kazakhstan and the rest of Central Asia, and we're excited to be a part of making this possible.

The ADB's annual meeting will attract top policymakers, including central bank governors, finance

ministers and private sector leaders, to the country. The meeting will help affirm Kazakhstan's profile as a desirable, stable investment destination and as a leader in regional and global discussions on key economic and development issues.

**The ADB is one of the major players in CAREC, with a total of \$8 billion in investments. How would you describe Kazakhstan's role in CAREC? In the Central Asian region?**

Kazakhstan has been an active participant in the CAREC [Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation Programme] Programme since its launch in 2001. [CAREC includes Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as institutional partners the ADB, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.]

Kazakhstan recognises the important role of regional cooperation and integration in expanding its markets and diversifying its economy. The country can benefit from leveraging its strategic location to facilitate global trade and transit between Asia and Europe along four CAREC transport corridors passing through its vast area.

Given its location, Kazakhstan is central to enhancing regional transport connectivity. From 2001 to the end of 2013, CAREC invested almost \$8.0 billion in loans and grants (35 percent of the CAREC total) in Kazakhstan, with the ADB contributing almost \$1.6 billion and the remaining \$6.4 billion contributed by the Kazakhstan government and other CAREC multilateral partners.

In 2013, Kazakhstan also successfully hosted the 12th CAREC Ministerial Conference on October 23-24, 2013, in Astana as well as the Senior Officials' Meetings and sector committee meetings.

### ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

At the Boao Forum for Asia 2014 (BFA) held from April 8-11, Kazakhstan's G-Global information and communications platform and the Astana Economic Forum (AEF) were presented. The BFA, which promotes economic cooperation in Asia, has become a platform for the presentation of Kazakhstan's initiatives. Over four days, delegates from 150 countries discussed current issues in the world economy and politics and the process of jointly building the future of Asia. Documents on the seventh AEF, the second World Anti-Crisis Conference (WAC), the Draft Concept of the World Anti-Crisis Plan and G-Global were among the BFA's official documents. A number of meetings with representatives of Chinese media, such as the Boao Review, Economic Daily and China Economic Net were held as part of Kazakhstan's presentations, which resulted in an agreement to hold joint debates during the upcoming seventh AEF.

Member of the Board of Directors of the Baiterek Holding Klaus Mangold believes that financing business projects undergoing difficulties through second-tier banks and the Damu Fund is a good way to promote industrial development. He shared his view on this measure after the government approved the joint action plan on supporting small and medium-sized business. "I believe that financing business projects, both new ones and projects undergoing difficulties, by dispersing funds in second-tier banks through the Damu Fund is a good approach to further promote industrial development. Certainly, to successfully fulfil the plan, it is necessary to focus on finding viable projects and avoiding mistakes in the process of restructuring and refinancing," he said. Mangold also added, "I am confident that the emphasis on agriculture development is a priority, especially taking into account the growing demand in regional and domestic markets as well as subsidiary benefits for related sectors of the economy."

"Kazakhstan is humanising criminal legislation in the economic sphere," member of the Mazhilis (lower chamber of the Parliament) Ramazan Sarpekov noted at an April 17 Central Communications Service briefing. He added that the new version of the Criminal Procedure Code of Kazakhstan will not place excessive pressure on business. "Kazakhstan has been humanising its criminal legislation over the past 5-6 years. Over the last 2-3 years, it's been a process targeted at the economic sphere. The new version of the Criminal Procedure Code of Kazakhstan already includes all recommendations and revisions," Sarpekov noted. "Therefore, registration [and] holding of inspections should be approved by the Prosecutor's Office. Moreover, an inspector must inform the prosecutor before auditing any business. This mechanism will be working in favour of businesses," he concluded.

Integrating, expanding and strengthening mutually beneficial external economic relations with foreign countries is the most important development priority of the East Kazakhstan region, Regional Akim (Governor) Berdybek Saparbayev told a Central Communications Service (CCS) media briefing on April 17. "In 2013, trade turnover between Russia and the East Kazakhstan region increased by 27 percent. In terms of money, it reached about 268 billion tenge [US\$1.47 billion]. Similar growth is registered with Belarus, which equalled 62 billion tenge [US\$340.5 million]. We have good relations with other neighbouring countries along with the countries of Europe and Asia. Generally, the relations we have are concentrated in the industrial sphere," the head of the region noted. During the briefing, Saparbayev used a local company as an example. "We have a valve plant producing equipment for the oil and gas sector and exporting its products to Russia. In 2013, the trade turnover of this plant with Russia reached about 3 billion tenge [US\$16.4 million]," he said.

## Kazakhstan Proceeds with WTO Accession Talks

By Rufiya Ospanova

The most recent round of negotiations on Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) with the United States, this time focused on harmonizing measures regarding plant and animal disease control, took place in Washington, D.C., on March 4-6 with the participation of Kazakh Minister for Economic Integration Zhanar Aitzhanova.

The negotiations took place without the presence of the Russian delegation which was not invited by the U.S. side in light of the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine.

"We conducted the negotiations and consultations independently, and we are also consulting with our Russian and Belarusian colleagues. The consultations within the framework of the Customs Union (CU) are also underway. The issues are related to the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and the competencies of the three countries, so in any case we must coordinate them with our partners in the CU. But since these negotiations concern Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO, we will hold them independently," Aitzhanova said.

The veterinary and phytosanitary measures discussed in this round of negotiations are among the three issues currently hindering Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO. The other two hurdles are the harmonization of import customs duties with Russia and the countries of the CU, and subsidies and agricultural donations.

As Aitzhanova explained, regarding customs duties, Kazakhstan will join the WTO on its own terms. Until the completion of negotiations, customs duties with Russia will be differentiated.

"The third issue that directly concerns the Kazakh economy is the volume of subsidies and agricultural donations. I know that many experts write that after WTO accession we

will have a very difficult situation in agriculture and farmers will have no jobs. This thesis is incorrect. Currently, we are holding complex negotiations in terms of subsidies in agriculture that will meet our long-term plans to support the development of the industry," she added.

By joining the WTO, Kazakhstan will become a full member of the global trading system and will be subject to all WTO fundamental principles and rules. These include nondiscriminatory conditions for the access of Kazakh products to foreign markets on the basis of most favoured nation treatment and national treatment; access to international mechanisms for resolving trade disputes; a more favourable climate for foreign investment; increased opportunities for Kazakh investors in WTO member countries; an increased flow of foreign goods, services and investments, creating conditions for improving the quality and competitiveness of domestic products; as well as the chance to participate in creating international trade rules that take into account Kazakhstan's national interests.

It is hoped that this will enhance the country's economic potential and ultimately increase Kazakh standards of living.

The negotiation process for Kazakhstan's accession to the organisation has now lasted almost two decades. This January, then-Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov said the terms of WTO accession would be announced in March or April and that accession was imminent. While saying it was important to "continue defending acceptable terms" for joining the organisation, Akhmetov also said, "This year, we need to make every effort to complete the negotiation process."

The process of Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO began more than 18 years ago, on Jan. 26, 1996.

## VII ASTANA ECONOMIC FORUM

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# BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

**BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF**

Chinese website China Economic Net and newspaper Economic Daily will moderate a televised debate at the seventh Astana Economic Forum (AEF). The agreement was reached during the Boao Forum for Asia 2014. Vice President of Kazakhstan's Eurasian Economic Club of Scientists Association Maksat Kurbenov held several meetings with representatives of business and academic communities and high-ranking delegates at the Boao Forum. Mutually beneficial cooperation and active participation in the upcoming AEF and the second World Anti-Crisis Conference (WAC) became the main theme of negotiations between the Kazakh delegation and Boao Forum guests. China Economic Net is one of China's main information and analytical resources and a major source of in-depth economic analysis of Asia.

On April 11, heads of government agencies and national companies, members of the National Chamber of Commerce and representatives of business circles attended a session of the National Investors' Council chaired by President Nursultan Nazarbayev. The session reviewed issues of national business and investment development. The President of Kazakhstan noted that entrepreneurship is a driving force of the country's economy. "Small and medium-sized business is the foundation of a strong middle class. We observe positive dynamics in this sector. The number of self-employed increased by 8 percent and reached 2.6 million last year. The volume of output produced by small and medium-sized business accounted for 9 trillion tenge (\$49.4 billion), with an annual growth of 3.3 percent," the President told participants at the meeting. It was at that meeting that President Nazarbayev announced plans to organise the third so-called legalisation of finances in Kazakhstan's independent history which is seen as an effort to reduce the size of the grey economy and channel more resources into the country's banks and real sector.

Director of Russia's Third Freight Company Yevgeny Scherbakov discussed the wide range of possibilities for cooperation between the business communities of the East Kazakhstan region and Russia's Altai region in an interview with the Central Communications Service (CCS). "As we know, railways have always been considered an indicator of industrial development. During Soviet times, people used to say that railways are the arteries of industry and economy. Therefore, it is safe to say that there are great opportunities for export and import. This is an indicator of how Kazakhstan and the East Kazakhstan region, Russia and the Altai region that we represent, closely cooperate with each other," he said.

Businessmen in the East Kazakhstan region plan to open trade centres in Russia's Altai Territory and launch production lines oriented at them, Akim (Governor) of the region Berdybek Saparbayev reported during an April 17 Central Communications Service (CCS) media briefing. "Now, we have opened a poultry processing plant in Ust-Kamenogorsk, one of the first among the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries. Seventy types of products are made from one kilogramme of meat. The plant intends to open a factory in the Altai Territory. We also recently agreed to open a trade centre in Barnaul to sell products from the East Kazakhstan region," Saparbayev said. "We analyse and compare the quality and prices of products. Several days ago, we held Days of East Kazakhstan in Barnaul [the capital of the Altai Territory]. We organised a fair there and sold food products. We sold meat for 1,000 tenge [US\$5.50] and their usual price, converting rubles to tenge, is about 1,500-1,700 [US\$8.23-9.33] per kilogramme. The situation is the same regarding dairy products. Thus, we have some businessmen in the region who would like to open trade centres there and sell our products," he said.

## EBRD Provides \$9 Million Loan for Transport Company Development

By Michelle Witte

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will provide a \$9 million loan to Kazakhstan's joint stock company Olzha to promote private investment in the country's transport industry and to support the business's development, the EBRD reported on March 28.

Olzha, a nearly 20-year-old company, provides operating leases for freight wagons to corporate clients inside and outside of Kazakhstan. Its fleet of some 1,400 wagons transports mainly liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and oil products. Olzha will use the new EBRD financing to purchase about 100 freight wagons and a locomotive. A \$24.8 million EBRD loan to the company was approved last year, also for the expansion of the company's fleet as well as for the implementation of international health and safety standards.

"The Bank closely monitors private wagon leasing and freight-forwarding markets and selected Olzha for its prudent business management, transparency and financial robustness," Askar Namazbayev, principal banker for transport at the EBRD Resident Office in Almaty, told The Astana Times. The bank is planning to expand its private sector portfolio and is considering other wagon leasing companies and other public-private partnerships, he said.

"Both loans target strengthening private sector presence in the railway market, increasing competition and promoting high standards for business practice," Namazbayev said. "By supporting Olzha to acquire new wagons and a locomotive, the bank directly contributes towards increasing share of

the privately held rolling stock in Kazakhstan and increasing participation of the private sector on the operating lease market."

EBRD officials have said the loan also supports the application of modern business practices in Kazakhstan. As part of the agreement with the bank, Olzha will adopt international occupational health and safety standards and environmental management standards. The adoption of these standards is expected in July 2014, Namazbayev said.

Landlocked Kazakhstan has an extensive railway network with a freight wagon industry dominated by state organisations. Last year's loan to Olzha was the EBRD's first private sector transaction in Kazakhstan's railway industry. The country is currently focused on expanding and diversifying its transport sector and last year adopted a major infrastructure development plan for 2014-2020, which includes the construction of more than 8,000 kilometres of railways and the further integration of the country into international transport systems. The World Bank will help with the development of some of the plan and the country hopes through this work to rank higher in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index.

Kazakhstan and the EBRD also both foresee an increase in the country's oil and gas production, which will increase demand for rail transport.

Since 1993, the EBRD has invested nearly \$6.6 billion in Kazakhstan, with just over half its portfolio in the private sector. The bank recently adopted a new strategy for Kazakhstan, focusing on diversifying and supporting the non-resource sector, balancing the state and market's economic roles, and promoting low-carbon growth and energy efficiency.

## National Oil Company Enhances Russian, Kazakh Cooperation

By Zhubanysh Baygurinov

AKTOBE REGION – KazakhOil Aktobe is an example of beneficial cooperation between oil production specialists from Kazakhstan and Russia.

The company was founded by state-owned KazMunayGas and Caspian Investments Resources, a Lukoil Overseas and Sinopec joint venture. KazakhOil Aktobe has been involved in the development of the Alibekmola and Kozhasai oil and gas fields since 1999. In 2004, the company produced its first million tonnes of black gold and last year reached its jubilee goal of 10 million tonnes of crude oil.

KazakhOil Aktobe is one of the largest companies in the region's oil sector and is viewed as a responsible social and corporate partner. The basis of this success is the company's high growth rates in hydrocarbon production, its professionalism, advanced technology and the competency of its staff. Today, the or-

ganisation employs more than 600 specialists.

Two years ago, under a State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (SPA-ID), the company implemented one of its major projects, a new, modern gas-processing complex with advanced technology that meets international environmental safety standards.

More than \$270 million was invested in the construction of the facility and more than one hundred new jobs were created. The plant can produce 420 million cubic metres of gas per year, 57,000 tonnes of liquid gas, 320 million cubic metres of commercial dry gas and 10,000 tonnes of granulated sulphur.

According to experts, the new plant will maximise the company's petroleum production. As a result, harmful emissions will be reduced and the environmental situation in Kazakhstan's oil-producing regions will improve. In addition, the plant will accommodate a large share of the demand for inexpensive blue fuel.



## ASTEX-2014 Set to Attract Silicon Valley Innovators to Astana



By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – The second Astana Smart Technologies Exhibition (ASTEX-2104) and conference will take place in the run up to the 7th Astana Economic Forum (AEF) on May 15-16.

The international exhibition will be held by the Information Communications Development Corporate Fund of Kazakhstan, chaired by Silicon Valley innovator Sanzhar Ketebekov, and will include heads of foreign companies, large investors, business coaches, professors, e-commerce businessmen and analysts as speakers.

Robert Bellac, chief executive officer of NewEgg, one of America's largest e-commerce firms, is expected to speak on e-commerce trends to the Kazakh and foreign audience.

The event's guests will participate in discussions and workshops. Mark Goodstein, executive director of IdeaLab, one of the first Internet incubators for business ideas in the United States, and David Travers, partner in the investment company Rustic Canyon Ventures, will discuss innovation issues in e-business and the development of information technologies in the business-to-client and business-to-business sectors. Dara Khosrowshahi, chief executive officer of Expedia Inc., the world's largest online travel company, will share his experience in creating a smart industry. Kazakh e-business issues will be presented by SAT & Company Board Chairman Kenes Rakishev, famous for his role in Mobli and other domestic and in-

ternational startups, Choco Family Chief Executive Officer Ramil Mukhoryapov and others.

The event will take place in one of the most technologically developed centres in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the KazMediaOrtalygy TV and Radio Complex. It will display innovative solutions in the information technologies sector, including the latest technology in holograms, virtual fitting rooms and 3D printers.

Registration is available online at [www.astex.kz](http://www.astex.kz), where a personal quick-response code will be issued. Participants will be able to test a mobile application for remote access to the conference and will vote online for the best IT projects. The ASTEX prize will be awarded to the winner of the contest.

For the second year, ASTEX will serve as an international communication platform to share experiences and discuss relevant issues in the industry, as well as provide an opportunity to enhance cooperation between countries, organisations and companies.

Consortium Agreements on an Open Logistics Platform and Data Trading Platform for Subsurface Users are expected to be signed within the exhibition, and an offer to create an international electronic commerce development association has been made.

Speakers will make recommendations as to how to promote companies in a smart environment and how to effectively sell products at home. They will also share their



Sanzhar Ketebekov, Silicon Valley innovator.

opinions on which areas of Kazakh business should be developed.

Kazakhstan's Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Zerde National Information Communication Technologies Holding and the Information Communications Technologies Development Corporate Fund are jointly organizing ASTEX-2014.

The first ASTEX was held at the 6th Astana Economic Forum on May 21-22, 2013. The Information Communications Technologies Development Corporate Fund worked on finding and concluding agreements with sponsors and exhibitors, attracting speakers, conducting a comprehensive publicity campaign, developing image products and other event preparation work.

As a result, within the two days of the 2013 exhibition and conference, 42 speakers spoke during four sessions (smart government, smart industry, smart business and smart life), 25 exhibitor companies, including some of the world's largest vendors (HP, Microsoft, ASUSTek Computer Inc. and others) were presented and numerous workshops were held, including workshops on e-learning, e-commerce and e-health.

The first ASTEX Awards for best IT manager in the public sector, best IT manager in the corporate sector, best IT manager in law enforcement bodies, best blogger and best startup were also presented then.

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# EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Ethnic Harmony and Multi-Vector Foreign Policy Key to Kazakhstan's Stability, Development

On April 18, the 21st session of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan chaired by President Nursultan Nazarbayev took place in Astana.

The theme of the session was "Strategy 'Kazakhstan 2050: the culture of peace, spirituality and harmony.'" The session was attended by members of the Assembly, members of the government and the Kazakh Parliament, heads of political parties, religious groups, representatives of science and academia, media and foreign guests.

The key message of the opening speech by the President was on the stability and unity of Kazakhstan's society. The harmonious development of a multi-ethnic Kazakhstan is the essential factor in achieving the developmental goals set forth in Strategy 2050.

Indeed, we witness how wise and deft management of a multicultural society that provides equality before the law, freedom of religions and languages, plays a crucial role in social stability that translates into sustainable economic development. President Nazarbayev reiterated during the session that there are no preferences in Kazakh law based on ethnic, religious or national characteristics. All people of Kazakhstan are equal before the law.

In Kazakhstan, representatives of multiple nationalities live together and have equal access to all social services. Kazakhstan's multi-ethnic society has a long history: during Soviet times, representatives of various nationalities, including Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Turkish and Koreans, under different circumstances moved to Kazakhstan. In his speech, President Nazarbayev focused on Kazakhstan's path toward its multinational society: from the past when different nationalities were initially united under the pressures of World War II and later while implementing the grandiose plans of the Soviet economy. At present, Kazakhstan's people not only strengthen inter-ethnic dialogue, but also learn how to benefit from the richness of the country's vast variety of national customs, literature and traditions. In near future, the President called for additional measures to strengthen the Kazakh model of tolerance and harmony. He said the Assembly needs to support the work of ethnic and cultural groups and Kazakhstan's culture as a whole.

Sadly, recent events in Ukraine, which, according to the President, "could not be heard of without pain in the soul," display how inter-ethnic discord may not only be detrimental to development, but bring grief to many Ukrainian families and threaten the country's future. According to the President, inter-ethnic relations, civil equality and language policies cannot be a matter of political games. One cannot ignore these values or use them in a struggle for power. "Everyone must understand that there is a thin line that separates chauvinism and nationalism from outright neo-fascism," President Nazarbayev said.

The unity of Kazakhstan's society is a key factor in the implementation of Strategy 2050, while at the same time the strengthening of peace and unity is the key outcome of the implementation of the developmental plan.

As all countries' domestic and foreign policies are closely intertwined, Kazakhstan's domestic multi-ethnicity goes hand-in-hand with its multi-vector foreign policy. In his speech at the session, the President reiterated that Russia, Central Asian countries and China are neighbours of Kazakhstan; this is why Kazakhstan will always maintain amiable relations with those countries.

The recent meetings at the Nuclear Security Summit in the Hague allowed Kazakhstan to advance bilateral relations and discuss pressing issues on the international agenda, including the situation in and around Ukraine.

As the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Erlan Idrissov, wrote recently, in the Hague "global leaders both appreciated Kazakhstan's balanced position in the current complicated and contentious circumstances and sought advice from the Kazakh leader given his vast experience in international politics and the respect he enjoys from all sides."

According to the foreign minister, "Recent foreign policy developments, including top-level meetings and visits, have once again demonstrated the critical importance of Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy. Remaining true to the fundamental principles and values of this well-established doctrine is the only viable option for a country such as ours."

Kazakhstan has maintained peace and harmony in a society that brings together more than 100 ethnic groups and almost 20 religions. It has built up and maintained mutually beneficial relations with all countries, both near and far. And it has managed to reform its economy by and large and ensure the sustainable growth of the living standards for its population.

This has been Kazakhstan's recipe for success in the first 22 years of its independence. Policy directions coming from the country's leaders indicate they intend to stay true to such a course. While there are numerous voices in the society openly challenging the wisdom of such policies, and proposing, for example, to draw down the level of cooperation with Russia, the overwhelming majority of the people in Kazakhstan seems to be firmly supportive of this course of actions and policies, though. And it would be only wise for them, and, in fact, for all of Kazakhstan's foreign partners, to support it firmly, too, as this would benefit all.

## Regulation, Trade and the Voice of Business in the Coming Eurasian Economic Union

By Olga Kazantseva

MOSCOW – The countries of the Customs Union are preparing to enter a new stage of integration: the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia have declared that the Eurasian Economic Union must be formed by Jan. 1, 2015. Minister of Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission Andrey Slepnev recently discussed the factors that will lead to integration success and the problems of the transition period.



Andrey Slepnev

*Economic integration is the foundation of Eurasian integration. Motivating its expediency, experts point out that by creating a single market, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia will protect their national economies from the risks and shocks of global financial and economic turmoil and achieve sustainability through the orientation of their production to the needs of the large market of the Customs Union. Is this thesis confirmed by specific arguments, the dynamics of trade turnover and other indicators of economic activity?*

Initially, the idea of economic integration was based on the fact that we are creating a broader and more representative and attractive market. Its capacity today exceeds 170 million consumers. And of course, the sustainability and functioning of the laws of such a big market are quite different from those of local markets.

What is the difference? First of all, these scales are attractive for organising the overall production of various goods: cars, appliances, computers and so on. And this in turn means new jobs, investments, education and quite different requirements of the workforce in terms of its competence. Thus, we have a wider palette of possibilities in terms of human capital than those offered by local markets, which have to become highly specialised in the production of a small segment of goods and services. That's why the combined market of the Customs Union has great potential.

Now we see concrete positive effects, especially in Kazakhstan, which today is actively involved in the processes of development within the Common Economic Space.

Turnover statistics illustrate such positive effects. Last year, for example, the export volume of certain types of machinery and equipment from Kazakhstan to the CU countries increased considerably: machinery and lifting devices by 4.8 times, refrigerators and freezers by 4.5 times, rolling machines by 5.5 times and land transportation means by 2.6 times.

Last year 1,200 trucks were delivered to Russia from Kazakhstan, which is nine times higher than the figure from 2012. Mostly, these are new trucks with a capacity of 20 tonnes. Such dynamics are the result of investment projects implemented in collaboration with global companies and with companies-partners from CU countries.

In 2015, a car factory in the East Kazakhstan region with a capacity of 120,000 vehicles a year will be put into operation. Its production is oriented primarily to the market of the Customs Union. This project is implemented jointly by the Renault, Nissan and AvtoVAZ companies.

Kazakh exports of foodstuffs and raw materials to the countries of the CU grew by 2.1 times in the past year. Exports of wheat flour grew almost 10 times and a steady growth, 19 percent, was observed in exported volume of chocolate products in 2013.

The common market opens completely different opportunities in the service sector. If we speak about Kazakhstan, it is primarily con-

necting with the transit potential of the country as a key area of the New Silk Road from China to Europe. With the intensification of trade, the sphere of transport is expanding, as well as the scope of services for traffic flows. And this is a significant segment of the economy.

Thus, today we can see a lot of practical examples that the market of the CU is becoming a priority for productions organised in Kazakhstan. Of course, there are goods with falling trade volumes. First among these are groups of raw products. But this trend is impacted by global trends. It's not a tragedy; on the contrary, there has been a positive trend of growth in deliveries from Kazakhstan of processed products on the background of crisis processes in world trade. All this suggests that we chose the correct course.

*A fresh example is Israel...*

Not only this country. Recently, we decided to form a group for the study of free trade with India; we are holding talks with Vietnam, New Zealand and a number of European states. In total, about 30 countries and organisations have expressed interest in enhancing relations with the CU. The scale of the CU allows the creation of the best conditions for trade and the effective protection of our interests.

*At the recent meeting of the dialogue platform with representatives of the business communities of the Customs Union, you talked about the new format of interaction, implying closer cooperation with business associations in decision-making. What is the expected effect of this interaction?*

Our goal is to reduce the distance from the initiative to the decision. It takes a lot of coordination within the governments and between governments. Therefore, all initiatives must be discussed in a timely fashion with the involvement of all necessary specialists, agencies and parties.

For example, we raise the issue of customs duties. They're good for those who are engaged in production and bad for buyers of imports. Therefore, it is very important to look for a compromise. Usually, it can be found through the size of the duty or specification, through selection of individual products, localisation of the issue and so on. But, for that, those who initiate the request and those who have a direct interest in the business should participate in the discussion of these regulatory decisions.

We are sure that business associations of the CU are sufficiently representative and able to provide impartial and comprehensive solutions to these issues. So, we decided to involve them in the activities of advisory committees.

*Will businessmen have a real voice?*

Certainly they will. We pursue a democratic approach to discussing the issues, especially as the voice of business in such things is always authoritative. Entrepreneurs provide our citizens with jobs; they are close to people. And we try to get

closer to the people through them.

*Another important question related to the operation of business is the desire to put in order national statistical information systems, to make them more transparent and reliable. How important is this to the functioning of the Common Economic Space market?*

It is necessary to provide businesses access to international trade statistics. Businesses must respond quickly to any problematic changes that do harm or cause damage, through preparing statements on measures to protect the market.

Today, when we are limited in changing duties by WTO obligations, the only opportunity to respond to adverse changes in the market is protective measures.

*The first day of January 2015 will be the starting point of the Eurasian Economic Union, which means a qualitatively new level of integration and the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour in the common market. Are we ready for the new quality of relations?*

The work in this area is quite active. But it is hardly possible to say today that the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union will immediately imply a sharp surge in integration. We are not so long past the date of formation of the Common Economic Space. We also still haven't fully used the potential of the CES and its programmes.

The new phase, of course, will be associated with the identification of new challenges and prospects for the next 5-7 years. Now, we are actively working with candidate countries Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, and we hope that during the current year the issue of the integration association's expansion will be decided.

Actually, we will reach agreement on further liberalisation and formation of single markets in a number of sensitive sectors, first of all services and capital. This will give additional capabilities to the single market for energy to transit, which is important for Kazakhstan, in particular transport infrastructure. Many sectors will be drawn together in the regulation in order to better use the opportunities of the common market.

No less important is the institutionalisation of our integration association, which will allow full participation in world affairs and the active assertion of common interests.

All this work indicates substantial qualitative progress. Actually, it is a logical conclusion of the integration cycle, which began in 2009 when the CU and the CES were formed. Now, the integration experience will be formalised in the full-fledged union.

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The Astana Times

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# OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Defining the Labour Market to Ensure Social Protection for All

By Alikhan Smailov

About 8.6 million people or 68 percent of the population aged 15 and older were employed in various areas of the domestic economy in 2013. Compared to the previous year, this was an increase of 63.5 thousand people (0.7 percent). More than half of the employed, 4.4 million were men; 48.8 percent, 4.2 million, were women.

The number of hired workers in 2013 was 6 million, or 69.4 percent of the total number of people employed in the economy. Compared with 2012, this was an increase of 136,000 people (2.3 percent). The number of self-employed among the total number of employed was 2.6 million or 30.6 percent. Of them, the share of productively employed people was 61.4 percent; unproductive employees made up 38.6 percent.

Currently, to collect data on employment and unemployment, most countries conduct sample surveys of the labour market, which measure the economic activity of the employed, unemployed and economically inactive persons in accordance with the criteria of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In Kazakhstan, employment surveys have been conducted quarterly since 2001 in all regions of the



country. The surveys engage about 75,000 people aged 15 and older.

The methodology used by the agency to determine the main indicators of the labour market, including the number of self-employed and unemployed people, complies with guidelines for the use of key indicators of the labour market developed by the ILO. The methodological approaches used to classify a particular person as employed or unemployed are used in statistical practice in most countries, which allows them to obtain internationally comparable labour market indicators.

The population survey is carried out through employment questionnaires of the sample survey, compiled on the principle of a logical sequence of questions. Based on re-

spondents' answers, the economic activity of the population is classified as employed (wage workers or self-employed), unemployed or economically inactive, corresponding to the basic principles and guidelines of the United Nations regarding economic characteristics of populations and the International classification of employment status.

Who are self-employed? According to the International classification of employment status (ICSE 1993), employed workers are divided into wage (paid) workers and self-employed.

Wage workers are those who are working under a contract of employment (written or oral) providing for payment in the form of remuneration (salary). Self-employed people are divided into the following groups: employers, own-account workers, unpaid family workers and members of cooperatives.

Employers include persons engaged in entrepreneurial activity in any form of economic activity and using the hired labour of one or more employees on a continuous basis.

Independent workers are persons who carry out any kind of economic activity and do not hire permanent employees.

Unpaid family workers are employees of family firms that receive rewards not in the form of wages

but on the basis of intra-profit distribution.

Members of a cooperative are persons who are members of a labour cooperative engaged in entrepreneurial activity.

In Kazakhstan, the sample survey of employment in the fourth quarter of 2013 showed that the number of self-employed was 2.6 million (30.3 percent of total employment), including 160,700 employers, 2.4 million self-employed, 32,200 workers in family businesses and 14,800 members of cooperatives.

Independent workers account for the lion's share of self-employed (92 percent). Independent workers are those who work alone or with one or more partners, are engaged in activities on the basis of self-employment and do not hire permanent workers. About 63.3 percent of the self-employed work on an individual basis (registered or unregistered individual entrepreneurs); 36.7 percent are involved in production, both for their own consumption and for sale. According to the employment survey, in the fourth quarter of 2013, more than half (52.4 percent) of independent workers received income from the sale of products manufactured at their own business.

Most of the self-employed, 1.36 million or 52.5 percent, are involved in independent activity in

agriculture, 674,900 or 26 percent in the retail sector and 599,100 or 21.5 percent in providing various public services, including transport, medical, educational or other services.

Results of the survey show that on average, one self-employed person works 35 hours a week, while in 2010 this was 31 hours. Only 0.4 percent of all self-employed people work five hours or less.

It should be noted that the share of self-employed of all employed people in developed countries is about 12-14 percent. For example, in France it is 11.0 percent; in Germany, 11.6 percent and in the U.K., 14.6 percent. In the Czech Republic it is 18.5 percent; in Italy, 25.1 percent; in Korea, 28.2 percent and Turkey, 37.1 percent.

In 2013, in accordance with the instructions of the head of state for the government in the programme article, "Social Modernisation of Kazakhstan: Twenty Steps to a Society of Universal Labour," Kazakhstan's National Statistics Agency, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning, Ministry of Regional Development and Ministry of Agriculture, approved a new methodology to determine the number of self-employed, their monthly incomes and the unemployed population in the country.

The main aim is to assess the structure of the self-employed population and to determine the categories of persons to be engaged in productive employment, including through the mechanisms of the Employment Road Map 2020 programme, as well as to plan further steps for their formalisation and involvement in pension and social security schemes.

According to the new methodology, the self-employed population in Kazakhstan is divided into two groups: the productively employed and the unproductively employed.

The main criterion is the level of monthly income received from the production of goods, works and services. The level of monthly income is correlated with the subsistence level formed in each region of Kazakhstan.

In the fourth quarter of 2013, the share of productive employment in the total number of self-employed was 64.5 percent and the proportion of unproductive employees was 35.5 percent.

More information on this topic is available in the public domain on the National Statistics Agency website, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>.

The author is chairman of National Statistics Agency of Kazakhstan.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Freedom and Democracy in South Africa

By Shirish Soni

On 27 April 1994, South Africa cast aside centuries of discrimination and oppression to form a new society built on the foundation of freedom and democracy. It marked the end of apartheid rule and an introduction of a new Constitutional order, wherein all work towards a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society based on justice, equality, the rule of law and the inalienable human rights of all. Our national symbols, our flag and our anthem are synonymous with the shared values and the unity of our nation. A national identity has emerged built on a respect for each other and our love for the country that we all call home.

However, we must never forget that our road to democracy was not easy and was achieved because of the unyielding sacrifice of thousands of patriots. During apartheid behaviour which is considered normal in a free society was criminalised. There was no freedom of speech, no freedom of association or movement. Apartheid intended to strip away every ounce of dignity and humanity of black people but did not succeed. Our freedom was not free, it came about thanks to the role of ordinary South Africans who struggled against apartheid, often at great personal cost.

The year 2014 presents an opportunity for the people of South Africa, the continent and the rest of the world to join us in celebrating the South African story. And the South African story is a good story to tell.

These celebrations offer us an occasion to reflect on how our free-



dom and democracy were achieved, the progress we have made during the past 20 years, and how South Africans are going to work together to implement Vision 2030, our National Development Plan (NDP).

We cannot afford to forget that our democratic birth was rightly hailed as a miracle. Domsayers and those who wanted us to fail had predicted chaos and civil war. However, none of these things came to pass and the values of democracy and freedom of our birth still endure today.

South Africa abandoned its shameful past and has steadily moved towards building a new culture based on respect of human rights and dignity.

Compared to the times before 1994, we can now proudly proclaim that millions of people now have water, electricity, sanitation and housing. The Census 2011 figures paint a picture of a country that has increased income levels, an improvement in the roll-out of basic services and amenities and increased levels of education.

Growing the economy and creating jobs:

- Our average annual economic growth between 1994 and 2012 was 3.2%;
  - The gross domestic product has grown to more than 3.5 trillion rands;
  - 3.7 million work opportunities were created since 2009;
  - The time it will take to start a mine from application to final approvals was brought to under 300 days;
  - Mining's contribution to our tax revenue came to 20 billion rands during the past 5 years;
  - 700 km of pipeline move 4 billion cubic litres of fuels a year from Durban to Gauteng;
  - During 1993, South Africa counted 3 million foreign visitors; during 2012, South Africa received 13 million foreign visitors;
  - Investment in public infrastructure development since 2009 amounted to 1 trillion rands; and
  - 37 000 km fibre-optic cable was laid by the private and public sectors since 2009.
- Improvements made in the roll-out of basic services and amenities include, among others:
- 3 million housing units were delivered since 1994;
  - 500 informal settlements were replaced with quality housing and basic services since 2009;
  - The number of households that had access to piped water increased from 80.3% in 1996 to 91.2% in 2011;
  - The proportion of households that have flush toilets connected to the sewage system have consistently increased to 57% in 2011 from 50% in 2001;
  - The number of households

that used electricity for lighting increased from 58.2% in 1996 to 84.7% in 2011, and households that used electricity for cooking increased from 47.5% to 73.9% over the same period.

Quality of life also continued to improve. The overall life expectancy of South Africans improved significantly between 2009 and 2011 to 62 years. Improving our healthcare services delivered impressive results:

- 300 new health care facilities were built since 2009;
  - 160 new clinics were built during the same time and 10 hospitals were built or refurbished;
  - The tide is turning in the fight against HIV and AIDS. By March 2012, more than 20.2 million people had undergone testing since the HIV Counselling and Testing campaign started in April 2010;
  - A revolutionary "one-tablet-a-day" treatment for people living with HIV was also recently launched.
- Relentless efforts to improve the quality of education are also ongoing:
- 370 new schools replaced mud schools and other unsuitable structures since 2009;
  - 700 000 children attended Grade R (pre-primary year) between 2003 and 2011;
  - 9 million learners are currently on the government's nutrition programme;
  - 8 million children do not pay school fees;
  - During 2013 we had a 73% pass rate in Grade 12 compared to 61% in 2009;
  - Student enrolment numbers into

universities increased with 12% during the last 5 years;

• Student enrolment numbers into further Education and Training colleges increased with 90% during the last 5 years; and

• The National Student Financial Aid Scheme increased its budget with R9 billion during the past 5 years.

On the international arena only during the past couple of years, South Africa experienced the following successes:

- South Africa served as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council during 2011-2012 for the second time (the first time was during 2007-2008);
  - The 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup was hosted by South Africa, the first on African soil;
  - During 2011 South Africa infused new life into the climate change negotiations when we hosted COP17/CMP7;
  - In May 2012, South Africa successfully hosted the Global African Diaspora Summit, an event of historic significance in the relations between Africa and its Diaspora;
  - South Africa hosted the historic BRICS Summit in March 2013 – the first on African soil – whose key outcomes, the Ethekwini Action Plan, is being implemented under our Chairmanship to the satisfaction of our BRICS partners (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa); and
  - South Africa is also currently the co-chair of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation, which will host the Summit in 2015.
- South African - Kazakhstan bilateral relations are also becoming

stronger every year. Toward the end of 2013, Kazakhstan opened its Embassy in South Africa. It is also anticipated that at least three agreements/MoUs will be signed between the two countries this year, one on the reciprocal exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official/service passports, an agreement on trade and economic cooperation and a memorandum of understanding between KazMunayGas and PetroSA.

By our own standards we declare that this is not good enough, that we must not rest until all people can claim a better life. While celebrating our achievements, we must also look forward to the next 20 years. At the centre of our democracy and freedom is our Constitution, it enshrines the rights of every South African and explains our obligations as citizens to each other and the country within those rights. Our rights, as enshrined in the Constitution come with responsibilities. It is our collective responsibility to actively participate in building our country towards reaching the country's Vision 2030 as set out in the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP is our roadmap, our 2030 plan. The plan outlines the type of society we are striving for in 2030, where no one is hungry, where everyone is able to go to school and further their studies if they so wish, where work is available, where everyone is making a contribution because each person has been provided with what they need to reach their full potential.

The author is the ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

## Training Young Professionals to Harness Future Energy

By Nurlan Tokmoldin

The theme of EXPO 2017 – Future Energy – is relevant as never before. Providing humanity with clean, safe and efficient sources of energy is one of the most pressing global problems, which intersects with the task of preserving the ecological balance. One can argue about the scale of impact of human activities on such environmental problems as global warming, but the fact that traditional, non-renewable sources of energy in the form of oil, gas and coal will run out in the foreseeable future remains undeniable. Protecting us from this outcome will require finding new sources of energy. To maintain the ecological and economic balance, these new sources must be renewable and humanity must learn how to use them effec-

tively before traditional resources disappear.

Renewable energy sources include wind, solar and hydro (rivers, seas and oceans) energy, thermal energy of the Earth and the energy stored in biological mass. Their potential is different. The largest amounts of energy accessible for conversion into work are contained in rivers, biomass, wind and sunlight. However, it is the energy of the sun where wind, water, plants and animals ultimately derive their energy from.

For Kazakhstan, with its vast territory, low population density, abundance of sunshine and relatively small number of rivers, solar energy, along with the wind, can become the basis of renewable energy sector.

Existing estimates of the potential of solar energy in Kazakhstan are ambiguous. The most cited fig-

ure is 2.5 terawatt/hours per year, but that differs significantly from the annual arrival of solar radiation on the territory of the country, which is no less than 2 million terawatt hours per year. In other words, if we cover the entire territory of Kazakhstan with solar cells with an efficiency of 10 percent, the obtained amount of energy (with a large surplus) will meet the energy needs of the planet.

The main drawback related to solar energy is that there is no sun at night when it is required, for example, for lighting. This requires either finding a renewable energy source that remains available at night or finding effective methods of energy collection, storage, transfer and use. One of the promising ways to solve the latter problem is the development of hydro-

gen economy.

Problems of efficient conversion of solar energy into electricity, heat and chemical energy of hydrogen gas, as well as its storage and management, are studied at the Institute of Physics and Technology of the "Parasat" National Science and Technology Holding in cooperation with research centres in the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom and Kazakhstan. The research is aimed at creating complete production cycles, from raw materials in the form of sand and quartzite to finished solar cells and modules, from hydrogen production by water photo-electrolysis to its storage within specially designed polymeric materials and efficient burning in fuel cells to generate electricity.

One of the fundamental technologies being developed at the Institute over the years is obtaining and

purifying silicon – the base material for solar energy and electronics – by metallurgical methods. Metallurgy-based technologies developed in the Institute allow not only for the production of purified silicon from sand and quartzite, but also of special silicon alloys, from which one can obtain a gaseous compound of silicon and hydrogen known as silane. The latter is one of the most common materials for semiconductor electronics, but its handling requires special precautions. The Institute, together with the Siemens company, is currently working on building of a technology line for silane production from this alloy. The ultimate objective for this project is to create a research line for the production of heterojunction silicon solar cells based on the purified crystalline silicon and silane obtained at

the Institute. Heterojunction silicon solar cells, also known as HIT cells, reach 25 percent efficiency of solar energy-to-electricity conversion, which is 1.5 times higher than the efficiency of standard silicon solar cells.

To continue our research and develop and improve existing technologies, the Institute aims at employing and training young professionals from leading technical universities of Almaty. We hope they will help us bring R&D activities at the Institute of Physics and Technology to a higher level and contribute to the creation of high-tech green industries in our country.

The author holds a PhD from Imperial College London and is Head of Gorkelinsky Laboratory at the Institute of Physics and Technology, Almaty.

# EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Astana, London Sign Agreements on Cargo Transit from Afghanistan, As British Minister Visits to Advance Wider Relations



Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov (r) welcomes Britain's Senior Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Baroness Warsi (l) for their meeting in Astana.

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"This is the end of a chapter, not the end of a book... Our main priority is to see Afghanistan achieve success as a peaceful and stable nation."

According to the Kazakh foreign ministry, in addition to Afghanistan, Idrissov and Warsi covered a wide range of issues on the bilateral and international agendas in their talks. The two officials noted the dynamic development of bilateral relations after the visit by British Prime Minister David Cameron to Kazakhstan in July 2013 and the meeting between President Nursultan Nazarbayev and the head of the British government in London the same month.

"The relationship [between Britain and Kazakhstan] has really become much, much deeper," Warsi said in her interview. "The Prime Minister's visit was a highlight moment and I see it as one of my biggest achievements to ensure that the visit happened. The frankness of the conversation is now more apparent."

During their meeting, Idrissov and Warsi stressed the importance of the work of an intergovernmental commission on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation which consists of specialised working groups and the Kazakh-British Trade and Industry Council (KBITIC). The next meetings within the commission are expected to take place during the Astana Economic Forum in May and at the traditional Kazakh business forum in London in October.

Trade and economic cooperation is a key component of bilateral ties. According to Kazakhstan's Customs Control Committee, mutual trade reached \$2.1 billion in 2013, including \$1.5 billion in Kazakh exports and \$0.6 billion in imports. Britain is the third largest investor in Kazakhstan, after the Netherlands and the U.S. According to the National Bank of Kazakhstan, the total amount of direct British investment in the country from 2005 to September 2013 amounted to \$10 billion.

"The economic relationship has hugely developed. The intergovernmental commission is a testimony of that. Already, well over a billion pounds worth of deals have been done [thanks to the work of the commission] and further needs to be done," Warsi said in the interview.

She also added that her meeting with National Bank Chair-

man Kairat Kelimbetov on April 14 focused on the issue of Islamic financing. "Britain has just announced its intention to issue a sovereign sukuk which is a big moment for us. And we host the Global Islamic Finance Investment Group of which Kazakhstan is a member. So I think there's lots of new avenues that we're exploring," Warsi explained.

During their talks, Idrissov and Warsi also discussed further improvement of the visa regime and facilitating the process of obtaining a British visa for Kazakhstan citizens, as was agreed during David Cameron's visit to Astana. They also discussed prospects for cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United Kingdom in the legal sphere, and Astana's campaign for a non-permanent member seat at the UN Security Council for 2017-18.

According to the Kazakh foreign ministry, Idrissov and Warsi also noted mutual interest in seeing the resolution of the situation in Ukraine through diplomacy, including through the timely and effective conduct of negotiations between the EU, Russia, Ukraine and the United States in Geneva on April 17.

"We have consistently asked for the situation to be de-escalated, for Russia to return to direct talks with the Ukrainians to allow for these matters to be resolved face to face and we sincerely hope that some progress can be made in Geneva on Thursday [April 17]," Warsi said in that regard in her interview.

Warsi, who is on a regional tour and is set to also visit Uzbekistan on April 16, also discussed the general view of Central Asia in London.

"One of the things that were important for me when I became responsible for Central Asia was to understand the uniqueness of each country," she said. "It's not just a bloc. Everyone has its own strengths and weaknesses, its own challenges, and our relationship with each country is very unique and very different."

Asked if she would relate to a tongue-in-cheek term for Kazakhstan from several years ago of a "misunderestimated stan," Warsi chuckled and said: "I think it's misunderstood and it's underestimated. And part of my relationship building was to make sure that it was understood better, and the potential was brought to the fore. The Prime Minister's highly successful visit is testimony of the fact that it is better understood and we do recognise and we don't underestimate it. And not just in relation to trade links, but internationally... [given] the relationship with Iran, the relationship with Afghanistan, the relationship with Ukraine... It is such an important regional player."

Noting Kazakhstan's past chairmanships in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Baroness Warsi said "Kazakhstan is increasingly playing its role as a serious international player and that's why it's important to have this strong relationship."

As Minister for Faith and Communities at the Department for Communities and Local Government, another of her jobs with a domestic focus in Britain, Warsi also speaks up on issues of freedom of religion in her own country and discusses related issues with her colleagues on foreign trips. She said over time she, in a way, brought together the two jobs as their missions are closely intertwined and her work in the Foreign Office also includes the human rights brief.

"How we deal with minorities in our own country reflects on us internationally, and what we do internationally really has an impact on us locally," Warsi said as she added that she had a chance to visit Astana's famous Khazret Sultan mosque on one of her previous four visits in four years. "I've taken much of what we've done on freedom of religion domestically and I've tried to use it as a way of trying to work with other countries on how they deal with issues around the freedom of religion and belief."

"I also think it's important to speak up not just for your co-religionists. And I do not feel that people should be held accountable for their co-religionists," Warsi said as she explained her stance against religious profiling and her efforts to prevent sectarianism and religious discrimination internationally.

In Astana, the host city of the triennial Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Warsi was sure to find a sympathetic audience as she also met with the head of the secretariat of the Congress, Speaker of the Senate Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and chairman of the Agency for Religious Affairs Marat Azilkanov. She also met with Akim (Mayor) of Astana Imangali Tasmagambetov.

## PM Massimov Visits Russia, Discusses Draft Treaty on Eurasian Economic Union

Continued from Page A1

"Throughout the negotiation process we were acting on the basic principle... of meeting economic interests of the participating countries," he stressed.

In his turn, Medvedev welcomed Massimov and his new government and expressed his and his Belarusian counterpart's shared desire to work together. "We wish all of you, and Mr. Massimov personally, success in reaching Kazakhstan's national goals," Medvedev said.

During the meeting Medvedev noted the prompt organisation of the meeting of CES prime ministers in Moscow to discuss current issues, including a draft treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union.

"Our countries are moving towards the formation of this union. We've formed a common customs territory and introduced CES framework agreements. A substantial number of our national powers have been transferred to our partners from the organisation's supranational body, the Eurasian Economic Commission, something we are still getting used to. Now we are proceeding to an even higher level of integration," Medvedev said in his opening remarks.

"Our cooperation in this trilateral format has produced concrete results, such as fewer trade barriers, which can partially make up for the reduction of external demand and alleviate some of the consequences of the financial crisis," he continued.

Talking about trade turnover within the Customs Union last year, Medvedev said it exceeded \$64 billion, which he called an impressive figure. He also mentioned that the institutional changes are no less important.

"The terms of the CES have given businesses the opportunity to locate in places where there are fewer administrative barriers and it is easier to do business. At first glance, this may not seem good for our national interests. However, in



Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov (l) and Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev discuss directions for deepening Eurasian economic integration.

the context of the CES, this represents real competition between jurisdictions, which was our goal," he added.

Massimov also held bilateral meeting with Medvedev as they discussed further development of Kazakh-Russian cooperation and further interaction within the Customs Union and CES.

The officials praised the level of bilateral cooperation and reaffirmed the interest of the two countries in further deepening ties across the spectrum of inter-state relations.

Meanwhile, talks on the accession of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan to the Customs Union continue. These countries have done much to become fully-fledged participants in the integration process Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus have been developing.

As for the treaty, it should be ready for signing by President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, Russian President Vladimir Putin and President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus in Astana in May and, prior to that, the three presidents will meet in Minsk later this month to finalise the document.

The formation of the future Eurasian Economic Union provides for the establishment of the freedom of capital flow and freedom of the movement of labour, services, and goods which is expected to give further impetus to the development of key industries in three countries.

According to experts, member nations of the Eurasian Economic Community, the precursor to the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space, have made considerable headway in integration, which would open up great opportunities, as well as improve the investment climate in member states.

Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan are founding members of the Customs Union, which is the basis for the upcoming EEU.

President Nazarbayev first mentioned the concept of a Eurasian Union during his speech at Lomonosov Moscow State University in March 1994 when he envisaged it as a mutually beneficial union of mutually respectful partners.

The treaty on the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union is due to come into force as of Jan. 1, 2015.

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## Young Shymkent Singer Honoured in Russian Music Competition

By Lyubov Dobrota

SHYMKENT – Young Kazakh singer Margarita Kin has won the Bach's Spring International Festival Contest held in Magnitogorsk, Russia.

In two rounds of competition, Kin performed the aria from Bach's oratorio "St. Matthew Passion" and Adele's couplets from the operetta "Die Fledermaus," by Johann Strauss, winning over the jury headed by Luz Leskovitz, artistic director and conductor of the Salzburg Palace Concerts. Kin won in her category and was honoured as one of the best performers in all musical genres by the festival.

This is Kin's third major award in three years. Last year, the young singer won the national Dostar competition of young operetta performers. The year before, she took first place at the eighth Musical Garden Rübezah International Opera Festival in the Polish town of Karpacz.

A graduate of the South Kazakhstan Music College and the Institute of Culture, Kin for many years has been working in the ensemble of Russian folk instruments directed by Alexander Korotkov. She plays several musical instruments, including rare instruments like the small domra (a traditional Russian and Ukrainian string instrument) and mandolin.



Margarita Kin is involved in the ensemble of Russian folk instruments and was honoured as one of the best performers in all musical genres by Bach's Spring International Festival Contest.

Several years ago, Kin took a serious interest in singing. Her desire to do everything in a professional manner led her to the vocal department of a conservatory.

"Her success is natural. She has

a beautiful voice and amazing vocalisations, which she constantly develops and improves. I am glad that we have a festival like Bach's Spring in Russia. It is necessary for cultural balance. The potential

of the Russian school of music is huge, but we should not focus narrowly on the Russian classics. Bach's music is a world language that unites peoples and countries," Korotkov said.

## World Class Colleges to Focus on Six Strategic Sectors

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – A network of colleges featuring finely tuned specialisations, including tourism and hospitality, construction and housing, energy, engineering, design and information technology and communications is being developed with campuses under construction in the capital Astana and also in the country's business heartland of Almaty.

Under the banner World Class Colleges, the learning institutes are the brainchild of Kasipkor Holding, a non-commercial joint stock company formed for the specific purpose of fostering new education opportunities for young Kazakhs.

The areas of specialisation were chosen based on analysis of the most popular business focuses of more than 200 enterprises. They are also in accordance with the projected plan for the development of the country's growth industries.

"The basis for creation of World Class Colleges in Astana and Almaty is a system of profile schools,"

said Talgat Dairov, deputy chairman of Kasipkor.

"The profile of each school is developed together with international consultants and reflects the needs of the economy for deficit labour niches.

Each college will contain six schools: School of Tourism and Hospitality; School of Construction and Housing; School of Energy Industry; School of Engineering; School of Design and School of ICT."

"Students of the World Class Colleges will enjoy a number of advantages, including diplomas and certificates that are recognised in Kazakhstan and internationally. They will also receive tuition in English and practical training on modern equipment. In addition, they will be employed by large companies across the country," Dairov said. "Tuition will be conducted by highly skilled teachers from our strategic partners and students will benefit from scholarships covering education, accommodation and living expenses."

The curricula are being devel-

oped jointly with strategic partners of Kasipkor. Having studied the theory, students will conduct practical training on simulator platforms in colleges. Platforms are similar to real production sites used in enterprises today. Students will undergo internships in the country's largest companies operating in the sector they study. Some students will even be eligible for overseas internships. With the knowledge that diplomas and certificates given by Kasipkor's strategic partners will be recognised on an international level, students of World Class Colleges will be able to find jobs in Europe and elsewhere.

"Also, we don't force them to pay back expenses for their education. But we focus the attention of our graduates on the local market, since our purpose is to train deficit specialists for our own domestic labour market. Therefore, Kasipkor will employ them in the country and this will gradually lead to full replacement of highly-paid foreign labour," he said. Construction of the campuses will commence this year in Astana, eventually totalling an area of 16.5 hectares (41 acres) when completed in 2017. It

is planned to have at least 1,500 students enrolled in three-year programmes in English and to upgrade qualifications in the most popular specialist disciplines.

"As the focus of the college is to ensure access to education for young people from all over Kazakhstan, we project up to 60 percent of available spaces will be filled by rural youth young students from poor families and orphans," Dairov explained.

About 40,000 square metres will be allocated for the construction of dormitories, giving students from even the most remote regions of the country the opportunity to receive lodging and scholarships.

"Full scholarship will cover education fees for all students accepted to World Class Colleges," Dairov added. "These will be covered by government grants. At the same time, the amount of places in colleges is limited. Non-residents and students from vulnerable groups will be placed in the dormitories located on the grounds of the colleges.

Monthly subsistence allowances will also be paid to students.

"We want to provide the opportunity to enter our Interregional Centre, APEC Petrotechnic in Atyrau and to offer entrance examinations to everyone. For this purpose, Kasipkor held consultations in the Kyzylorda, Aktobe, Mangistau, West Kazakhstan, Atyrau and Akkmola oblasts.

Continued on Page B4

## Astana Hosts Seminar on Automating HR Management Systems

By Alex Lee

ASTANA – A seminar on automated human resource management systems in the public sector was held recently at the National Centre for Civil Service Personnel Management. The seminar was supported by the Agency for Civil Service Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the European Union-funded project "Civil Service Reform and Modernisation of the Government of Kazakhstan".

In his welcoming speech, Chairman of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Alikhan Baimenov noted that the introduction of up-to-date personnel and information technologies is a factor in improving the quality of human resources management. Therefore, it is planned to complete the e-kyzmet personnel management integrated information system by the end of 2015. It incorporates

the best aspects of similar programmes from around the world. The EU project drew international experts to the seminar, including Sylvia Bronmans, chief executive officer of the Dutch government company P-Direkt, who has experience in public sector personnel processes automation in the Netherlands. She spoke about the basic functions and efforts of the P-Direkt system, which is the most advanced European model for centralising generic functions of central government bodies.

P-Direkt is a Dutch government agency that was designed to centralize and standardise the human resources processes of 10 ministries. Maximilian Foedinger, the key expert of the EU Project, also covered issues on international practices regarding the automation of human resource management systems in the civil service.

Continued on Page B8

## 'We Try to Seek Win-Win Results,' Chair of Sports Press Association Says

By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – In autumn 2013, Ilyas Omarov, a diplomat with more than 20 years of experience became a chair of the Sports Press Association of Kazakhstan (SPAK). For nearly nine years he worked as a press secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Kazakhstan. Nesip Zhunusbayev, the former SPAK chair, a renowned journalist became its honorary president.

Omarov spoke to The Astana Times about current activities and objectives of the association.

*What are the main objectives of SPAK?*

My colleagues at SPAK supported me when I offered to work under the motto called "sports diplomacy." There is such a concept as a win-win partnership in diplomacy. The international initiatives of Kazakhstan are known as the ones that are aimed at ensuring benefits for everyone.

So, our association is open for cooperation with anyone who is interested in the development of the Kazakhstan sports press, as we have similar goals.

Continued on Page B7

## Astana Dakar Teams Take on Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge

By Jan Furst

The prestigious rally race Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge took place in the United Arab Emirates Apr 3-10. Kazakhstan's Astana Dakar racing teams took on the challenge by winning the fourth leg of the five-day race for the first time in club's history and doing well overall.

Three Kazakh teams participated in the Desert Challenge: Bauyrzhan Issabayev/Vladimir Demyanenko in Astana-Toyota, Denis Berezovskiy/Ignat Falkov, Astana-Nissan and Aidyn Rakhimbayev/Anton Nikolayev in Astana-BMW Mini. It was Rakhimbayev and Nikolayev who won Stage Four

in Abu Dhabi on April 9 for the first time in their career in Dakar rally racing, ahead of some of the world's renowned names like Nani Roma, the winner of Dakar 2014.

"It was a hot and dynamic day," Rakhimbayev wrote in his Facebook account.

"At last, I managed to 'tame' our MINI," he said. "The wild, unbridled stallion – powerful with quite a character!"

The Kazakh pilot signed with MINI right after Dakar 2014 earlier this year and only had four days prior to Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge to learn to "speak to the MINI in its language" as he explained in his posts.

Continued on Page B7



**THINGS TO WATCH APRIL**

ASTANA OPERA	
<b>April 25, 26, 27 at 19:00</b>	Swan Lake
<b>May 9, 11, 12 at 19:00</b>	"Tosca" opera by Giacomo Puccini
KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ARTS	
<b>April 24 at 19:00</b>	St. George's Day English music concert
<b>April 29 at 19:00</b>	Jazz-2014
CONGRESS HALL	
<b>April 26 at 19:00</b>	"Atadan-Mura" concert of folk music and dance
<b>April 29 at 19:30</b>	"Kvartirnik" Bi-2 concert
<b>April 30 at 19:30</b>	"Tvoya_A" Anita Tsoy concert
PALACE OF INDEPENDENCE	
<b>May 7, 8 at 13:00</b>	Astana Fashion Days 2014
SARY-ARKA CYCLE RACE TRACK	
<b>April 26 at 19:40</b>	Astana Arlans vs. Baku Fires semifinal fight

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## Nazarbayev School Student Honoured for Research Work in Russia

By Svetlana Abenova

EAST KAZAKHSTAN REGION – Timur Serikbayev, a student in the eighth grade of the Nazarbayev Intellectual School in Ust-Kamenogorsk, received two awards at the seventh International Conference of School and University Students in Protvino in the Moscow region. The gifted teenager presented reports on linguistics and biology at the conference.

Extensive practical material is attached to his paper, "Joy or Kuanysh: Similarities and differences in Kazakh and English names," which he wrote under the guidance of Associate Professor of East Kazakhstan Serikbayev State Technical University Tolkyn Abdrakhmanova. "I'm glad that Kazakhs are still

giving motivating names with a logical meaning to their children. The name Kuanysh means 'joy' and the newborn child's parents want to tell people what a joy in their life the birth of a son is. Unlike Kazakhs, the British and Americans, to name a few, mostly care for giving a name with a nice ring to it," said Serikbayev, who was the only student representing Kazakhstan in Protvino and among the only six honorees in the field of linguistics. Serikbayev was also the youngest winner.

The Kazakh student's second work was on the treatment of bronchial asthma with houseplants. The highly motivated Serikbayev is interested in chemistry as well and spends a lot of time in the university lab. His short-term plan is to learn another foreign language.



Timur Serikbayev, an eighth grade student of the Nazarbayev Intellectual School received two awards for reports on linguistics and biology.

## Kazakh Trained Ophthalmologist Meets Domestic Need

By Klara Tishkambayeva

KARAGANDA – In the past, people with eye problems had to apply for consultation or an operation with Russian specialists. Today, the situation has changed, and the republic has its own professional ophthalmologists. Vladimir Kim is one of them. His eye microsurgery centres in Karaganda, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Shymkent and Astana are known to many people who need qualified ophthalmic care.

A graduate of the Alma-Ata State Medical Institute, he gained extensive practical experience at the Dzhambul Regional Hospital and 15 years ago arrived in Karaganda with a great desire to create an ophthalmology centre.

"We started with three rented medical rooms and one for surgery, if necessary. At the same time, we worked on mastering new technologies and always tried to offer high-quality services. The construction of our own clinic was a powerful incentive for us. At that time, it was a novelty because the economy had just begun to recover. We were also proud of the fact that we also made a contribution to our common cause of improving lives in the region," he said.

Kim and his team have created several medical centres in the country, where ophthalmologic problems are solved with a 90 percent success rate. In our age of information technology, eye diseases have become a special problem and their treatment must be carried out with the use of modern techniques and the latest equipment. The treatment of diseases even as common as cataracts, for example, can be carried out with the use of well-known methods and recent medical advances.

"If we want to succeed, we must



Professional ophthalmologist Vladimir Kim and his eye microsurgery centres in Karaganda, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Shymkent and Astana are known to many people who need qualified ophthalmic care.

constantly be one step ahead, I truly believe this. Of course, this involves great responsibility and certain risks, but at the same time, it gives us huge advantages by keeping us prepared for new developments and ahead of our competitors," the doctor said.

Today, the most common surgery treatment for cataracts is phacoemulsification. But 12 years ago, only skilled surgeons in a few clinics in Kazakhstan used this method. Kim was one of the first to use an ultrasound probe at such interferences. Its advantages are the ability to operate on a cataract at an early stage and the ability to replace opacity lenses with flexible intraocular lenses which are very important due to the lack of distortion in the postoperative period.

The main criterion of this operation for ophthalmologists is stability and safety, as well as the absence of post-surgical complications.

These are good signs for the clinic, said the doctor.

Today, domestic clinics carry out about 25,000 operations for cataract extraction every year. But unfortunately, many more people need this type of surgery. According to the doctor, the state allocates considerable funds for guaranteed free medical care, but despite this, the budget is not able to cover all those wishing to receive these medical services.

"In our clinic, the waiting list is four to six months, but that is not the longest wait. For example, in Hungary, it may be two to three years. Considering the present stage of financing, a waiting list of six months is acceptable," he explained.

In general, Kim and his team in their clinic in Karaganda carry out about 2,500 major operations a year. In such indicators as speed, quality and predictability of oph-

thalmology services, the centre is ahead of similar hospitals not only in the region but also nationwide.

"Now, thanks to President Nursultan Nazarbayev, a lot of attention is being paid to the development of healthcare in the country. I think that the duty of every physician is to be of maximum service to his patients and for the improvement of domestic medicine as a whole," the doctor said.

Today, together with his team, he is taking the next step by adopting a new method. It entails combining traditional phacoemulsification with a femto-second laser. This method makes the operation safer, more precise and more predictable. Moreover, it minimises the possibility of human error.

"The technology is very expensive, but it will justify itself. And in the future, it will also become the norm. And I'm happy that we are again in tune with the times and even one step ahead of them," Kim added.

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## Kazakh Youth Win Russian Musical Competition

By Raushan Shulembayeva

ALMATY – Fourth-year student of the Pyotr Tchaikovsky Musical College in Almaty Alina Molchanova won first prize at a prestigious international competition for young performers in Pskov, Russia, and her classmate Aigerim Umutbayeva won third prize.

It is significant that the two youths won a singing contest in Russia, which, along with Armenia, Latvia and Lithuania are known for their singers. The contest's lead judge, singer Nadezhda Yermigina, remarked on the young singers' wonderful voices and Kazakhstan's robust pool of vocal talent. Both winning contestants are students of Honoured Artist of Kazakhstan Lyubov Adilova. Larissa Kovalevskaya was the contest's concertmaster.

Director of Almaty Musical College Aya Kaliyeva said that generous state support has allowed the students to represent their national culture on the global stage.

"Over the past four short months, 37 of our students have won various competitions. They are young talents that represent well their country's values and comprehend the depth of thought of President Nursultan Nazarbayev who said that 'patriotism in Kazakhstan is intimately connected with the equality of all citizens and their overall responsibility to honour the motherland,'" said Kaliyeva.

Today, there are 560 students in the college from all corners of Kazakhstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, China and South Korea, who represent 20 ethnicities. All students, including those from abroad, glad-

ly partake in traditional festivals celebrating the languages of Kazakhstan's people. They sing songs and perform the folk music of different ethnic groups. The teachers believe that such traditions strengthen young people's sense of patriotism and teach them to respect the cultures of other nations.

The legendary school is proud of its artistic teams: its Alatau youth choir, symphonic and chamber orchestras, big band, the Akhmet Zhubanov Orchestra of Kazakh Folk Instruments, the Russian Folk Orchestra and Kazakhstan's only Uyghur Orchestra of Folk Instruments. Their performances are always met with a warm response from the public because the distinctive beauty of every nation's music is an inexhaustible source of love and positive human emotion.

## Kostanai Regional Theatre Tours Astana

By Arsen Dilim

ASTANA – The Kostanai Regional Theatre named after Ilyas Omarov toured the Kazakh capital Astana in the second half of April.

According to its director Nurlan Yerekeshiev, the troupe intended to dazzle spectators of any age, which it seemed to have managed to do perfectly as evidenced by the fact that all tickets were sold out.

Eleven productions were shown to the capital's sophisticated viewers. Among them were the classics like Hamlet, works by Abai and Sergey Yesenin, as well as a drama staged by Yersayin Toleubai, and the tragedy by Kazygala Myrzhakyp. The younger audience was fond of the comedy Baizhiyev Bachelors and Mutual Understanding, Kuni No.13. The children were not left without attention either with specially staged fairy tales Mashadu Kidnapped Onion Bulbs, and Gold and Mind by Toleubai.

The premieres also were presented among them Nostalgia, and Mariam and Ilyas.

In Nostalgia, playwright Zholtai Almashuly told a story about the plight of his protagonist Asana, a descendant of a wealthy family, who has a family living in well-being and prosperity overseas. He is very homesick, however, and his homeland is far away. And his only dream is to breathe a gulp of his native air, touch and kiss his native

land, and to stay in her arms. The story of one family shows the wounded souls and experiences of tens of thousands of fellow stranded far from home.

Life story of the national poet Mariam Khakimzhanova was portrayed in another premiere by Toleubai Mariam and Ilyas that finished the touring event. The bright poet's life story filled with many challenges didn't break her spirit. Her husband was proclaimed the enemy of the state and was sentenced to be shot, her second husband was a victim of the same fate. Hardships and mourning, however, couldn't stop Mariam from raising children and Ilyas Omarov helps her do it. The spectacle portrays Kazakh women during the years of repression.

The theatre will only celebrate its 15th anniversary next year, however the bonded troupe has already an impressive repertoire, mostly represented by the graduates of the Zhurgenev Kazakh National Academy in Almaty, who demonstrate the growing artistic maturity year on year.

"Repertoire is the face of any theatre," theatre's art and stage director Toleubai commented after the tour.

The Kostanai Drama Theatre was established in September 2000 by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. As per the request of the head of state, the theatre is named after a famous Kazakh state and public activist of the 20th century, Ilyas Omarov.

## Tale of Batu Unlocks the Secrets of Kazakh Culture, History for Children

By Julia Rutz

ALMATY – A fantasy story about the fascinating adventures of a young boy and his friends has just been published to inspire children to be curious about Kazakh culture, the language and the country's rich history.

Titled "In Search of the Golden Cup: the Adventures of Batu and His Friends," the new book was written

by Kazakh author and PhD of Philological Science Zira Nayrizbayeva.

The tale follows Batu and his school friends as they meet Aspara, the prince of the Massagets, an ancient ethnic group that lived in what is now contemporary Kazakhstan. The group sets off on a journey to find a stolen sacred cup of wisdom and peace.

While searching for the relic, the adventurous children encounter

different mythological creatures, including the sacred bird Samryk, which helps the main characters defeat their enemies.

The author also wanted to nurture a sense of patriotism and solidarity among the young, as well as illustrate that a person, even a child, should take responsibility for their own deeds and for their family and country in general.

The illustrations for the book

were created by talented young Kazakhstan artist Timur Davletgireyev, who recently published his own creative comic papers, which were rendered in manga style.

There are plans to translate the book into the Kazakh language and also create a cartoon programme about Batu and his friends, while an internet portal, interactive games and a journal for children will be rolled out soon.

## Pereversev Releases New Online Album



By Jane Rivers

ALMATY – Famous Kazakh pianist, Oleg Pereversev, who is also a member of the musical group Chick Flick and instrumental duet Vivat, recently presented his new online album "Classical Music for All."

It took a year to prepare the new tracks, which represent classical

music from different periods, including masterpieces by Bach, as well as self-composed songs. The album also includes an instrumental cover version of "Kozimmin Karasy," a song well known in Kazakhstan and written by the great Kazakh poet Abai.

Classical music connoisseurs will be glad to hear the famous "To

Elise" and "The Moon Sonata" by Beethoven, "Italian Polka" by Rachmaninov, "Nocturne No.20" by Chopin and "Flight of the Bumble Bee" by Rimski-Korsakov. The album has been released for internet users to listen online or download.

Classical music is important to Pereversev. Apart from playing in a musical group, he also performs

with an orchestra and organises solo concerts.

The pianist who studied at Hanover High School of Music and Theater in Germany, has won numerous awards and has received widespread recognition. He also participated in the popular show "Minute of Glory" and was one of the finalists on the Ukrainian show "Ukraine Searches for Talent." The video, where Pereversev plays "Flight of the Bumble Bee" on two pianos at once was watched more than 1 million times.

"Music is my passion. I first learned how to play piano at the age of five. Since then, music has become an important and integral part of my life and I am always looking for new ways to perform," explained Pereversev.

According to the musician, the idea of playing two pianos simultaneously came spontaneously. "I am not the first one to play piano in such an unusual way, but my family and friends found it amazing, so I decided to give the public a glimpse," says Pereversev.

Chick Flick was founded in 2009 and quickly became famous amongst concert goers thanks to their unusual sound that includes elements of electro, synth pop, acid jazz, bossa nova and lounge.

## Spiderman Speaks Kazakh

By Alina Usmanova

The blockbuster film "Spiderman: High Voltage" in 3D will be released in Russian and Kazakh in Kazakhstan on April 24, tenetgrinews.kz recently reported.

Dubbing of the film into Kazakh began in November 2013. Over the subsequent months, voice castings were conducted and material from the production studio was received and approved. Once approved, the dubbing of the Kazakh version, which will be released under the name "Zhana Ormekshi Adam: Kerneneg Quat," which is Kazakh for "Spiderman: High Voltage," took eight days.

Dubbing some scenes to enhance sound took even more time. Protagonist Peter Parker was voiced by young theatre actor Mery Adzhibekov. He was part of the team that worked on the first "New Spiderman" film.

"There was a lot of text and many emotional scenes. I felt as if I was inside of my character during voicing. There were situations where while voicing, I was worried that my heart would leap or tears would run down my face. The project was not too difficult, with this being the second time I have voiced Parker. I have really gotten used to doing Spiderman films. By the time I would arrive at the studio every day, I was already Peter Parker," Adzhibekov stated.

Actress Alima Kairbekova dubbed Parker's beloved Gwen Stacy and Azamat Kanapiya voiced Maxwell Dillon. Aigerim Onalbek was the dubbing director; she previously worked on films such as "Return to A," "My Heart Astana" and "Men in Black 3."

Kazakh became the seventh language into which the film was translated. The translation was carried out directly from English into Kazakh to assure the highest quality. Casting of the main characters was conducted in February in Almaty. Dubbing experts from Sony Pictures, who came to Kazakhstan specifically for the film, approved them.



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Atyrau Strengthens Cooperation at Investment Forum

By Rinat Kulmagambetov

ATYRAU – A number of business activities, including a technology conference and exhibitions of achievements in the oil and gas and construction industries, were held within the Atyrau Invest 2014 Forum in this western Kazakhstan city on April 1-3.

The oil-rich western region offers great opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs. The development of the large Tengiz and Kashagan oil and gas condensate fields in the last few years has given foreign partners an opportunity to examine the conditions of doing business in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan's investment climate has been ranked more and more favourable over recent years, and President Nursultan Nazarbayev set the task of increasing investment volume from the current 18 percent to 30 percent of the total gross domestic product in his most recent state-of-the-nation address.

In that address, the President called increasing investment one of the main components of the economic growth that will facilitate Kazakhstan's goal of joining the 30 most-developed countries in the world. The adoption of legislation on foreign direct investments, as well as the support of state bodies, is also contributing to the creation of a favourable investment climate.

"The 2014 Atyrau Invest Forum is aimed at strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation between foreign and domestic partners with the companies in the region, attracting investments," said Akim (Governor) of the region Bak-



Atyrau Invest 2014 Forum, held in the western Kazakhstan city, offers great opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs.

tykozha Izmukhambetov, opening the event. He stressed that the oil capital of the country brought together more than 600 participants including representatives of 100 companies from 15 countries and delegations from Belarus and neighbouring regions.

The intense interest in the forum is explained by the fact that the region, which is the centre of major investment, has already established cooperation with 50 countries. More than 900 enterprises with foreign capital are working in the region, having created about 17,000 new jobs.

Last year, these companies transferred to the budget 1.7 trillion tenge (US\$9.3 billion) in taxes. In addition to oil, Izmukhambetov said, there are also other mineral deposits in the region to be developed: potash salt, borate ore, silica sand, gypsum, limestone and clay.

The agro-industrial complex in the region is also developing. New

dairy farms have recently been built and this year a complex for breeding geese, a poultry farm and several greenhouses will be put into operation.

Big hopes are associated with the National Industrial Petrochemical Technology Park Special Economic Zone, which will create about 300 productions for the deep processing of hydrocarbon raw materials and the production of competitive products with high added value. Alongside that, a 250-hectare industrial zone is being created in the region. The availability of transport infrastructure provides access to the markets of neighbouring countries and world markets by air and water transport.

According to the Statistics Agency of Kazakhstan, the volume of investments in fixed assets of the Atyrau region is 17.1 percent of the national figure. Chairman of the Investment Committee of the Ministry of Industry and New

Technologies of Kazakhstan Yerlan Khairov urged the use of the opportunities created by the Customs Union, with its common market of 170 million people and a combined gross domestic product of \$2 trillion. The benefits of Kazakhstan's economic integration with the region are a single customs territory and free movement of goods.

Deputy head of Belarus's Gomel region, Boleslav Pirshchuk, speaking on mutually beneficial partnerships, stressed that economic cooperation and bilateral trade is strengthening every year.

"The growing activity of integration processes within the currently developing Eurasian Economic Community contributes to that," said the Belarusian delegate. By the end of the forum, the Belarusian delegation had signed cooperation agreements with the regional chamber of entrepreneurs and a memorandum of understanding with the Atyrau Special Economic Zone.

Overall, Atyrau Invest 2014 brought to the region 15 memoranda and agreements totalling 19 billion tenge (US\$104.4 million). In particular, the Meken farming partnership and the Atyrau SEC signed an agreement on projects for the construction of poultry farms and greenhouses. The Ak Kamy Company intends to start production of environmentally friendly biofuels in the region.

The second annual Atyrau Invest forum was held in parallel with the region's long-running Oil and Gas Exhibition. In addition, an industry conference and the Expert – West Kazakhstan Regional Business Forum were organised within the main event.

## Kazakhstan Explored During Academic Lecture Series at NY College



Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations (l) met with Dr. Jay Nathan, Ph.D. Professor of Management, Tobin College of Business for an Academic Lecture Series event.

By Bakhytzhann Kassymov

NEW YORK – St. John's University in New York welcomed Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, for an Academic Lecture Series event on April 10 that explored the past, present and future of Kazakhstan.

Dr. Jay Nathan, Ph.D. Professor of Management, Tobin College of Business, coordinated a visit to the Queens Campus for the newly appointed Ambassador Abdrakhmanov. It was one of Abdrakhmanov's first extended visits to Queens County.

"I am very impressed with the expansive campus, the diversity of students at St. John's and the intellectual curiosity presented during our conversation," said Abdrakhmanov. "I am confident that we will have the opportunity to continue to talk in greater detail about the issues related to my country and the current developments in our parts of the world."

During the well-attended academic lecture, Dr. Nathan, a four-time Fulbright Scholar who lived, worked and researched in Kazakhstan and recently authored a book entitled "Kazakhstan's New Economy," presented some of his research on Kazakhstan, and Brian

Browne, Assistant Vice President for Government Relations, moderated a broad discussion on current issues and challenges facing Kazakhstan.

"The world is our classroom and when societies interact, they learn," Dr. Nathan remarked. "When a society is far removed from other countries, it lacks knowledge and knowledge is not only powerful but critical to any success."

The lecture concluded with audience questions and answers and several smaller conversations with students and faculty who were in attendance. Kerry McGurty, a third-year government and politics major from Pennsylvania commented, "I learned a great deal about an emerging country and how my generation of students are growing up in Kazakhstan."

Before returning to his duties at the United Nations, Abdrakhmanov left behind some books and prints of artwork from Kazakhstan.

"A global education dictates an understanding and appreciation for all corners of the world," Browne said. "Kazakhstan, a good and strategically important ally for the United States, has a vital and emerging role in the region and the world that our students should understand."

## Aktobe Farmers, Authorities Expanding Beef Cattle Production

By Zhubanysh Baygurinov

AKTOBE REGION – Authorities in Aktobe are focusing on cattle farming in their regions, commissioning feedlots and providing funds for the purchase of breeding animals.

To provide the region with productive livestock and increase the export potential of Kazakh-produced meat, Aktobe authorities are turning their attention to developing domestic breeds, such as the Auliekol and Kazakh Whitehead breeds. The regional budget last

year allocated 244.7 million tenge (US\$1.3 million) to help improve herds in 36 villages and pay for 680 breeding animals. Recently, two feedlots for 1,500 and 1,000 animals each were commissioned for the Reymkul farming partnership in the Alga district and the Zhantizer partnership in the Khromtau district, both of which breed domestic beef cattle.

Samat Kaldygulov, leader of the Reymkul partnership, bought the first batch of Auliekol cattle in 2010 in the Kostanai region. The Auliekol breed was developed in

the early 1990s by Kazakh scientists by crossbreeding three groups of beef cattle: Franco-Italian Charolais, Canadian Aberdeen-Angus and Kazakh Whitehead. The end result was a new, highly productive breed of domestic beef animals that meet international standards and are also well adapted to difficult climatic conditions.

For the third year, the farmers of the partnership have received a good animal yield. Last year, they sold dozens of seed bulls from their yield. The animals gain up to 400 kilogrammes a year and up to

500 kg in 18 months. An adult bull will generally reach 760 kg. Today, the partnership has 500 animals and Kaldygulov said that he plans to increase their beef exports. He has opened his own meat processing plant in the oblast centre.

The Zhantizer farming partnership has nine hectares of hay and grasslands and fields for forage crops. They recently upgraded their technical park and, through their ongoing development, are providing jobs and incomes to Alga district workers.

## Shymkent Company Brings Innovative Design Ideas to Medical Equipment

By Lyubov Dobrota

SHYMKENT – "Everything is possible" is the motto of design engineer Alexander Kushner of the Kazmedpribor company, which produces medical devices. In his seven years at the company, Kushner has been involved in the development of 300 kinds of medical products.

Lately, he has been working on equipment that solves problems for doctors and patients. Kazmedpribor began with basic things, designing and producing stands for the standard medical drips found in health facilities. Gradually, the need for more complex medical devices and special equipment increased, as did orders for their design. The company's work always begins with a request to improve something or solve a problem and leads to a more comfortable working environment for medical professionals. The execution

of a custom order usually results in mass production.

"This is interesting and exciting work, thinking and solving complex problems," Kushner said. "Before taking an order, it is important for me to collect as much information as possible. When the issue is improvement or, as they say now, upgrading some equipment, the first thing is to meet with people who work on it and ask what they would like to improve, change or enhance in the design. No one knows their equipment better than those who work with it. Then I collect information and study all the details on this design theme. One day the insight comes and... all that is left to do is only to embody it in the design sample."

Fostering insight is a lot of work, of course. When the engineer developed a birthing chair-bed for pregnant women at the request of one of Shymkent's maternity hospitals, he had to study the whole process

down to the smallest detail in order to understand and find the weak points in the design of their expensive, imported chair and to propose a solution to solve their problem. Today, these birthing chairs are among Kazmedpribor's most frequently ordered products. They are bought by medical institutions from all regions of the country.

The birthing chair-bed was also one of the main exhibits at the annual Moscow Healthcare Exhibition, where Kazmedpribor has now presented its products three times and has received good references from Russian consumers and from overseas producers of medical furniture and equipment. A Japanese company that manufactures incubators for newborns appreciated the achievements of the design engineer from Shymkent, who proposed replacing the drawer stand on their model with a more mobile design that can even adjust the height of the equipment.

## World Class Colleges to Focus on Six Strategic Sectors

Continued from Page B1

Our staff held massive information and explanatory campaigns not only in cities and towns, but also in schools in rural areas and also for graduates of Youth Centres and orphanages. This category of entrants will be provided with special privileges."

Kaspiyor is also initiating its Preparatory School programme to assist with English language development for future students, starting from September this year. Students who failed the main entrance test but who showed good subject knowledge and motivation will be put into the Preparatory School programme. This means that within a year they will have intense training in four subjects: mathematics, English, chemistry and physics.

"Therefore, students will have more chances to finally pass the main test and get accepted to the major programme of the APEC Petrotechnic College. In the future, we also plan to accept students on self-paid basis," he added.

Upon graduation students will receive diplomas at Kazakh and foreign levels that will ensure the full competitiveness of graduates from

colleges in Kazakhstan with the assistance of foreign specialists.

"Teachers in World Class Colleges will be highly skilled instructors from the strategic partners of Kaspiyor, including from SAIT Polytechnic (Canada), Pearson (Great Britain) and Challenger Institute of Technology (Australia).

"In line with this, we are training teachers' assistants for the subsequent replacement of foreign instructors. During this time, assistants will be trained by foreign instructors, previously having done advanced training courses on professional teaching skills," Dairov said.

In regard to the provision of qualified personnel, Kaspiyor determines the selection criteria for college's experts, managers, teachers and training officers.

"All managers and teachers directly or indirectly connected with Kaspiyor or the colleges will be added to the database of teachers and managers. This database is under creation by Department of Teaching Excellence. It is used as one of the data sources when searching for new staff to join Kaspiyor's network," he said.

Another important point is nature

of training, according to which students will learn practical working skills, instead of theoretical knowledge. Due to that fact, graduates will be able to immediately start to work on real production. In order to meet these criteria, World Class Colleges will be equipped with the modern equipment, which is used by foreign and local companies working in Kazakhstan. Production processes will be re-created in workshops.

"We are creating World Class Colleges with the purpose of providing the labour market with highly qualified specialists of scarce profiles. Our students will be able to get an international education in our country," Dairov concluded.

British consortium Pearson Limited was chosen as the strategic partner in the specialisations including tourism and hospitality and engineering, according to Kaspiyor Holding representatives.

Kaspiyor Holding was created at the request of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to create a world-class network of colleges. The purpose of the company is to promote the modernisation of technical and vocational education to build a new source network of multi-skilled workers.

# SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## UNDP Helps Promote Gender Equality in Kazakhstan

By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project to achieve gender equality has been promoting family values, the representation of women in decision-making positions, distance employment and other related goals in Kazakhstan since 2012. Rashida Naubetova, the project's manager, spoke to The Astana Times about the goals and achievements of the project.

### How was the project launched in Kazakhstan and what has been achieved?

Since 1993, when the UNDP started to operate in Kazakhstan, it has been contributing to the programme for women's support, and in 1999 the National Commission for Women's Affairs was established. Activity started from the very first days after the creation of the national mechanism and within 10 years the project has been under implementation, with the assistance of Sweden. Thanks to the UNDP, our members of Parliament, civil servants and entrepreneurs have travelled to Sweden to gain experience.

In 2009, the national commission was the first organisation to sign a contract for a grant from the UNDP. Initially it was a three-year project dedicated to increasing the potential of the national commission. Now, this is the second joint project of the UNDP and the national commission for 2012-2014. Currently, the UNDP allocates less funding. Initially, our projects were fully funded by the UNDP and our Swedish donors. Then we introduced a 50/50 allocation procedure and now

80 percent of the project's funds are allocated by the government of Kazakhstan and 20 percent by the UNDP.

### What is the purpose of the project?

The UNDP supports all layers of society and brings advanced international practices to the country. This project is dedicated to the social and economic renewal of Kazakhstan, which will be achieved by working on the moral development of the society, based on equal rights and opportunities, in bringing up the younger generation. The project consists of two components. The first component is moral development; the second one is the economic and political promotion of women. Within this project, we manage to hold conferences, workshops, research and training sessions.

### What activities have been held within the project?

Recently, in the Zhambyl region, we held a regional conference for the southern regions on moral education and the promotion of family values. Nongovernmental organisations in moral education and representatives of state bodies attended the conference. The Council of Fathers NGO came from the Kyzylorda region and showed the role of fathers in bringing up children, the Kazakh State Women's Pedagogical University did a presentation on the university's Kyz Zhibek club, where women are trained for family life.

In February, with UNDP support, we held a presentation of the Otbasy Centre of National Family Values. It is planned that this centre will open branches in other regions and will work on the revival of our national traditions and reviving lost Kazakh recipes.

Last year, within the creation of the Customs Union, we held the first forum of border territories of the Western Kazakhstan region, called "Initiatives of Women in the Customs Union." Representatives of four western regions, Atyrau, Mangistau, Aktobe and Western Kazakhstan, as well as six Russian border regions took part. Within the forum, women entrepreneurs shared their experience and launched a campaign for the development of green entrepreneurship. Since we've already worked in the western regions, this year we plan to move to eastern Kazakhstan.

Last year, at our initiative, a regulation on distance employment was introduced to the labour legislation of Kazakhstan. This is an aspect of saving the family. We did research on this and it became clear that neither employers nor employees are ready for such a system. We should hold an education campaign to help people understand that distance employment can help save families.

Together with Russian scientists, we created a guidance manual on gender sensitivity in health care.

On Feb. 14, Kazakhstan defended its report for the implementation of the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in Geneva and we got a positive response.

### What are your plans?

Gender policy is a relatively new direction and we will also work on that. The gender equality issue should be taken into account in the strategic plans of all state bodies and all organisations.

Our primary goal is achievement of gender equality, which brings economic growth. This includes both the economic and political promotion of

equality. According to calculations by international experts, increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions will result in an increase in labour productivity by 15-40 percent. Equality within families will also positively influence the position of a family. It's no secret that every third couple in Kazakhstan gets divorced, and thus the number of orphans increases. Lots of young people do not register their marriages and if the partners separate, the women are left unprotected, without housing, and their children grow up without fathers. Moral education is needed to counter all of this. We lost lots of our values during the collapse of the Soviet Union, when all the country's attention was paid to economic growth.

Within the project we also plan to create a council of women in law enforcement bodies.

### Do you have statistics on increases in the number of women in decision-making positions?

Upon the results of the latest Parliamentary elections in 2012, the number of women in Parliament increased by 1.6 points and now we have 28 women members of Parliament. The number of female members of government also increased: when the national commission was created, we had only one woman and now we have four women, three of whom are ministers and one a deputy prime minister. Every fifth member of the government is a woman. Every fourth member of local representative bodies is a woman.

Among people with higher educations, 61 percent are women. Doctors of science are mostly women, Bolashak graduates are also mainly women. Nevertheless, in management positions it is mainly men.

In this regard, it is necessary to overcome stereotypes that women are only teachers or hospital staff, and gender education should be conducted from kindergarten on to promote women's involvement in all spheres of our lives.

## Kazakh-British Partnership Offers Opportunities to Local Scientists

By Jane Rivers

ALMATY – A new £20 million (\$33.4 million) partnership programme was launched on April 9 to promote scientific research cooperation between the United Kingdom and Kazakhstan, the press service of the British Council reported.

The new Newton-Al-Farabi partnership programme is a five-year programme to increase cooperation in science and innovation between the Kazakh and UK governments, state and research institutions, universities and enterprises in order to strengthen the innovation capacity and economic development of Kazakhstan.

"I am sure our scientists will actively participate in this programme to gain useful insight from their British colleagues. Moreover, it is a good opportunity to bring domestic science to a new level because it presents new challenges and tasks for local researchers," said Amandyk Tuleshov, deputy chairman of Science Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan.

The Newton-Al-Farabi programme includes scholarships, fellowships and joint seminars for young researchers and senior research assistants from Kazakhstan and Britain.

"The Newton Fund is making a shift towards large scale, sustainable and mutually beneficial research relationships between the UK and international partners.

Many of the countries involved are where the British Council's in-depth knowledge on the ground and trusted reputation can provide the platform for new world-class collaboration grounded in excellence and in intercultural understanding," explained British Council Director of International Higher Education Professor Rebecca Hughes.

### The Newton-Al-Farabi programme includes scholarships, fellowships and joint seminars for young researchers and senior research assistants from Kazakhstan and Britain.

The Newton Fund is part of the UK's official development assistance programme. Its aim is to develop science and innovation partnerships that promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

The fund covers three broad areas of activity. It is aimed at improving science and innovation expertise, student and researcher fellowships and joint centres; research collaborations on development topics, as well as innovation partnerships and challenge funds to develop innovative solutions on development topics

## Flash Mob Draws Attention to Physically Challenged

By Jane Rivers

ALMATY – A group of physically challenged individuals put on a dancing flash mob show April 5 at the Maxima Shopping Mall.

The flash mob was warmly welcomed by visitors. The three-minute performance was organised to show people that disabilities don't stop people from enjoying their lives and even dancing.

"The event had a positive mood. Some visitors even joined in on our dancing. Frankly speaking, we didn't expect so much attention," said Sabina Kasimova, one of the participants.

"We love life and we like spending our free time with friends like all other teenagers. Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of places like Maxima to meet, as there is still a lack of special facilities for people

in wheelchairs in most of Almaty's buildings," explained another wheelchair dancer, Maria Tarasova.

Flash mob participants expressed their hope that such events will help clarify misunderstandings and encourage people to accept physically challenged people as equals and active social members of society.

The arrangement was organised as part of Empowerment Now! by the Civil Society Development Association ARGO and Shyrak, a public association of women with disabilities.

"Unfortunately, the number of disabled people in Kazakhstan is increasing. At the moment, there are more than 600,000 people with disabilities, among them are 200,000 women and 50,000 children," said ARGO Director Executive Dzhamilya Asanova.

According to Asanova, the Empowerment Now! campaign is taking place in seven regions of the country supported by different on-site non-governmental organisations. This campaign includes seminars on the social adaptation of disabled people and workshops for parents. The campaign also seeks to bring youth with disabilities together with their peers.

"We also organise exclusive festivals and work closely with the media and offer seminars for journalists where we teach them appropriate terminology that can be used while covering topics about disabled people," explained Asanova.

The Empowerment Now! campaign was launched in August 2012 and was supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

## New Technology to be Used in Kumyss Production in Karaganda

By Julia Rutz

ASTANA – A pilot project using German technology to produce a version of the traditional Kazakh mare's milk drink kumyss will be launched next year in the village of Osakarovka in the Karaganda region.

Entrepreneurs from Karaganda visited German facilities last year to become familiar with the technology of producing milk powder. Production there was first launched almost 20 years ago. The German enterprise is ready to share all the necessary equipment and technology to commence manufacturing the product in Kazakhstan.

"There is no potential to increase production in Germany. They already have 200 horses, but, because of the lack of space, the animals can only be kept in horseboxes, which

results in enormous expenses faced by the producers to buy fodder. In Kazakhstan, on the contrary, we have a lot of green pastures. According to the calculations made by German entrepreneurs, it would be profitable for them to import milk powder from Kazakhstan," said Balgat Zhumkin, vice-manager of Eurasia Invest Ltd.

According to producers, dry kumyss can be stored for up to a year whereas fresh horse milk can only be kept safely for a month. It is also noteworthy that all the essential properties are preserved in the powdered milk product.

Production in the Karaganda region will be the first of its kind in the country, with the manufacturing facilities located 9.5 kilometres from Osakarovka.

Currently under construction, the

pilot scheme is set to produce 10 thousand tons of powdered horse milk in 2015 utilising 25,000 hectares (61,776 acres) of pasture accommodating 272 horses. Capacity will be increased in the future.

Preliminary calculations put the cost of 1 kilogramme of powdered horse milk at 20,000 tenge (US\$110) against the current European price of 200 euro (50,000 tenge/US\$276) per kilogramme.

"This milk is a very effective dietary ingredient for those who have cardiovascular diseases and hyposomnia. It can even help prevent cancer. Horse milk can be used to improve the well-being of the population of the country," Sharmanov explained.

The initiative is being supported by the president of the Kazakhstan Academy of Nutrition, Toregeldy Sharmanov.

**KAZAKHSTAN**  
UNITED FOR GLOBAL SECURITY

The Republic of Kazakhstan is seeking a seat on the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for 2017-2018. Our priorities within the United Nations reflect four primary issues facing the world today: Food Security, Water Security, Energy Security and Nuclear Security.

In the 22 years since our independence, Kazakhstan has worked tirelessly to address these issues in our own country and beyond. Among many other initiatives and achievements, Kazakhstan is currently:

- ▶ ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST GRAIN PRODUCERS AND WHEAT EXPORTERS. WE HAVE DISTRIBUTED WHEAT AND FOOD TO NATIONS IN NEED.
- ▶ A CONSTRUCTIVE INNOVATOR IN WATER SECURITY COOPERATION AND TECHNOLOGIES. WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN THE RESTORATION OF THE ARAL SEA.
- ▶ AN ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF DEVELOPING A GREEN ECONOMY AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES THROUGH OUR GREEN BRIDGE INITIATIVE AND AS HOSTS OF EXPO 2017, THEME OF WHICH IS "FUTURE ENERGY".
- ▶ A GLOBAL LEADER IN NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION, DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY. AN INITIAL DR OF ADOPTING A UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE WORLD AND A SPONSOR OF THE ATOM PROJECT, A WORLDWIDE PETITION CAMPAIGN TO PERMANENTLY END NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING.

These issues are complex and interdependent. They require global cooperation and relationship building. Kazakhstan has come a long way in a short time because we know that cooperation is the key to success. We are dedicated to knowledge and resource sharing in order to help make the world a better, more secure place for its citizens.

The achievement and maintenance of international peace and global security are paramount to the success of the planet and its people. In Kazakhstan, we are ready to do our part to ensure that success as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

NATION&CAPITAL

# TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Issyk Saka Mounds to Be Opened to Public

By Rufiya Ospanova

Archaeologist Bekmukhanbet Nurmukhanbetov, a member of the expedition that discovered the famous "Golden Man," announced recently that the Saka mounds in Issyk will soon be open to the public.

Nurmukhanbetov said that there are more than 100 Saka mounds and ancient Rahat and Oriky settlements in Issyk. Most of the mounds have not yet been explored. According to Nurmukhanbetov, during the excavations, the construction of underground tunnels through which tourists can go inside the mounds will be provided. Artifacts will remain in the tombs, and people can see the decoration of ancient tombs. No firm timeframe was provided for the project, although it is expected that its implementation will be a massive effort.



Nurmukhanbetov noted that the Saka mounds will be protected from looters. Archaeologists will have lots of work in preparing the mounds for visi-

tors. They will need to clean the mounds and install electricity. The scientist added that volunteers are welcome to help the preparation effort.



Archaeologist discovers more than 100 Saka mounds and ancient Rahat and Oriky settlements in Issyk.

## Almaty Students to Work as Tour Guides

By Diana Akhmetova

Almaty students of tourism will have the opportunity to work as guides on public transport telling passengers about the sights and history of the cultural centre of the country.

"This year, our city was chosen as the cultural centre of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and we have lots of things to say to Almaty's guests that we can be truly proud of. Every street is unique because

it bears the name of a prominent figure or an important historic event. Yet, we do not always remember these things; some people aren't even aware of the lack of knowledge, let alone the history," head of Almaty city's youth policy department Sanzhar Bokayev said.

The project is also aimed at further developing tourism. Organisers note that the "People's Guide" project is a training activity for students of tourism before the

upcoming Universiade 2017 and EXPO 2017.

This month, Almaty university students have been preparing for the launch of the project by collecting information about city sites and places and organising what they have found in a manner that patrons of the city transit networks can consume and find interesting and relevant. The main task of these on-board tour guides will be giving short, informative briefs on historic places to passengers as they pass by them.



Students of tourism will work as guides on public transport telling passengers about the sights and history of Almaty.

## Kazakhstan to Chair CIS Council of Tourism in 2015

By Alina Usmanova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan will chair the Council of Tourism in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 2015, according to the press service of the Committee for Tourism Industry of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of Kazakhstan.

On March 14, an international economic forum, CIS and New Formats of Cooperation, was held in Moscow. Within the forum, a meeting of the Council of Tourism of CIS member states took place. Belarus was elected chair of the Council of Tourism for 2014 and 2014 was declared the Year of Tourism in the CIS countries.

"In 2015, Kazakhstan will chair

the Council of Tourism of the CIS. The Kazakhstan side included 20 points in the action plan for the Year of Tourism. Virtually all regions of the country supported the initiative and presented their activities," said Marat Igali, chairman of the Committee for Tourism Industry.

The Council of Tourism of the CIS member states was established in 1994. It is composed of representatives of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. The council focuses on developing a unified strategy for tourism development in the CIS countries and coordinating implementation of the tourism policy.

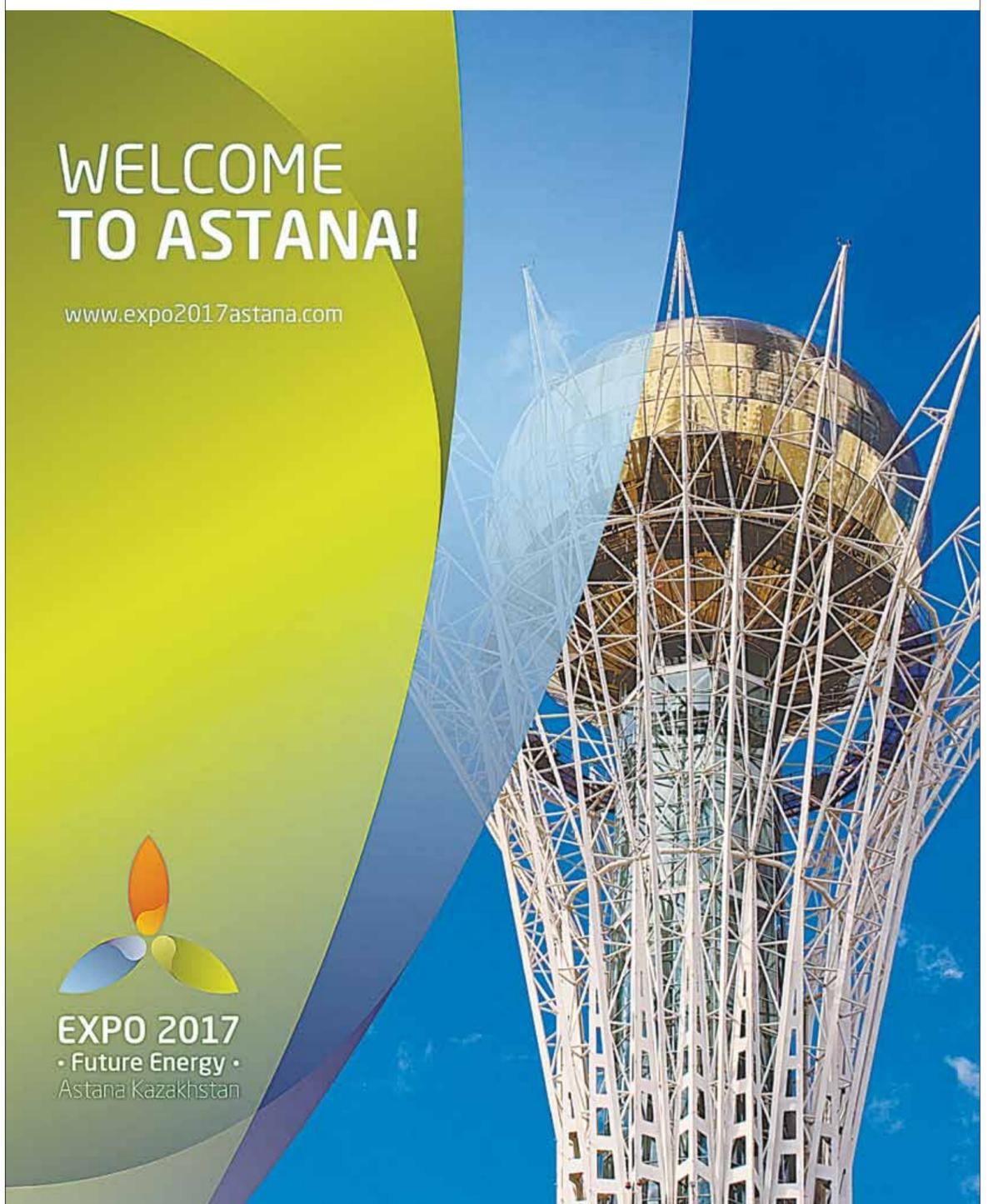


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# SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Astana Dakar Teams Take on Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge

Continued from Page B1

The Astana Team crew started ninth on the day of the fourth leg of the Desert Challenge and after only 42 kilometres was literally hanging by the bumper of their team mate the Dutch Erik Van Loon, who in turn was waiting for the Czech Miroslav Zapletal on H3 Hummer to err to overtake him. The Dutch got so pre-occupied with his target that allowed Rakhimbayev and his co-pilot Anton Nikolayev too close and eventually let them slip past him.

"The first ten cars start with a gap of two minutes, the rest with one minute," Rakhimbayev explained. "We waited for Van Loon to overtake Zapletal, once he did, we attacked him, he certainly didn't expect that!"

Rakhimbayev explained that usually the overtaken car doesn't chase the obviously faster car with at least a two minute faster pace. Van Loon, however, is known for not letting go easily and the two got into an intense "200 kilometre clash of MINIs," as Rakhimbayev put it.

"Over the remaining 200 kilometres along the toughest route, with endless steep dunes and sand traps, we were in a mad race. Positions changed every 20-30 kilometres, [we] used every chance and mistake to overtake and in a mad



Aidyn Rakhimbayev and his co-pilot Anton Nikolayev took on the challenge by winning the fourth leg of the five-day race.

pace overtook other cars, and only the Euronews helicopter witnessed this madness," Rakhimbayev wrote.

Approaching the finish line, the Astana team crew was hoping to finish at least second or third, however, and was pleasantly surprised to learn from one of the technical commission officers about their victory. "Congratulations, perfect, you are the first!" he told them smiling.

The All-Russian crew of Vladimir Vasilyev/Konstantin Zhiltsov, also in a MINI, finished second, 50 seconds behind the

Astana team and Van Loon eventually finished third.

"We have the first place today," Rakhimbayev said after the race. "We are proud that today we have the leading position. I think it is a very good result. This is my first time, when during the World Cup, we take first place at one of the stages," he said.

The long-awaited stage win spurred attention to Rakhimbayev and his success couldn't go overlooked by his fellow racers.

"I remember him from last Dakar. Each time he improves his prowess," Roma said. "As for

Astana Team, I have heard a lot about it in cycling and not motorsport. Your team races in Tour De France. I really like the sport. And your cyclist Alexandre Vinourov is one of the best in the world," Roma underlined.

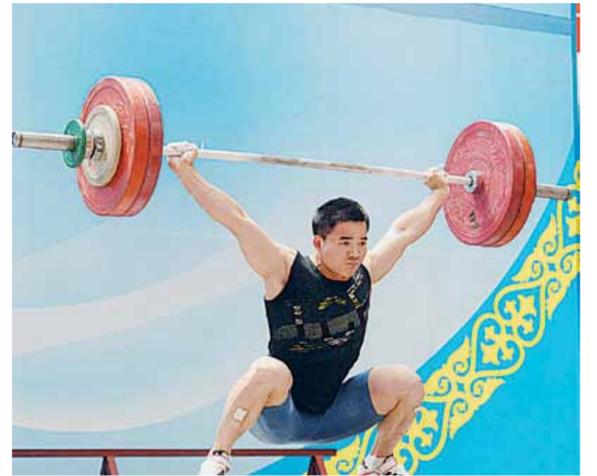
Astana Motorsports manager Artur Ardavichus, Dakar 2012 bronze medallist, also commented on the occasion.

"Today in our camp and at the media centre, everybody was talking about the presidential sports club being first in 'super-production' category," Ardavichus said. "Aidyn Rakhimbayev gave us the club's first win and climbed even higher in the standings. This is the first time ever that one country and one club were on a podium, Rakhimbayev in T1 and Berezovskiy in T2. Go forward, Astana, and good job, guys!"

Overall, the Kazakhstan-Russian Rakhimbayev-Nikolayev team finished the race in the 10th position, almost four hours behind the Vasilyev-Zhiltsov team which also drove MINI ALL4 Racing.

The Astana Team is now readying for the next world cup race, the Sealine Cross Country Rally, in Qatar on Apr. 20-25, where they will take on their new rivals in top 10, only this time as the world cup contenders.

## Almaty to Host Open Asian Powerlifting Championship



Open Asian Powerlifting Championship gathers powerlifters and bodybuilders in Almaty.

By Rufiya Ospanova

strongest in each weight category and overall.

From April 21-27, a major international powerlifting tournament, the Open Asian Powerlifting Championship, will be held for the first time in Almaty. Athletes from more than 10 countries have already confirmed their participation in the event.

Men and women of all ages, from juniors to veterans over 70 years of age, will take part in the championship. During the first four days, April 21-24, the strongest athletes will compete in three disciplines: weightlifting (triathlon), bench press and deadlift without special equipment.

On April 27, the international tournament will finish with a sports show, the Asian Mega Cup, which will take place on the stage of the MEGA Alma-Ata Mall. That day, the strongest athletes in bodybuilding and powerlifting will come together on one stage.

The 15 strongest triathletes who qualified in the first days of the tournament will be divided into three weight groups and the panel of judges will determine the

strongest in each weight category and overall.

Winners in all nominations will receive cash awards and other prizes, which will be provided by the main sponsor of the Asian Mega Cup, a group of companies called the Astana Group, as well as other sponsors and organisers of the tournament.

Throughout the day, a brightly coloured show of pop stars and talented young performers will take place in parallel with the sports programme on the MEGA Mall stage.

Over the past few years, powerlifting has grown significantly in Kazakhstan. At the 2013 World Championship in Prague, Kazakhstan's team, which consisted of 15 people, won third place among more than 40 participating countries for the first time. Powerlifting is becoming one of the most popular sports in the country and can be found in virtually every gym in all localities of the country.

## 'We Try to Seek Win-Win Results,' Chair of Sports Press Association Says

Continued from Page B1

**What are the main directions of the SPAK activity for the future?**

The main direction is assistance to journalists. After all, sports journalism is not only about Astana and Almaty. Sport life flourishes across Kazakhstan. Currently, we analyse the state of sports journalism in the regions, assist in the opening of regional branches. Our first branch was established in Karaganda, Kostanai and Aktau followed this example, Uralsk and Pavlodar are in the pipeline. I hope this list can be continued. In the future, we plan to hold a national seminar of the sports press in Kazakhstan.

Along with this, it is necessary to promote the image of Kazakhstan in the international arena. For this purpose it is necessary to actively participate in the activities conducted under the auspices of the International Sports Press Association (AIPS). In particular, it is important to second journalists to AIPS seminars, introduce our country representatives in AIPS committees in various sports. But for this purpose it is necessary to be a member of this international organisation.

We offer all sports journalists in Kazakhstan to join the AIPS and we are ready to assist in this matter. Today, more than 40 Kazakhstan journalists are members of AIPS. I believe this figure will grow soon.



Ilyas Omarov

It is also necessary, jointly with the National Olympic Committee of Kazakhstan and the Kazakhstan Agency of Sport and Physical Education, to seek to increase the number of journalists' accreditations granted by the International Olympic Committee for the coverage of the Olympic Games.

**What can you say about the new composition of the SPAK executive committee?**

The composition of the executive committee includes true professionals who can and want to work. There is a common misconception that membership in the executive committee of such organisations is just a honorary position. I was pleasantly surprised, however, when many of the persons elected to the executive committee stated almost as an ultimatum that they

consider their activities within the SPAK very seriously and are not going to just sit idle. "Otherwise, why do we need such a membership in the executive committee?" they reasonably noted.

I'd add that the executive committee is primarily a working body, which should facilitate the work of "literary fraternity" in the field of sports.

**What is the procedure of joining SPAK?**

Any journalist in the field of sports can become a SPAK member. All is needed is only to express a wish and fill out a questionnaire.

**When will the next SPAK meeting take place, and what issues will be considered there?**

According to the charter, the SPAK meeting shall be held at least once a year. In our case, the deadline is this autumn. The main issue will be the report on the activities for the past period and suggestions for further development of the activity. The SPAK executive committee is to address the current issues. If there is an issue requiring convening of an extraordinary meeting, it will be done as needed.

**What can you say about the work of the sports press at the Sochi Olympics?**

Kazakhstan Agency for Physical Culture and Sports did a very ef-

fective job convincing the government to allocate funds for a trip of 40 sports journalists to Sochi. That was a timely decision because we had only four accreditations from the International Olympic Committee for the journalists covering the upcoming Winter Olympics. That is too little for our country. If before it was due to our modest results at the Olympics, after the success in London, we have the right to expand the presence of our journalists.

For example, I met my colleagues from Ukraine and Slovakia. The Ukrainians won five medals at the Winter Olympics and got about 50 accreditations, exclusive TV reporters. Slovakia got four medals and they got 15 accreditations for journalists and four for photographers, plus separate accreditations for TV and radio reporters. We have six medals and got only four accreditations. I believe that the Kazakhstan sports fans do not deserve such a treatment. Our association intends to seek ways to change this situation. Naturally, this should be done in conjunction with the National Olympic Committee of Kazakhstan.

**And do you still work at the Foreign Ministry?**

My involvement with SPAK is a volunteer activity, so, yes, I continue to work at the Foreign Ministry.

## Kazakhstan Will Compete in Tour d'Azerbaijan 2014

By Diana Akhmetova

The Tour d'Azerbaijan cycling race, consisting of 150 racers from 22 countries, will take place May 7-11 in Azerbaijan.

This year's participants hail from Austria, Britain, China, France, Germany, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine, and as well as other countries. An Australian team will also participate in the Tour d'Azerbaijan for the first time.

Baku will be represented by the Synergy - Baku team.

The race starts in Baku on May 7 and finishes 154 kilometres away in Sumgayit. This stage will be a good chance for sprinters. They can decide the fate of the race on the last five legs.

The second stage starts on May 8 and is being repeated for a third year and consists of 187 kilometres from Baku to Ismayilly, where racers will have to overcome a hilly route and strong winds.

The third stage is 180 kilometres long and runs from Qabala in Sheki back to Qabala and will start on May 9. Stones on a site near the medieval Caravanserai will seriously test riders.

The May 10 fourth stage is not very long. It is only 115 kilometres from Qabala to Pirqulu but features three inclines.

The fifth stage will be held in Baku on May 11 and consists of a 120-kilometre loop, then six 13.6-kilometre laps, which include stretches on the old town's cobblestone roads. This stage is a test of

the route developed for the 2015 European Games.

Tour d'Azerbaijan will be broadcasted by the Eurosport channel. Half-hour race diaries and an hour-and-a-half broadcast of the final stage will be aired.

The total distance to be covered by riders will be 838 kilometres.

The cycling race was placed in the 2.1 category by the International Cycling Union, for which eight teams from South Africa, Spain, Italy, Australia, the United States, Russia and Poland will be licensed.

## Golovkin Named Among Most Entertaining Boxers



Gennady Golovkin's knock out percentage is 89.66, the best among all current champions.

By Jan Furst

ASTANA - Kazakh boxer Gennady Golovkin, also known as GGG, has joined Manny Pacquiao, Ruslan Provodnikov, Sergey Kovalev, Brandon Rios and others in being named one of today's most entertaining boxers, according to the site sports.ru.

The 32-year-old World Boxing Association and International Boxing Organisation champion from Karaganda, central Kazakhstan, is known for turning each bout into a thriller. He has 29 wins in 29 fights with 26 by knock out. His knock out percentage is 89.66, the best among all current champions.

Earlier this year, Golovkin was named to the Gatti List, named after the famous professional boxer Arturo Gatti, which lists the five most entertaining boxers on HBO. He has also been named by various organisations over the course of his career the most feared boxer, most avoided fighter and most powerful puncher.

Golovkin had to cancel his fight against Andy Lee earlier in April due to the loss of Golovkin's father and is now preparing to fight Mexican Julio Cesar Chavez in the U.S. in July.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014

## Charity Uses Art to Improve Lives of Children with Disabilities

By Ruyiya Ospanova

ASTANA – The Believe in Wonder charity fund and the Astana Department of Education, in cooperation with the Khan Shatyr Mall, held an event on April 19 to raise awareness about children with disabilities.

The event is called My World is Behind the Window and involves sending 26 teachers from the city's department of education to the homes of children with disabilities to teach them to paint free of charge.

Children with infantile cerebral

paralysis, mental deficiencies and birth defects of the central nervous system often study at home and see other children and life through their windows. So the campaign brings the activity to the children. "Painting is a good remedy," say the campaign's organisers.

A concert of young singers from Astana was also held on April 19 at the Khan Shatyr Mall as part of the campaign. The concert was hosted by Syrym Kashkarbayev. Channel Seven reporter Arystan Baltin and Astana-TV reporter Ravil Omarov also helped publicise the campaign.

The campaign was organised by Zhanna Tuyakbayeva, head of Believe in Wonder, and Aida Aktanova, the group's vice-president.

Believe in Wonder helps disabled children feel that they are not alone in this world and its work is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly in 1982. The convention states that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in society.



## Astana Hosts Seminar on Automating HR Management Systems

Continued from Page B1

"We are an EU-financed project and our main task is to improve civil services," Foedinger said in an interview with The Astana Times.

He further explained that one of the key components of the programme is e-kyzmet.

Foedinger is an Austrian expert with more than 23 years experience in consulting public and private entities in Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Middle East. During his career, he has advised numerous state bodies, including ministries, agencies and regional and municipal administrations. His core specialties are restructuring, innovation and research cooperation, regional development and export promotion.

"This will be a system which will manage all human resource operations in Kazakhstan's civil service," Foedinger said.

"Of course, this is a huge task. [We try] to find the best European practices and bring them to Kazakhstan as part of the learning process and to find ways of saving

money," he said, calling P-Direkt one of the leading European experts in the field.

"We visited the UK, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Poland, etc., and out of all of the organisations we visited, P-Direkt was the one with the most suitable criteria," Foedinger said.

Foedinger went on to explain that HR in the former Soviet states and the CIS has been neglected, but he underlined that slowly the importance of human resources is being realised and given more attention, especially in Kazakhstan.

"It's not only the natural resources you have here. The government [now] understands that the most important natural resources are not gas and oil, but human resources. It's about people that have the power to either let a country fail or succeed," Foedinger said.

"Why is the EU financing the programme? The answer is really very simple. Business can be done in a strong economy; while under a weak one, nothing can be done. Look at Europe after World War II, there was nothing left. Everything was destroyed. Look at Europe

now; they had a plan to rebuild and did just that. If you rebuild somebody, you can do business with them. In regards to Kazakhstan, the country doesn't need rebuilding, but rather strengthening," Foedinger said. This is one of the reasons, according to him, why agencies like P-Direkt are here today to share their knowledge.

With the centralisation and automation of HR functions, HR managers will have more time and energy for dealing with strategic issues. Foedinger also sees this as a chance to constantly improve and upgrade people's skills and qualifications.

Foedinger stated that the overall budget of the project is 4.2 million Euros (US\$5.8 million), which have been allocated over 48 months.

The seminar was attended by representatives of the personnel management services of more than 30 representatives of the government and heads of the IT Association of Kazakhstan. The recommendations elaborated upon during the seminar will be applied in the operations of government agencies.

## Capital Job Fair for the Disabled Draws 100 Employers



By Gulyaim Tulesheva

ASTANA – Astana's department of employment and social programmes and the city branch of the Nur Otan party recently held a job fair for people with disabilities.

About 100 employers, including representatives of healthcare and education companies, as well as other Astana-based organisations, presented 300 vacancies at the fair. The fair was held as part of Nur Otan's Kedergisiz Keleshek ("Future Without Boundaries") project. A series of similar fairs are planned to be held over the course of the year.

During the fair, applicants were provided access to a data bank of available vacancies in the city and a

list of occupations and professions for training. The Baiterek Holding was among the employers represented, having announced two vacancies for general managers. The Development Bank of Kazakhstan is ready to employ two managers, as is the Zhilstroisberbank of Kazakhstan. The National Scientific Centre of Emergency Medical Care is ready to take into their clinic instructors of therapeutic exercises, information technology specialists, psychologists and financial employees, reported chairman Vladimir Openko. The technical construction college needs mathematics and physics teachers, car mechanics and computer programmers. Seven vacant positions

were offered by the National Diagnostic Centre, including positions for laboratory doctors, X-ray laboratory assistants, nurses and communications engineers.

According to first deputy of Nur Otan's city branch, Sapar Akhmetov, employment is one of the most important areas of life and an important step towards improving quality of life, a necessary condition for Kazakhstan's joining the world's top 30 most-developed economies.

"Today, we invited employers who expressed a desire and had jobs available for disabled people. Among the proposed vacancies on the list are openings for health workers, secretaries, accountants, managers, operators of closed circuit TV, janitors and more. Many organisations are now at the stage of preparing jobs," Akhmetov said. Heads of organisations and staff managers who participated in the fair conducted interviews directly with applicants and explained their requirements, and two capital residents found jobs during the fair. All wishing had an opportunity to take part in the youth practice or choose paid public works.

According to the organisers, there are currently 1,895 people with disabilities of working age without jobs in Astana.

## ADB 47th Annual Meeting to Seek to 'Connect Asia With Changing World'

By Jan Furst

ASTANA – More than 3,000 international finance ministers, central bank governors, business leaders, investors, journalists and civil society representatives are expected to gather in Astana May 2-5 for the 47th annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The meeting is being held under the heading, The Silk Road – Connecting Asia with the Changing World.

Among the meeting's topics will be the modern investment climate in Kazakhstan. The meeting will include the conference, Invest in Kazakhstan, with the participation of politicians, businessmen, as well as representatives of European and Central Asian regional financial institutions.

"Invest in Kazakhstan conference is expected to be held on the first day of the annual meeting of the ADB Board of Governors," said Maksat Mukhanov, head of the Institute of Economic Research, during a recent Central Communications Services briefing.

"The conference will be focused on the economic potential of our country," he said.

According to Mukhanov, the conference will be a good platform to establish new business contacts and sign contracts.

"The main theme of the venue will be, Silk Road: Connecting Asia and the Changing World. The theme was proposed by the government of Kazakhstan taking into account the increasing potential and the role of our territory in the development of inter-regional cooperation," Mukhanov added.

"Currently, it is planned that more than 3,000 delegates from 67 world countries will participate in the event. More than 25 different events are planned to be held during the event," he noted.

"It is planned to hold important events, sessions that are to help reveal the potential of Asia. In particular, it is planned that some sessions will be aimed at the development of innovations, energy, transport and international and regional cooperation in Asia," he said.

According to the programme, ADB President Takehiko Nakao,

President of Toyota Motor Europe Didier Leroy and others will speak at the conference.

"Participants at the conference will discuss issues relating to the development of the economy, financial system and state policy of Kazakhstan, which contributes to attracting investments to the country. Moreover, Kazakhstan's opportunities both on regional and global scales in terms of attracting investments in joint projects for promoting products and goods produced in Kazakhstan, as well as in the development of business and trade relations between national and foreign producers, will be discussed at the conference," according to the Kazakh Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning.

Investment agreements and memorandums are also expected to be signed with foreign partners as a result of the forum.

Kazakhstan has been cooperating with the ADB since 1991. The country has attracted more than \$3.2 billion in loans from ADB since its accession in 1994 for the development of agriculture, education, finance, transport and water supplies.

### International Sunday Brunch on Sundays, from 12:30 - 16:00



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