



President Restructures, Reshuffles Kazakh Government, Sets New Goals



President Nazarbayev addressed an enlarged government session on Aug. 6 announcing major restructuring and reshuffle. See also an editorial on Page A6.

By Zhanara Abdulova

ASTANA – Addressing an enlarged government session in the Akorda presidential residence on Aug. 6, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced a major government reshuffle and restructuring.

“The decision has been made on a new structure of government consisting of 12 ministries and about 30 committees, instead of 17 ministries, nine agencies and 54 committees. All nine agencies will enter the ministries in the form of committees,” Nazarbayev said.

“We need to create an effective system of public administration. We need a compact government.

There shouldn't be more officials than are required,” the President underscored. “Kazakhstan needs an efficient system of governance to enter the top 30 most developed countries,” he said.

Thus, the new National Economy Ministry will take over the duties of the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning, the Ministry of Regional Development, the State Statistics Agency, the Agency for Regulation of Natural Monopolies, the Agency for Protection of Competition and the Consumer Protection Agency.

“Upon the recommendation of the prime minister, Yerbolat Dosayev [the former minister of econ-

omy and budget planning] shall be appointed the national economy minister,” Nazarbayev said.

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection have merged into the Ministry of Health and Social Development. Tamara Duissenova, the former minister of labour and social protection, has been appointed the head of the new ministry.

In perhaps the largest merger ever, the new Ministry of Investment and Development will absorb the functions and powers of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Agency for Communication

and Information and the National Space Agency (Kazcosmos). In addition, it will deal with issues of energy efficiency and geology. Asset Issekeshov, former minister of industry and new technologies, has been appointed to this office.

Nazarbayev also announced the re-establishment of a new Ministry of Energy, which will be headed by Vladimir Shkolnik, a two-time former energy minister. The new ministry will assume the functions and powers of the Ministry of Oil and Gas, the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies and the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources.

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Nazarbayev Urges Peaceful Solution to Ukraine Crisis

Says Kazakhstan Committed to Further Attracting Foreign Investment

By Zhanara Abdulova

ASTANA – Escalating conflict and tit-for-tat sanctions are a road to nowhere, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said, referring to the expanding standoff between the West and Russia over Ukraine as he received credentials from six newly appointed ambassadors in the Akorda presidential residence on Aug. 12.

“The ongoing conflict in Ukraine [and] the destabilisation of the situation in the Middle East and other regions of the world are consequences of the global crisis that have spread beyond the economic and financial spheres,” Nazarbayev stressed in his remarks at the ceremony. “In these challenging times, it is of utmost importance that further escalation of the conflict and toughening of sanctions against each other should be prevented. This is a road to nowhere. Finding areas of common ground and negotiating is the only option. Kazakhstan continues to be committed to this option and

is doing its best to influence the situation. The main thing is not to stop looking for peaceful means of conflict resolution.”

The ambassadors presenting their credentials were Hidayat Abdul Hamid of Malaysia, Jaan Reinhold of Estonia, Abdurahman al-Salim Sueyti of Libya, Mojtaba Damirchilu of Iran, Nazirmad Alizoda of Tajikistan and Sean Perry Style of Canada.

The President congratulated the envoys on their appointments, expressing confidence that the active work of diplomats will contribute to the further development of comprehensive and mutually beneficial cooperation between the countries.

“Kazakhstan is opening a new page in its history. The Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy envisages new development priorities and includes an important and large-scale task: joining the top 30 most-developed economies of the world. The strategy is aimed at strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation with all foreign partners of our country,” Nazarbayev said.

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ATOM Project Seeks 100,000 Signatures Against Nuclear Weapons

By Dmitry Lee

As the summer days become shorter and shorter, The ATOM Project, the education and online petition campaign against nuclear tests and weapons, is preparing to take part in a major international conference dedicated to the International Day Against Nuclear Tests on Aug. 29. The conference to be held in Kazakhstan's capital is being put together by the Nobel Peace Prize-winning organisation, International

Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW).

Since its launch in 2012, The ATOM Project has mustered over 90,000 signatures in support of a nuclear-weapon-free future from more than 100 countries. The ATOM Project and its honorary ambassador Karipbek Kuyukov, a famous painter who was born armless near the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, have travelled across Europe, North America and Far East Asia in hopes of raising awareness among the citizens of the world.

Kuyukov told The Astana Times about The ATOM Project, why it is relevant today and about the Aug. 29 UN International Day Against Nuclear Tests.

How is your project relevant in a world where nuclear weapons tests are no longer frequently conducted?

Well, we all know that North Korea still conducts nuclear tests from time to time and while only one country is still testing, others have inklings to do that. The ATOM Project is still im-

portant today because people around the world realise through common sense that we all live in fear and that one little red button is more powerful than the voices of millions. The ATOM Project serves as a reminder to humanity to stay alert against nuclear weapons. We need to educate people on the issue, show the consequences of nuclear tests and explosions and make sure neither Hiroshima nor Nagasaki happens again.

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Senate Elections to Be Held Oct. 1

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan has set Oct. 1, 2014, as the date of Kazakhstan's next Senate election, the country's eighth since achieving independence in 1991. Eighty candidates, including four women, have registered with the Central Election Commission as of Aug. 13, 65 self-nominated.

The election was announced on Aug. 1, and nominations for the 16 available Senate seats will be made from Aug. 2-31. Registration of candidates will run until Sept. 11 and campaigns will be conducted Sept. 12-29.

Senators in Kazakhstan serve six-year terms, with half of the elected ones up for re-election every three years. This round of elections will replace senators elected in December of 2008. The most recent Senate election was

held in 2011. Kazakhstan's Parliamentary election legislation mandates that elections must be competitive, meaning there must be at least two candidates listed on the ballot for each available seat.

Of the bicameral Parliament's 47 senators, 15 are appointed by the President at his discretion. Appointees come with various backgrounds, including some from political parties and the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, a national body organised to provide additional representation for the country's many ethnic groups. It is expected that new appointments will begin to be made during and after the election, Marat Sarsembayev, a member of Kazakhstan's Central Election Commission, told The Astana Times in an interview on Aug. 13.

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Youth Debate Societal Challenges, Civic Engagement on International Youth Day

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – The United Nations in Kazakhstan marked International Youth Day on Aug. 12 with a conference open to all interested young people and youth organisations. It was addressed by programme staff from the UN Development Programme, UN Volunteers and UNICEF and opened by UN Permanent Representative in Kazakhstan Stephen Tull.

It was standing room only in the UNDP building's conference hall, as students from Nazarbayev University, Eurasia National University and other schools in Astana as well as young interns from a number of the capital's embassies and representatives from the Astana akimat and the Ministry of Education and Science listened to presentations on the UN's work

in Kazakhstan and took part in conversations ranging from bullying and mental health issues to sustainable development to political engagement.

Umit Kazhgaliyeva, UNICEF programme officer, presented on work in mental health in Kazakhstan, which leads in youth suicide rates in the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe and has the fifth highest youth suicide rate in the world. Around the world, 20 percent of young people experience some type of mental health problem, she said. “In Kazakhstan in 2011, more than 55,000 adolescents, children and young people were registered with mental health conditions. ... [A]nd as you know, the actual numbers are usually higher,” she said.

Attendees followed the presentation with pointed questions

about access to psychiatric help and what was being done to connect young people to mental health resources. Kazhgaliyeva outlined programmes like the Inclusive Society Programme, a joint effort by UNICEF and the Special Olympics that brings together young people with and without mental health issues through education, sport and health programmes, as well as the Youth Friendly Services centres created with the Ministry of Health to provide free and confidential psychological and reproductive health services. There are now 17 such centres around the country. UNICEF also supports violence prevention programmes, child justice programmes and other youth-oriented initiatives through partnerships with the Kazakh government.

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A farmer checks on the soya sprouts in East Kazakhstan region which seeks to develop its agriculture using what amounts to two thirds of all the country's water resources. See the story regarding the future of Kazakhstan's agriculture on Page A5.

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President Restructures, Reshuffles Kazakh Government

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The new Ministry of Culture and Sports will absorb the functions and powers of the Ministry of Culture, the Agency for Religious Affairs and the Agency for Sports and Physical Activities. Arystanbek Mukhamediuly, the former minister of culture, shall be the head of the newly created body.

From now on, the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan will have only two deputies: First Deputy Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev and Deputy Prime Minister for human development, Gulshara Abdykalykova.

"The rest of the ministries shall remain, with certain changes in their powers. In particular, budget planning functions shall be transferred from the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning to the Ministry of Finance, while another area of budget planning issues will be handed over to the Finance Ministry," Nazarbayev said.

Kazakhstan's Financial Police has been dissolved and its functions transferred to the Agency of Civil Service Affairs and Anti-Corruption Enforcement. The Emergency Situations Ministry has been abolished and its functions transferred to the Interior Ministry.

Key issues of social and economic development as well as new tasks and challenges for the upcoming period were also discussed during the meeting.

"The further economic policy of the government should be focused on the existing risks. Today, we have to develop new responses to a changing environment," President Nazarbayev said. He noted that all the required conditions and decisions have been made for the fruitful work of public authorities in Kazakhstan.

The President stressed that the current situation in the world econ-



omy, in both its regional and global aspects, requires close attention

He called on the government to boost its activity to achieve the objectives set out in the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy.

"Today, the government and public authorities face a range of new tasks and challenges. The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union shall come into force on Jan. 1, 2015. At the same time, Kazakhstan is in the final stages of negotiations to join the WTO [World Trade Organisation]. In December 2014, a country programme of cooperation with the OECD [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development] will be adopted. Therefore, we need to continue promoting economic growth in the context of integration. We should actively work with our Russian and Belarusian partners and open our trade offices, where required," Nazarbayev said.

He stressed that the diversification of the economy remains the priority of the government.

"The State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (SPAID) for 2015-2019 has been elaborated and approved. It identifies priority industries for the second five-year period. This year, it is important to ensure positive growth in the basic sectors of the economy, including oil and gas, metals and mining industries. We should launch large-scale field exploration and upgrade the existing facilities," he said.

According to the President, the service sector remains the main source of economic growth and its share in the country's gross domestic product has reached 53 percent.

In the meantime, a number of legislative changes have been made to improve Kazakhstan's business environment, including measures to simplify procedures for allocating land and registering enterprises and the introduction of

electronic customs declarations and automated licensing.

"The government has done much over the recent years. Now, we are expecting further positive changes in the business environment, as well as more efficient operation of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs," the head of state said.

President Nazarbayev noted that the development of transport routes is high on the agenda for export diversification. The most urgent issues in the field are the completion of building works on the Khorgos Eastern Gate Special Economic Zone in Almaty Oblast and the creation of infrastructure in the seaports of Aktau and Kuryk. The President tasked the government with considering the possibility of building free warehouses in the Persian Gulf and the Pacific coast.

In his speech, Nazarbayev also touched upon the situation in Ukraine. "Kazakhstan empathises

with the tragedy of ordinary people in Ukraine," he said. "We call on all parties to the conflict to sit down at the negotiating table and find mutually acceptable solutions on the basis of trust and frank dialogue in order to stop the bloodshed, especially against women and children. I believe that there is no reasonable alternative. For my part, I am doing my best," he said.

Adjourning the government session, Nazarbayev stressed that the main task of public authorities and public institutions is to support peace, harmony and security in the country. "We raise our children in a spirit of tolerance and loyalty to their country. It is necessary to actively involve everyone, especially young people, in the work to achieve the goals set out in the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy. Only a strong nation, rallied around the historic goal that we have set out in the strategy, can fulfil this mission," he concluded.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

President Nursultan Nazarbayev held a meeting with Defence Minister Serik Akhmetov on Aug. 13 where Akhmetov reported on systematic work in maintaining the combat readiness of Kazakhstan's Armed Forces. The defence minister told about the ongoing organisational and practical measures to increase the combat training of troops and to equip the army with modern weapons and military equipment. The head of state stressed the importance of further developing of the country's military-industrial complex and the need to strengthen military-technical cooperation with leading international manufacturers. The President also noted the need for the production of ammunition by Kazakh enterprises, as well as the definition of a reliable supplier of weapons and military equipment. Besides, Nazarbayev instructed the defence minister to consider aspects of the ministry's activities in light of the need to form a compact structure of government and to improve the governance system.

Participants in the national movement Kazakhstan 2050 have developed the internet platform bizalan.kz, where Kazakh citizens will be able to participate in the development, discussion and evaluation of government programmes, Chairman of the Council of Kazakhstan 2050 Danat Zhumin announced at an Aug. 13 briefing in the Central Communications Service (CCS). "We have developed a demo version of the website called bizalan.kz. In a week, we will fully complete this project. This is the first crowdsourcing platform in the country, which allows different people, regardless of where they live and where they work, to participate in the development of state programmes and their evaluation," Zhumin said. He noted that the Kazakhstan 2050 movement has all the necessary intellectual resources as well as the tools that allow it to provide quality public examination of new government programmes. "We would like to propose this platform to the government to jointly participate in the implementation of the President's instructions given at the enlarged meeting of the government on Aug. 6," he noted. At the enlarged meeting, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev gave instructions to develop a comprehensive programme on the development of the services sector in Kazakhstan until 2020, as well as a single business support programme before the end of 2014.

"The number of people doing sport in Kazakhstan increased up to 3.9 million people," then Chairman of the Agency for Sports and Physical Culture of Kazakhstan Tasthanbek Yessentayev informed at an Aug. 5 Central Communications Service (CCS) media briefing. (Yessentayev has since been appointed deputy minister of culture and sports following the government restructuring on Aug. 6.) "Thanks to all-around support from the President and measures which have been undertaken, a steady growth in the number of people going in for sport has been registered over the last five years, from 2.3 million people or 15 percent in 2007 to 3.9 million people in 2013 which is 23.2 percent," Yessentayev said. He also noted that 440,000 people with disabilities live in the country and 210,000 of them are contraindicated for sports. "However, 18,200 people or 8.7 percent of them are regularly doing sports," he informed.

Next season the first ski lodge catering to free-riding ski tours will open near Tekeli in the Almaty region. The Tekesu skiing and recreation complex is located near the Soldatsai and Cherkesai gorges. The new facilities are designed for advanced skiers who will be taken up the mountain in a snowcat, and there will be 30 kilometres of ski runs. Up to 1,000 extreme sports enthusiasts are expected to use these facilities. There is also a skiing area with rope tow lifts in operation in the mountains near Tekeli.

Senate Elections to Be Held October 1

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The main group of 32 senators are elected by secret ballot vote by the collected maslikhats (elected representative bodies of the regions), the members of which have been directly elected by the voters of their regions. Two senators are elected from each region, as well as from Astana and Almaty City. One seat from each of these regions will be contested in the current election.

In order to be eligible for election, Senate candidates must be 30 years old, citizens of Kazakhstan, residents of Kazakhstan for at least 10 years and residents in the regions they hope to represent for at least three years. They are required to have a higher education – at least a bachelor's degree or the Soviet-era equivalent specialist degree, Sarsembayev said, and at least five years of work experience. They must also collect the support, in the form of signatures, of at least 10 percent of the maslikhat deputies in their region before they can register. Each deputy can offer his support to only one candidate. (Giving a signature for support is not a guarantee of a vote.)

Candidates can nominate themselves or be nominated by local maslikhats or political parties and public associations, though Sarsembayev said that political parties have declined to make any nominations in this election. Candidates are not required to be part of a political party or to disclose whether they are, though most do, he said.

Candidates must pay a 299,490 tenge (US\$1,646) registration fee in order to run. The fee is returned to candidates who receive at least 5 percent of the vote, a variation of a common practice around the world. Candidates will be given 395,000 tenge (US\$2,170) for campaigning costs. That amount has been calculated to include the costs of a 15-minute television presentation, a 10-minute radio spot, the printing of campaign ma-

terials and two advertisements in local or regional print media, plus meeting space and transport costs. They may also raise an electoral fund of up to 13.98 million tenge (US\$76,792).

One hundred thirty-six million tenge (US\$747,253) will be allocated from the national budget for the election.

Sarsembayev called the low number of women registered so far "a pity," but noted that women are active in Kazakhstan's lower house, the Mazhilis. There, their representation is above the global average at 25.2 percent, though women's weak representation in its Senate brings the combined average of 19.8 percent slightly below global averages (as calculated by the International Parliamentary Union, the international organisation of Parliaments).

On the day the election was announced, Chairman of the Central Election Commission Kuanandyk Turgankulov told a Central Communications Service briefing that international representatives would be invited to observe the election. "The Kazakh Foreign Ministry and the Central Election Commission will open an international observers' institute for the purposes of realising the principle of openness and transparency during the organisation of election campaigns," he said.

About 250 international observers attended the last election, Sarsembayev recalled, and said he expected about the same number to come to this one. Organisations like the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), however, are not interested in indirect elections and will not be coming.

"We suppose that there will be international organisations from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), from these two," he said adding that observers were expected from neighbouring states and from across Asia.

Elections can also be observed by journalists, candidates' proxies and other interested parties, Sarsembayev said, and observers are allowed to bring one translator. "Yes, political parties, public associations, they have the right to observe. Journalists from local newspapers [and] proxies of candidates also have the right to be an observer. Proxies are the main figures in observation, because they represent the interests of candidates, so they're looking the most critically!" So far, he said, they have received no complaints, just many requests for clarification of the legislation.

Organisations such as the OSCE, which has sent observers to direct elections in Kazakhstan, have never

judged the country's elections free and fair.

"Of course, they made some critical observations," Sarsembayev said of past observers. "In most of these cases, we didn't agree with this or that critical observations, but, of course, there were some matters, there were some critical observations that we agreed with, and we try to address them." The Central Election Commission of Kazakhstan reviews, discusses and sometimes disputes criticisms from all international observation bodies, he said.

"In some cases, we convinced them that they're not so right. In some cases, they convinced us that we are not right in this or that matter or aspect of the election. Of

course, their assistance is useful for us," he said.

Kazakhstan also likes to do its own observing. "In some cases, we tell them, 'Please invite us to your countries, we want to see your experience, your rich experience in these matters.' For us, it is more useful not only to hear, but to see with our own eyes, so we can see the process of their elections," Sarsembayev said. "And Great Britain, they invited us; the United States invited us ... and we were observers there, and it was very interesting and useful for us. And this is, to my mind, one of the best ways for us to study, to improve our process in our country."

Senate election results are to be calculated by no later than Oct. 7.



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Editor-in-Chief
The Astana Times

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EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

A telegramme of congratulations to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the occasion of his victory in his country's presidential election was sent on Aug. 11 by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev. On behalf of the people of Kazakhstan and himself, Nazarbayev congratulated Erdogan on his victory in the historically-significant election. The telegramme read, in part, "The voting results clearly witnessed your authority in society, broad support for your policy focused on the settlement of socio-economic issues and strengthening the positions of Turkey in the international arena." The head of state also stressed that under the leadership of Erdogan, Turkey has turned into a highly-developed state that has influence in international affairs. "I am confident that brotherly relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey will only be strengthened on the level of strategic partnership," the telegramme said. At the end of the message, the President wished Erdogan good health and success and wished peace and prosperity to the people of Turkey.

A two-day forum of the heads of the prosecutor's offices of the border regions of Kazakhstan and Russia took place Aug. 7-8 in Astana. Representatives of the General Prosecutor's Office of Kazakhstan, transport prosecutor's office and the prosecutors of the Aktope, Atyrau, East Kazakhstan, West Kazakhstan, Kostanai, Mangystau and North Kazakhstan regions, as well as representatives of the General Prosecutor's Office of Russia, heads of the departments of the General Prosecutor's Office in the Ural and Southern Federal Districts, heads of the prosecutor's office of Altai, Kalmykia, Altai Territory, Astrakhan, Volgograd, Kurgan, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Orenburg, Samara, Saratov, Tyumen, Chelyabinsk regions, Western Siberian, Ural and Southern transport prosecutor's offices took part in the meeting. Opening the forum, Kazakh Prosecutor General Askhat Daulbayev said the launch of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in May, which provides free movement of goods, services, capital and labour and ensures implementation of coordinated policy in key economic sectors, sets new tasks for the prosecutors of the member states. Daulbayev noted that cooperation between the Kazakh and Russian general prosecutor's offices, both in bilateral and multilateral formats, is quite fruitful. However, the establishment of the economic union obliges the prosecution agencies of the partner countries to boost cooperation in order to ensure law under new conditions. The effectiveness of cooperation of the countries' law-enforcement bodies in the midst of integration processes can be significantly improved by strengthening the coordinating role of prosecutors, eliminating bureaucratic acrimony and integrating the law-making systems. The forum's agenda also included other topical issues on cooperation in different spheres of law enforcement practice in the EEU. The participants discussed opportunities for consolidating efforts on combating transnational organised crimes, illegal migration, drug trafficking, religious extremism and terrorism, cyber crimes, money laundering and crimes in the sphere of protection of natural resources. The main outcomes of the forum are expected to be recommendations aimed at prevention of inter-regional and interstate crimes, improvement of practical cooperation and information exchange.

Six ancient Kazakh maps and letters from the pope to the ruler of the Turks were found in the Vatican Secret Archives. Rafis Abbasov, a historian from Columbia University who worked with Al-Farabi University for many years, discovered the papers by accident. The archives belong to the Vatican and the Jesuit order and he waited for almost a year to see them. The majority of the maps indicate the close relationship that existed among the Kazakh people and the people of Southern Asia and Western Europe. It will take six months to assess the artefacts.

Nazarbayev Urges Peaceful Solution to Ukraine Crisis, Says Kazakhstan Committed to Further Attracting Foreign Investment

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Kazakhstan's dynamic economic growth, along with the second five-year programme of accelerated industrial and innovative development, is laying the foundation for more effective partnerships, he noted.

"Kazakhstan opens up broad prospects for foreign partners and has been consistently improving its economic conditions. Favourable economic indicators, international reserves totalling more than \$100 billion, stable legislation and political stability in the country form the basis for steady and confident work by investors. It is with this aim in mind that we have created a compact government and improved the efficiency of management and the business environment," he said.

President Nazarbayev underscored the country's unique environment for investors.

"There are low taxes, preferences, as well as stable relations between the government and investors. We have also declared a unilateral visa-free regime for the citizens of the countries that showed the highest investment activity. In the future, the list will expand rapidly," he noted.

Nazarbayev stressed that the development of renewable energy sources and green technologies is a very important goal for Kazakhstan. He reminded the ambassadors that Astana will host EXPO 2017, international specialised exhibition, on the subject of Future Energy and invited them to take an active part in the preparation and work of the exhibition.

The President stressed that Kazakhstan considers Tajikistan an important partner in Central Asia.

"Today, Kazakhstan's investments in Tajikistan's economy have exceeded \$125 million. There are about 40 enterprises working in Tajikistan which are invested in by Kazakhstan. De-



(L-R) Iranian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Mojtaba Damirchilu, Estonian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Jaan Reinhold, Malaysian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Dato' Hidayat Bin Abdul Hamid, President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Libyan Ambassador to Kazakhstan Abdurahman al-Salim Sueyti, Tajikistan Ambassador to Kazakhstan Nazir Ahmad Alizoda and Canadian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Sean Perry Style pose for picture at the Akorda presidential residence on Aug. 12.

spite this, it is necessary to increase the volume of bilateral trade and expand the scope of cooperation. We are interested in the implementation of bilateral projects in agricultural products, construction, light industry and the food industry," Nazarbayev said.

He noted that political and economic ties between Kazakhstan and Iran have been gaining strength from year to year.

"The commissioning of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway is ample evidence of that. Our work in this field will provide an impetus to trade and economic cooperation in the region. The early resolution of the situation regarding the Iranian nuclear programme is important for stability in the region. We have contributed to this process, having held two rounds of talks between the six powers and

Iran in Almaty. We believe a long-term agreement serving the interests of all parties will be achieved in the nearest future. Next month we are expecting President Hassan Rouhani to officially visit Kazakhstan for the first time. The visit will provide an opportunity to push bilateral ties to a new level," he said.

President Nazarbayev noted that relations between Kazakhstan and Malaysia were steadily developing in multiple directions.

"Malaysia is our political and trade partner not only in Southeast Asia, but in the Muslim world as well. The recent official visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak helped promote our economic cooperation. Following the visit, agreements totalling more than \$1 billion were reached," he said.

Nazarbayev further emphasised that the development of compre-

hensive cooperation with Canada is important for Kazakhstan.

"About 170 companies and 40 missions with Canadian investment are currently working in Kazakhstan in the fields of mining, agriculture, construction and education. We are also committed to the implementation of joint projects, especially in the nuclear industry," he noted.

Nazarbayev said Estonia is an important political and economic partner of Kazakhstan in the Baltic region.

"Our countries should continue to develop further cooperation, including in the fields of ecology, energy, high technology and transportation," he said.

The President spoke about the intention to establish close cooperation with Libya, which is regarded as a promising partner in the Arab world.

"Kazakhstan and Libya have great potential for cooperation in the oil and gas industry, energy and agriculture. We are very hopeful that the political situation in Libya will stabilise in the nearest future," Nazarbayev said.

The President stressed that Kazakhstan is ready to address urgent regional and global issues.

"In this regard, Kazakhstan is bidding for a nonpermanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2017-2018. We hope for your support of our initiative," he said.

At the end of the ceremony, Nazarbayev wished the ambassadors every success with the work ahead of them and fruitful diplomatic activity in Astana.

Addressing the media following the official ceremony, the new ambassadors expressed their readiness to deepen and strengthen cooperation with Kazakhstan.

Kazakh, Russian Foreign Ministers Meet to Promote Ties within EEC

By Zhanar Abdulova and Altair Nurbekov

UST-KAMENOGORSK – Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov hosted his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in one of the leading industrial centres of Kazakhstan on Aug. 6 to discuss bilateral cooperation and interaction within the Eurasian Economic Council (EEC).

On the first day of his two-day trip, the Russian Foreign Minister visited a number of enterprises, including Asia Auto and Ulba Metallurgical Plant of Kazatomprom, the national atomic company. He became acquainted with the history of the nuclear fuel component plant and a project for the production of solar photovoltaic modules that are manufactured in Kazakhstan. Lavrov also visited the Consulate General of Russia and the Cathedral of St. Andrew.

The two foreign ministers addressed bilateral ties in the commercial, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres, along with cooperation in the framework of international institutions, unions and relevant international issues.

During their meeting, Idrissov and Lavrov also exchanged views on aspects of stability and security in Central Asia, Ukraine and the Middle East.

Special attention was paid to the practical steps necessary to enhance cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia within the framework of inter-regional and cross-border cooperation, interaction in the industrial, energy, nuclear and space areas and monitoring the progress of the Joint Action Plan for 2013-2015.

Speaking of the upcoming fourth summit of the Caspian Sea countries in Astrakhan at the end of September 2014, the sides



Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov (l) and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov (r) during their meeting in Ust-Kamenogorsk on Aug. 6.

mainly focused on the issues related to the legal status of the sea. They also focused on the cross-border contacts in the oil and gas sphere in light of the 11th forum of interregional cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan to be held in Atyrau with the participation of two presidents.

The foreign ministers also discussed cooperation within the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space (CIS) and emphasised the significance of the agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) signed in Astana in May by the heads of Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus.

Moreover, Idrissov and Lavrov addressed issues of cooperation within the CIS and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation

(CSTO) and agreed to coordinate their activities in such international organisations as the UN, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

The sides stated that both countries have similar positions on key international and regional issues and confirmed their intent to continue cooperation to ensure security at the regional, continental and international levels.

Addressing the media after the meeting, the two ministers reaffirmed their adherence to partnership, which will remain one of the foreign policy priorities for both countries.

"Given the significance of the cross-border cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia, which accounts for about 70 percent of the bilateral turnover, the visit to one of the largest industrial centres of Kazakhstan (Ust-Kamenogorsk) is of a symbolic nature. This visit gave the opportunity to see the results of the hard work of the two countries to further strengthen their relations in trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres," Idrissov stressed following the meeting.

"We hope the organisation of mutual visits in the regions of our countries will become a good tradition," he added.

Idrissov also stressed that the process of Armenia's and Kyrgyzstan's accession to the EEU

was well on its way and noted that the issue will be further revised during presidential meetings in Minsk in October 2014. According to Idrissov, Armenia's accession was further advanced, while Kyrgyzstan was not far behind, moving along the so-called road map for that country's accession to the Eurasian integration processes.

For his part, Lavrov said the Eastern Kazakhstan region is a reliable and fast-growing partner of Russia, in particular within the framework of the International Coordinating Council. He noted "Our Common Home, Altai," programme, which involves Altai Krai and the Altai Republic of Russia, the Eastern Kazakhstan region, Xinjiang-Uigur autonomous region of China and Bayan-Ulgi and Khovd Aimaks (regions) of Mongolia.

"It is true there is a huge potential for modern and efficient development, which I have seen with my own eyes during a visit to the region's enterprises, Asia Auto and the Ulba Metallurgical Plant of Kazatomprom. I have a strong impression that people here cherish tradition and look into the future with confidence and this future primarily has to do with the development of our bilateral cooperation. I am convinced that our partnership will grow stronger," Lavrov said.

Lavrov also had to face numerous questions from reporters regarding eastern Ukraine and specifically stressed the dire humanitarian situation there as well as the flow of refugees to neighbouring regions in Russia.

On the second day of his visit, Idrissov and Lavrov had informal meetings and made a sightseeing tour of the Eastern Kazakhstan region.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

Government Reports on Development Progress, Defines Plans to Promote Sustainable Growth

By Zhanara Abdulova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's social and economic development in the first half of 2014 was the focus of an enlarged government session on Aug. 6, during which the country's most significant government restructuring to date was also announced. Ministers and other speakers reported on plans to protect the country against fallout from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, development programmes for business, energy production and use and other topics.

Senior officials including Bakytzhan Sagintayev, Asset Issekeshiev, Tamara Duisenovna, Yerbolat Dossayev, Umirzak Shukeiyev and Kuandyk Bishimbayev, some of whom were subsequently shifted into new positions, delivered reports to President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Reporting on the banking sector and economic progress, First Deputy Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev, who has retained his post, said a number of measures have been taken to ensure economic growth and large-scale support of businesses in the country.

"The National Fund of Kazakhstan has allocated 50.5 billion tenge (US\$277.4 million) for small and medium-sized businesses. An initiative to allocate resources from the National Fund voiced earlier by President Nazarbayev has served as a major impetus for the following economic growth," he noted.

In order to ensure efficient and transparent use of the funds provided by the National Fund, framework agreements were signed with four international organisations, including the World Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank. The agreements stipulate institutional and financial support for priority development programmes in the amount of US\$7 billion.

"We have identified the key investment projects in major sectors of the economy, which, according to preliminary estimates, account for US\$5.5 billion. The banks have



approved 327 projects worth 76 billion tenge (US\$417.5 million), out of which 218 projects have already been financed with 50.5 billion tenge (US\$277.4 million)," Sagintayev said. Another 150 projects are being worked upon, while additional resources have been allocated for 467 projects within the Business Road Map 2020 programme.

Former Minister of Labour and Social Protection Tamara Duisenovna, now head of the new Ministry of Health and Social Development, said 13,000 oralman (repatriated ethnic Kazakhs) families have come to Kazakhstan in 2014. The total number of ethnic Kazakhs who have immigrated to the country this year is 35,000 people. "Their accommodation is also provided within the Business Road Map 2020," she noted.

"In September 2014, a draft law dealing with the problems of oralman's accommodation will be submitted to Parliament for consideration," Duisenovna said.

Chairman of the Board of the Samruk Kazyna National Welfare

Fund Umirzak Shukeiyev informed his colleagues of plans to build two hotels with a total capacity of up to 1,500 persons in Kenderli on the Caspian seashore in western Kazakhstan within the next two years.

Then-Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Issekeshiev, now head of the new Ministry for Investments and Development, said the industrial sector consumes 70 percent of Kazakhstan's electricity.

"For instance, the country's population consumes 12 percent, while the transport sector [uses] 5 percent. At the same time, the 50 largest industrial enterprises consume about 40 percent of the country's energy resources, and we are working with them on an individual basis," he noted.

Yerbolat Dossayev, erstwhile minister of economy and budget planning and now head of the new Ministry of National Economy, said Kazakhstan has worked out a separate action plan to mitigate the effects of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

"Together with government agencies, we have developed an anti-crisis

plan dependent on further development of the national economy. We have also drawn up a special action plan in case further sanctions are introduced against Russia and the situation in Ukraine deteriorates. This plan will be updated in September 2014," Dossayev told the President.

"In order to support the basic sectors of the economy, we have introduced a mechanism for providing a temporary reduction of tariffs for rail freight for Arcelor Mittal, the CNPC [China National Petroleum Corporation] and Kazakhstan Aluminium," he noted.

The government has also reduced taxes on natural resources production for deposits characterised by heavy mining conditions and low profitability, including Kazakhmys in the Zhezkazgan region and Karazhanbas in the Mangistau region.

"Aiming to compensate oil volume variations related to the delayed extraction at the Kashagan field, an agreement has been reached with the mining companies to maintain production volumes at the level of

2013, in the amount of 81.8 million tonnes [a year]," Dossayev said.

On the whole, domestic demand has enabled growth of gross domestic product, including through an increase in investment activity. "Thus, Kazakhstan's fixed assets investment growth has amounted to 5.3 percent," Dossayev said.

At the end of July 2014, Kazakhstan's total international reserves exceeded US\$104 billion, including gold and currency reserves in the amount of US\$27.7 billion, and the assets of the National Fund totalling US\$76.3 billion.

"Due to the timely adjustment of the tenge exchange rate, the inflation rate in Kazakhstan was recorded at 4.9 percent in August 2014. Food prices rose by 5.4 percent, prices for non-food products rose by 5.0 percent and prices for services moved up 4.3 percent," the minister said.

Chairman of the Baiterek National Holding, Kuandyk Bishimbayev, reported that nearly 50 percent of all Industrialisation Map projects are now funded by the Development Bank of Kazakhstan.

"According to the new five-year plan, we are now working with the Ministry of Industry on a list of projects. We have assessed 340 projects across the country, after which about 50 projects were selected. Twenty-six projects were chosen in cooperation with international financial institutions. The final list will be submitted to the government in September or October of this year," he said.

In 2014, restrictions were lifted on the use of authorised capital of the Development Bank of Kazakhstan, which released up to 250 billion tenge (US\$1.37 billion), which was previously deposited into bank accounts.

"These measures also made it possible to reduce interest rates and increase financing terms. Whereas earlier the Development Bank of Kazakhstan issued loans with rates of 8-9 percent for a period of 7-10 years, now the new loan rates range from 5.5-8 percent and are given for a period of 15-20 years," Bishimbayev noted.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakh First Deputy Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev held a teleconference meeting of the government Aug. 11 on the current economic situation in the country. The meeting was attended by representatives of the central government and local authorities. As Sagintayev noted, a global economic slowdown has been observed. Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dossayev spoke of the current economic situation and the possible risks for Kazakhstan connected with the European Union and the United States sanctions against Russia and the Russian retaliatory sanctions. The meeting also included the issues of supplying the Kazakh regions with oil and fuel and the fill rate of food resources for the stabilisation funds. In order to ensure the economic security of the country, Sagintayev stressed the need for action to ensure the smooth functioning of the economy and gave instructions to the relevant state agencies and the administrations of the regions.

"The agro-industrial sector still remains one of the key industrial sectors in the country's economy," Chairman of the Meat and Milk Union of Kazakhstan Ivan Sauer said at an Aug. 11 media briefing held in the Central Communications Service (CCS). "The import of dairy products increased this year compared to 2012. The statistics for dairy products manufacturing are positive as well," he said. "What is the main problem? The main problem is that small commodity producers and partially medium-sized commodity producers are completely excluded from the process of product processing. This concerns both milk and meat production. We need more cooperation. We need associations," Sauer said. Speaking at the briefing, the head of the union said it is necessary to put small commodity production in place for the good of the national manufacturers and natural products.

National Managing Holding KazAgro allocated more than 7 billion tenge (US\$38.5 million) for the purchase of grain harvested in 2014 for the state reserves," Deputy Chairman of KazAgro Kairat Aituganov told an Aug. 14 meeting on the issues of the harvest. "[Approximately] 7.7 billion tenge (US\$42.3 million) has been allocated for the purchase of grain to the state reserves under the guarantees of second-tier banks, of which 3.5 billion tenge (US\$19.2 million) is through the spring and summer funding and 3.5 billion tenge (US\$19.2 million) in autumn. It should be noted that the funds not used in spring and summer will be used for the direct purchase of grain in the main period," Aituganov said. In total, KazAgro allocated 89.3 billion tenge (US\$490.7 million) for spring sowing and harvesting in 2014, 7.1 billion tenge (US\$39 million) of which is budgetary funds to purchase grain into state reserves, 11.6 billion tenge (US\$63.7 million) as own funds of the holding. This year for the first time, the holding financed spring field works through second-tier banks in the amount of 20 billion tenge (US\$109.9 million).

"It is planned to put about 100 projects of the Industrialisation Map into production in the second half of 2014," the then Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of Industry and New Technologies of Kazakhstan Asset Issekeshiev said at the Aug. 6 enlarged meeting of the government, which included the participation of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. (Issekeshiev has since been appointed Minister for Investment and Development.) "In the second half of the year it is planned to put about 100 projects of the Industrialisation Map worth 600 billion tenge (US\$3.3 billion). The second five-year plan was approved, the government developed a step-by-step plan of action and started work in the new format," Issekeshiev noted. He also informed of the development of a single comprehensive plan for the development of light industry. In addition, a list of key infrastructure projects for industrial investors of the second five-year industrialisation plan is being developed together with the Baiterek National Managing Holding and Samruk Kazyna National Welfare Fund. This list is also coordinated with the World Bank and Islamic, European and Asian development banks.



GLOBAL BUSINESSES

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Aksu Plant Modernisation Wins National Award

By Sergei Gorbunov

AKSU – The boiler house modernisation project implemented at the city's ferroalloy plant was a winner in the fifth national industry contest Golden Hephaestus at the recent international congress Astana Mining & Metallurgy. The plant was entered in the area "best solution in the field of energy conservation"

It was noted that on the eve of the international specialised exhibition EXPO 2017, many domestic plants have introduced energy-saving technologies and demonstrated environmental awareness while considering new projects within the framework of green technologies.

"Energy saving and production waste management for our large industrial plant is important today as never before. This award is the result of many years of hard work by our team and the confirmation of our progress in this direction," said Plant Director Arman Yessenzhulov. The facility is a branch of TNK Kazchrome, which is part of the Eurasian Resources Group.

Ferroalloy production is one of the most energy-intensive industries in the world and it's quite natural that metallurgical enterprises more and more often present their energy-saving projects. At that, they ecologically modernise not only the basic facilities and shops, but also the supporting units. In this case, it is the gas/oil boiler of the ferroalloy plant. Its engineers

replaced the outdated boilers with modern units with excessive capacity. The main advantage of the new equipment is the use of ferroalloy gas, a special type of fuel. For several years, this by-product has been actively used at the plant as a supplemental fuel, for example, in the production of agglomerate. This technology provides a significant economic impact on all the company's heat supply facilities.

The project's cost is about \$1.75 million and the expected annual savings of natural resources is 490 tonnes of fuel oil and 22,200 tonnes of coal. This amount of fuel can be successfully replaced by more than 51,000 cubic metres of ferroalloy gas.

"Moreover, the consumption of natural resources is almost always accompanied by a proportional reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. And if the company introduces technologies for secondary use of resources, the amount of pollutant emissions into the atmosphere is also reduced. Therefore, the introduction of energy-saving technologies is not only an economic benefit, but also a necessary component of the company's policy allowing us to save natural resources," Yessenzhulov said.

In the near future they plan to use ferroalloy gas directly in the production of ferroalloys. According to the specialists, it will be a weighty new innovation in the iron and steel industry.

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

The export potential of Kazakhstan in the 2014-2015 marketing years is estimated at nine million tonnes of grain, Chairman of the Committee of the State Inspection in the Agricultural Sector of the Kazakh Ministry of Agriculture Saktash Khasenov announced Aug. 8 at a briefing on the issues of harvest. "The expected gross grain harvest is about 17 million tonnes and carryover, four million tonnes; that is, we have 8-9 million tonnes of grain for export," he said. Khasenov noted that the markets for Kazakh grain remain the same — the countries of Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Iran. In addition, there is an agreement on enhancing exports to China and transit to Southeast Asia. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, 759,000 tonnes of grain have already been harvested in Kazakhstan this year.

Funds allocated under the first tranche of the National Fund of Kazakhstan to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will be disbursed before Sept. 1, Chairman of the Board of the Kazakh National Chamber of Entrepreneurs Ablai Myrzakhetmetov said at an Aug. 7 media briefing in the Central Communications Service (CCS). "One hundred billion tenge (US\$549.6 million) or roughly about half of the amount has been granted and 76 projects have been approved, almost all of which have been implemented. The first tranche will be disbursed in full in September. This is a major help for SMEs at 6 percent per annum for ten years," he said. According to Myrzakhetmetov, part of the allocated funds will be spent on infrastructure of special economic zones. On the instruction of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, one trillion tenge (US\$5.5 billion) will be allocated in 2014-2015 in the form of long-term loans for the Kazakh economy. In May, Kazakh second-tier banks started to use funds allocated from the National Fund within the framework of the joint action plan of the government and National Bank to finance projects of small and medium-sized businesses in the manufacturing industry.

"The state duty is to create conditions for business development, not to compete with business and the key reasoning of the second wave of privatisation is to support private business through reduction of the number of state enterprises," Deputy Minister of Economy and Budget Planning Marat Kussainov said at the Aug. 4 Central Communications Service (CCS) media briefing. "The government approved the complex privatisation plan for 2014-2016 on March 31. This plan contains measures on the reduction of the state participation in business operations," he said. Besides, according to the deputy minister, the list of companies subjected to privatisation, including community property companies, was approved as well. According to Kussainov, the analysis of people's questions regarding the second wave of privatisation shows that people can be divided into two categories. The first category is skeptics who do not believe in the transparency and fairness of the bidding. The second category consists of potential auction participants who ask such questions as "what is sold," "how much does it cost," "how to buy," etc. Speaking at the media briefing, representatives of the ministry said that the unified bidding platform is running on the web-portal of the state property register www.gosreestr.kz. More than 3,000 auctions have been held on the platform since its launch in May 2013. "The procedure of electronic tender and bidding is now available as well. The electronic bidding procedure meets the needs of holdings," the deputy minister said. According to him, it will make the tenders transparent and provide business with access to information in a one-stop shop way.

Air Astana Chooses SITA for Communications Needs



By Dmitry Lee

ALMATY – Air Astana has selected SITA to assure its general and operational communications needs, including communications with partners and advanced data-links for air traffic control. This decision was followed by the announcement of a 13.5 percent increase in Kazakhstan's air traffic in 2013.

"As Air Astana continues its growth, it is important that we have the right infrastructure in place," said Vice President of IT & E-Business at Air Astana Chamindra Lenawa. "We use SITA because it offers excellent service quality and global coverage. Most importantly, because SITA is owned and operated by the air transport industry, the SITA team understands and responds to our needs very well."

In the past few years, the national carrier has rapidly spread its services across the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and

Central Asia, becoming a favoured choice for many throughout the region. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Kazakhstan's international passenger traffic is growing at 9 percent annually, making it the second fastest-growing market in the world.

"We are delighted to help support Air Astana's expansion in this rapidly growing region," Dmitry Krasnov, SITA vice president for Russia and the CIS said. "In addition, we are committed to ensuring that both Air Astana and the region have the IT and communications services they need, including developing our VHF and satellite communications network for cockpit datalink applications."

Many major airlines, airports, governments, air cargo, aerospace and international organisations use SITA's IT and communications solutions. They all rely on SITA's expertise to facilitate communi-

cations needs and help keep the wheels of the industry in motion.

SITA Type B Messaging underpins every operational aspect of air transport, from commercial and flight operations to ground support, baggage and cargo handling, passenger services, booking availability and aircraft maintenance. SITA operates the largest messaging network, directly connecting to over 2,400 members of the air transport community, exchanging over 100 million messages a day.

The IT company services more than 400 airports around the globe, over 450 air transport enterprises and 2,800 customers in 200 countries. Its consolidated revenue in 2013 was \$1.63 billion.

Some of the subsidiaries and joint ventures include OnAir, a developer system for mobile in-flight communications, CHAMP Cargosystems, an IT provider for commercial airlines and Aviareto, which offers aviation management solutions.

Karaganda Region to Increase Coal Production



By Alina Usmanova

Akim (Governor) of Karaganda region Nurmukhambet Abdibekov recently held a meeting on progress in the coal industry. He talked about the industry's future as well as goals officials are looking to achieve.

"Currently, 11 mines, six coal mines and five small coal-mining enterprises are functioning in the region. Coal extraction has increased from 25.9 million tonnes in 2009 to 32 million tonnes in 2013. It is expected that 32.5 million tonnes will be extracted in 2014," Tolegen Igbayev, head of the regional Department of Industry and Industrial and Innovative Development said.

He noted that development of the coal industry has been repeatedly talked about by those in both the national and regional governments. All of the discussion has helped the industry identify key goals to work towards.

The meeting also discussed the fact that a number of coal companies reduced their production volumes. In particular, there was a decline in production at ArcelorMittal Temirtau, Gefest and Borly. In addition, work was slowed at the Shubarkol field while a coke oven gas disposal facility was built.

At the same time, as part of its pro-

ject to modernise and develop steel production up to 6 million tonnes per year, ArcelorMittal Temirtau was planning to increase coal production up to 15 million tons per year.

The current strategic coal mine development plan, however, raises production to only 13.1 million tonnes by 2020.

Director of the Karagandagiprosht Institute Ivan Mirny discussed plans to build new coking coal mines in the Karaganda coal basin from 2015 to 2025.

"The region has huge potential for development, highly qualified personnel, professionals, academics and a sufficient material and technical base. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to actively work on the diversification of the coal industry, including the deep processing of coal, coal development, the introduction of new innovative technologies and, of course, creating safer working environments. Our task is seeing to the sustainable development of the coal industry," Abdibekov concluded.

Abdibekov wants to diversify the coal industry, adding deep coal processing capabilities and expanding the coal chemical industry. He would also like to see the introduction of new innovations and safer working conditions. This will ensure the stable development of the regional coal industry.

KazAgroFinance Chairman: Domestic Agricultural Producers Have the Tools to Profit

By Sergey Obolensky

Gumar Rakhimzhanov, chairman of KazAgroFinance, the company that implements major investment projects in the agricultural sector, recently spoke with The Astana Times about the work of his financial institution and plans for the future.

How does the company participate in the programme Agribusiness 2020?

As a financial institute, we take an active part in its implementation and work with domestic agrarians in almost all areas of the programme. This has to do, for example, with interest rates' subsidies. Thus, the cost of leasing is 12.8 percent, the state subsidises 7 percent and, as a result, the farmer pays only 5.8 percent. I would like to note the continued support and responsiveness of the Agriculture Ministry in the implementation of the programme Agribusiness 2020.

What is the company's contribution to the socioeconomic development of the country?

We are implementing investment projects in 14 priority areas, such as construction of feedlots, dairy farms, greenhouses, stud farms and others at the expense of the national fund. We have launched such important projects as Ordabasy Kus farm for the production of turkey meat, Rodina dairy farm and Arkharly Maibuirek stud farm. These and similar companies, due to their expert management and production experience, have become examples for the organisation of agribusiness. They clearly demonstrate the principle of our

company: to invest means to organise the farm, reach production capacity and return credit. This year, we plan to launch 63 projects.

Now, we are considering projects taking into account the schemes of regional specialisation established by the Ministry of Agriculture, i.e. before issuing loans, we carefully calculate the need and quality of projects.

We also have priority areas of support not included in the list that are funded by the national fund. However, we implement them at the expense of the borrowed and equity means. This is fish farming, horticulture, pigs and poultry farming and egg production. At present, we have approved 36 projects worth nearly 6.4 billion tenge (US\$35 million).

Still the focus of your company is on the leasing of agricultural machinery ...

Actually, due to leasing, the company has done much to upgrade the Kazakh agricultural machinery park. Of 5,500 pieces of equipment imported annually in Kazakhstan, KazAgroFinance accounts for 60 percent. Our farmers are actively acquiring equipment from global manufacturers, such as CLAAS and John Deere. We offer the most comfortable conditions for farmers. In the current year, as part of the republican quota for importing harvesters, we will buy 132 units of grain aggregates. Taking into account the fact that customs duties on this technique reduced from 26.2 to 5 percent, this significantly cheapens its cost for the end user – the farmer. Additionally, the cost of harvesters is cheapened by government sub-

sidies, thanks to which the interest rate for leasing will be 5.8 percent. Also this year, we launched the programme Crop 2014, in which the initial fee is only 10 percent instead of 15. These measures allow farmers to prepare for harvesting in a timely way.

Kazakhstan is a country with vast territory. How do you cover all the agricultural producers?

Together with local executive bodies, we regularly hold meetings to promote our programmes and measures of state support. These activities have already caused a positive response from the rural population. There is a concrete result already: a branch of JSC KAF will be opened in Zhezkazgan.

In recent years there are many complaints about the unavailability of credit resources due to the large number of required documents and the time of considering the applications. How will you comment on this?

We try to optimise our business processes. The work on the list of projects financed from the national fund is carried out in collaboration with the government. From 2010, the list of documents to be submitted for consideration by KazAgroFinance for capital projects was reduced by 40 percent, for simple projects, 30 percent.

At the same time, it should be noted that our company is a public financial institution, responsible for the effective use of funds on the principles of reciprocity and transparency. Our goal is not just to give money, but allocate resources, implement the project and return the funds. Therefore, to

comprehensively implement the project, we must start from the initial stage – its examination.

Also, it should be mentioned that we do not dictate to farmers what techniques or equipment to buy. The lessee himself defines the supplier based on his experience and partnership relations. We conclude contracts and draw attention to the experience, history and reliability of the supplier. At the end of 2013, we created a unified automated manufacturer-supplier base in all areas of agribusiness, which is available on our website kaf.kz.

How do you assess the prospects of cooperation among Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus in the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)?

We plan to sign memoranda of cooperation with the Gomel plant of harvesters (Belarus) and Rostselmash (Russia) in the framework of the Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Union, which will operate from Jan. 1, 2015. These memoranda will specify preferences for Kazakh customers in agricultural equipment, as well as a wide range of services and cost reductions for this technique due to the single customs space and production line expansion.

What measures are taken to minimise the impact of various negative factors on agro-producers?

Actually agriculture is a risky business. Therefore, we take into account such factors as drought and crop failure and try to support agricultural producers by the programme of financial recovery. As part of the programme Agri-

business 2020, we considered 226 contracts from 78 borrowers who are in need of extending the terms of earlier-taken loans, writing off interest rates and penalties and reducing interest rates.

Also, in order to reduce the burden on farmers in connection with the devaluation of the tenge, our company made an independent decision to fix the foreign exchange rate at the level of 167.95 tenge instead of 185 tenge per dollar and 230.37 instead of 252 tenge per euro. We have signed 945 additional agreements on indexation. This measure will reduce this additionally-emerged burden on the farmer by 10 percent.

How do you address such pressing issues as problem projects?

As any finance organisation we have under-performing projects. Today, they make up 13.1 billion tenge (US\$71.8 million), or 7 percent of our portfolio. We are actively working on each of the troubled projects and hold talks with investors who are willing to invest in them.

What will be done before the end of this year?

Our priorities are supplying harvesting equipment to farmers in the frames of the programme Crop 2014, commissioning 63 projects and bringing 34 projects to full capacity. We intend to continue to seek lower rates for financial resources in the second-tier banks and foreign banks. We will also continue our cooperation with the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs and Nur Otan party to ensure greater transparency of the company.

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

Streamlining Bureaucracy: An Eternal Challenge

Making the long-anticipated move public, President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced the country's new government structure on Aug. 6, aimed at consolidating the work and efforts of the Kazakh government. While the move was anticipated since the time Karim Massimov again took over as Prime Minister in April, the sheer scope of changes has taken many by surprise.

The purpose of the restructuring, which affected almost all ministries and agencies, is to optimise the productivity of the ministries and agencies in Kazakhstan. During an enlarged meeting of the government, all of the ministries received a critical review of their work and new parameters within which to undertake the tasks given by the head of state.

The President spoke of the challenges civil servants face in completing presidential orders and decrees, sympathising with those who really work and scolding those who merely pretend. "I went through all the stages of leadership: from the bottom, to the enterprise, and to the national level. In a department of 10 people, two of the 10 work, and eight are sitting around. Is this not true?" As a result, Nazarbayev announced: "I decided on a new structure of government consisting of 12 ministers, about 30 committees instead of the 17 ministries, nine agencies, 54 committees and 272 departments today. All nine agencies are abolished and transferred to the ministries in the form of committees."

The President highlighted the fact that over the past 10 years, the bureaucracy in Kazakhstan grew by 8,500 people. The 3.5 fold increase in the costs of maintaining the large amount of state employees means that 600 billion tenge (\$3.3 billion) is currently spent on 90,000 civil servants. Such expensive upkeep costs are wasteful for the government budget and usurp resources that are needed for much-needed development projects. Also, the time spent in various level government meetings doesn't allow for work to be carried out in an orderly fashion. Work is frequently being interrupted.

The Ministry of Energy has been recreated in Kazakhstan. It is now headed by Vladimir Shkolnik, previously head of KazAtomProm. Shkolnik has twice before worked as Minister of Energy (1999-2000 and 2000-2006). However, the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan has undergone considerable changes since Shkolnik held this office. Presumably, he will need to ensure increases from major oilfields, including Tengiz and Karachaganak to compensate for delays in oil production at the strategically important offshore Kashagan oilfield.

The KazAtomProm National Atomic Company is now under the leadership of former

Minister of Environment and Water Resources Nurlan Kapparov. Kapparov's business history and government experience promises to be a very useful mix for the company. Umirzak Shukeyev, Chairman of the Board of the Samruk Kazyna National Welfare Fund, which is the parent company for KazAtomProm, has already praised Kapparov. "I think all of these qualities will help him achieve success," said Shukeyev. He also noted that in the future, KazAtomProm, and, in general, Samruk Kazyna will work closely in collaboration with the new Ministry of Energy.

The functions of the Ministry of Emergency Situations were transferred to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Minister Kulmukhamed Kassymov retained the position of minister while ex-Minister of Emergency Situations Vladimir Bozhko attained the position of the Deputy Minister at the newly expanded Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Financial Police is being liquidated.

The new organisation that will be responsible for tackling corruption is the Agency for Civil Service and Countering Corruption headed by Kairat Kozhamzharov who previously worked as Assistant to the President and Secretary of Security Council of Kazakhstan, and before that headed the Financial Police.

Another new body established during the restructuring is the Ministry of Culture and Sports in Kazakhstan. Previous Minister of Culture Arystanbek Mukhamediyuli retained his position as minister in the new organisation. It incorporates the responsibilities of the previous Ministry of Culture and the two Agencies: on Issues of Religion, and on Sports and Physical Culture.

The Ministry of Health Protection and Social Development replaced the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Protection. Tamara Duissenova has been named the minister of this new Ministry, and Salidat Kairbekova, the former minister of healthcare has been proposed as the deputy minister. Bolat Zhamishev, the former Minister for Regional Development, has been appointed the Chairman of the Development Bank of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan now has a Ministry for Investments and Development, perhaps the largest among all, which is headed by Asset Issekesh.

The new ministry, established on the basis of the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, also absorbed the abolished Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the Agency for Communication and Information, and the Agency on Space.

Issekesh, known for spearheading the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development, is expected to further his work in promoting business growth and development. "Issues of energy efficiency

and geology are also assigned to the new ministry," said President Nazarbayev. Zhenis Kassymbek, appointed Minister of Transport and Communications last March, is now first deputy to Issekesh. Askar Zhumagaliyev who was appointed Chairman of the Agency for Communication and Information last March, will also act as deputy minister in the newly expanded ministry.

A newly created and almost equally large Ministry of National Economy will be headed by Yerbolat Dossayev. "The Ministry of National Economy will envelop the functions and powers of the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning, the Ministry of Regional Development, the Agency for Statistics, the Agency for Regulation of Natural Monopolies, the Competition Protection Agency and the Agency for Consumer Protection," said the President.

As for deputy prime ministers, only two will remain. "The Prime Minister will now only have two deputies. The First Deputy Prime Minister will be Bakytzhan Sagintayev, while Deputy Prime Minister for human development will be Gulshara Abdylkalikova," Nazarbayev said at the meeting of the government. After hearing the report on the Kazakhstan Business Roadmap from Sagintayev, he added, "It remains to monitor the effective use of funds and the implementation of the tasks."

"There are given tasks and allocated financing. Further work on the government's economic policy should be based on solving problems with currently existing risks. Therefore, today we must first analyse current economic policies to develop new responses to a changing environment," Nazarbayev said.

Such restructuring and reshuffles have become part and parcel of the state policy since independence. The President has always been eager to eliminate ministries that were underperforming or even harming overall development. The new structure is set to streamline the work of government and remove impediments to businesses. It is expected that less bureaucracy will also improve the investment climate. In light of the economic slowdown in Russia and the on-going conflict in Ukraine, these changes are meant to ensure the stability of economic management and the maintaining of law and order.

It remains to be seen whether the newly restructured and reshuffled government will be more efficient. Given the past experience of both President Nazarbayev and Prime Minister Massimov in steering the country clear of economic troubles during the 2007-2009 global financial crisis and economic slowdown, however, there are sound reasons to believe the changes will indeed help achieve the desired effect.

Public-Private Partnership in Astana in Action

By Kairat Zhanabergenov

At an expanded government meeting on Aug. 6, the President stressed that the development of domestic businesses was a key priority.

The capital of our country, Astana, is the physical manifestation of entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan. Growth in this field is extremely visible. The number of registered legal entities as of July 1 in Astana was 44,843 and the number of small businesses among them exceeded 22,000.

In the first half of 2014, retail activity amounted to 282.7 billion tenge (US\$1.6 billion) with an increase of 19.3 percent compared to the same period of 2013. The volume of industrial production in this period reached 119.169 billion tenge (US\$655.3 million).

SEC Astana is actively involved in efforts to create new jobs. Thus, with our assistance, more than 300 new jobs were created. The corporation contributes to reducing inflation. Among the corporation's contributions is the construction of the Astana Agro centre.

This trend to a large extent is promoted by Social-Entrepreneurial Coporation (SEC) Astana. Our organisation makes long-term projects possible. Our work, which we undertake with investors, provides advice on legal and financial issues and outsources non-core functions. Also, we provide assistance in the search for investors and long-term projects. We prepare relevant documents and share risks with entrepreneurs. It should be recalled that according to law, the SEC cannot control more than 49 percent of an organisation's assets, which assures majority ownership by the entrepreneur.

Everything an entrepreneur needs to get started has been made available to them. The SEC partakes in entrepreneurial projects and puts forth financial assets including land, buildings and various types of equipment. The SEC welcomes innovative manufacturing, energy conservation and compliance with international standards of quality in export-oriented and import substituting manufacturing.

Thus, in February, we launched two projects, one was for the development, introduction and production of car filtration parts and special vehicles and a concentrated detergent for car wash systems. Mashstroj took part in the project. The other, no less promising project titled, "Energy Audit," is aimed at improving energy efficiency and creating economically feasible measures to reduce energy consumption through creating a joint venture called Astana Energy Management, LLP.

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poration contributes to reducing inflation. Among the corporation's contributions is the construction of the Astana Agro centre, which has a capacity of 8,000 tonnes per year and a new vegetable store capable of holding 5,000 tonnes of crops. The company participates in Astana's foodstuff stabilisation programme. About 188.9 million tenge (US\$1.038 million) of private investments were put into the construction of a fruit storage facility with a capacity of 500 tonnes.

It should be mentioned that Astana has a strategic location between Europe and Asia. Our SEC is actively developing two transport and logistics facilities, Saparzhai and Saykhat. The Kazakh-Czech Technology Centre created under the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial-Innovative Development entails not only the highly precise production of metal, but training for personnel from all across Kazakhstan. Our main partners are the Association of Machine Tools of the Czech-Swedish company ESKAB.

In the spirit of the Fourth International Investment Forum titled Astana Invest 2014, which was held as part of the Sixth Astana Economic Forum, the corporation signed ten memorandums of mutual cooperation.

Currently, SEC Astana is planning to implement several projects with foreign partners. One of them, the Industrial Plant of Social Services, entails producing high quality meals for school students. The Cook and Chill process in which the meals are prepared assures that the food is cooked in a sterile environment. All equipment is compliant with international safety standards.

The project will be commissioned together with its logistics centre. Its preliminary cost is \$35 million and it will be under construction from 2015 to 2017. The project will be very prosperous, not only because of strong sales in neighbouring cities, but because of its appeal in a wide array of sectors of the economy, such as air transport (in-flight catering,) health care and specialised Ministry of Internal Affairs correctional facilities, etc. Our wide array of potential clients significantly reduces our payback period.

There is another project underway that seeks to up insulin production through the construction of a biopharmaceutical production centre. Unique technology will cut production costs to the point where domestic insulin will be cheaper than imports. The project's full cost is \$187 million.

It should be noted that SEC Astana is open to all interested persons. In mid-September 2014, we will hold a round table and invite entrepreneurs. More information is available at our website astana-sp.kz.

The author is Chairman of SEC Astana.

Helping Others Grow Along With Us

On August 19, the United Nations marks World Humanitarian Day, an opportunity to pay tribute to humanitarian workers the world over. The day has been celebrated since 2008 to honour those who bring assistance to millions worldwide and celebrate the spirit that inspires humanitarian work.

Celebrating "people helping people" around the globe, we can't help but mention Kazakhstan's joining the international humanitarian assistance movement and the country's aspiration to give a helping hand to people in need. Today, Kazakhstan is ready to provide humanitarian aid and is already taking confident steps toward promoting peace and security in the region and beyond. While Kazakhstan has provided an estimated \$100 million worth of humanitarian aid to other countries so far, its assistance to Afghanistan has been perhaps the most sustained and concentrated.

According to statistics, Kazakhstan has been providing assistance to Afghanistan through different projects intended to help that country's peaceful development. Since 2002, Kazakhstan has sent about 20,150 tonnes of food products worth \$17 million to Afghanistan and has allocated \$2 million to ensure the rule of law and support the country's law enforcement agencies.

In 2010, Kazakhstan's government launched a \$50 million educational programme for the citizens of Afghanistan. Once completed, the programme will provide 1,000 Afghan students a chance to receive a higher education in Kazakhstan's universities. The project will continue until 2019 and until 2020 for those studying medicine. As of now, 836 students from Afghanistan have enrolled in Kazakh universities. The most recent group of students

was formed in May 2014, in Kabul. In response to high demand on the Afghan side, the government of Kazakhstan is now reviewing the option to prolong the terms of the educational programme.

Among the most important initiatives of Kazakhstan in its effort to help resolve the crisis in Afghanistan is the idea to set up a Disaster Response and Risk Reduction Centre in Almaty, a regional intergovernmental coordinating body aimed at strengthening regional and international cooperation through regionally coordinated disaster response activities. It will promote an integrated approach to preventing emergency situations and create a joint early warning system and mechanisms for mutual notification of hazards related to emergency situations. More importantly, it will help ensure regular communication between the member states, the international community, civil society and other stakeholders on better preparedness for natural and man-made disasters. It is envisaged that this centre will work in concert with another proposed entity, a UN regional diplomacy hub, also in Almaty.

Naturally, Kazakhstan wants to systematise its humanitarian assistance and development assistance efforts. The country is now working to create what is now being provisionally called KazAID – the Kazakhstan Agency for International Development. The agency is modelled after the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and also looks to the official development assistance experience of Japan, Korea and Slovakia as examples.

The government and parliament of Kazakhstan have already started work on the legislation to set up such a structure. A draft bill providing a legal basis for KazAID has been introduced to

the Parliament and will be considered once the Parliament resumes its session in September.

In an interview with The Astana Times in July, UN Resident Coordinator and UN Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Kazakhstan Stephen Tull said the initiative of Kazakhstan couldn't be more relevant to the needs of the region and that the UN and the international community strongly support the country in developing its aid programmes.

"Kazakhstan was maybe in the top five contributors of assistance in Central Asia in 2009-2011. KazAID is not just humanitarian assistance. It is hard today to differentiate humanitarian and development assistance, but the main thing is, there are many areas where Kazakhstan right now can help with development assistance ... [e]nvironmental projects, energy efficiency or renewable energy projects," Tull said.

"It's because Kazakhstan is going through many changes itself that it is in a great position to help other countries to go through these changes. We also have this civil service hub – an international hub for civil service – based here in Kazakhstan. It's actually an international hub with different countries – 22 different countries are part of this hub. It shares experiences. What works in one place might work in another place for civil service reform. Kazakhstan can help share its experience because it has made a very good progress in civil service reform," he said.

As people mark World Humanitarian Day, there is hope that next year there will be even more reasons to celebrate this day in Kazakhstan and more people who can call this day their professional holiday.

THE ASTANA TIMES

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Expanding Ties with Africa a Priority, Ambassador Says

By Gulbarshyn Sabayeva and Altair Nurbekov

In an interview with The Astana Times, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Egypt and Morocco Berik Aryn, who also serves as the country's representative to the African Union, spoke about Kazakhstan's expanding ties with the continent.

In light of the latest political changes in Egypt, how do you see the prospects for the further development of bilateral relations between two countries?

First, it must be noted that over the past three years, Egypt has experienced two revolutions. Today it is going through a challenging moment in its history, and therefore the pace of development of Kazakh-Egyptian relations has been affected, as have its relations with other foreign partners.

Nevertheless, the fundamental principles governing relations between Astana and Cairo are unchanged, especially those of amity and purposeful cooperation...

In this regard, the election of a new president of Egypt, after which a new government was formed, allows us to begin a new stage of comprehensive cooperation. In a letter addressed to Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, congratulating him on his election as the President of Egypt, President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that "Kazakhstan considers Egypt an important partner in the Islamic world and is interested in further deepening of bilateral cooperation between the two countries and strengthening cooperation within the framework of multilateral institutions."

Egypt has been, and remains, one of the most important political partners for Astana in the Middle East and North Africa. Our interest lies in the further development of political dialogue with this pivotal Arab country. We also aim to consolidate cooperation in a multilateral format, advance trade and economic relations, maintain a high level of cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

Despite the ongoing transitional period in Egypt... active political dialogue between our nations has not been interrupted. Over the last two years alone, there were four meetings of the foreign ministers of Kazakhstan and Egypt within UN General Assembly meetings, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation activities, et cetera.



Berik Aryn

As a result, Cairo positively responded to almost all major international initiatives of Astana, including the EXPO-2017 and a campaign for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for 2017-2018. Cairo also appreciates Astana's efforts on nuclear disarmament and continues its activity in the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

To identify prospective areas and develop specific cooperative steps to strengthen bilateral cooperation at a new stage, we are planning a series of steps. These include convening the next session of the Kazakh-Egyptian Intergovernmental Commission on trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian, scientific and technical cooperation, renewing the activity of the Kazakh-Egyptian Business Council and holding ministerial consultations.

We have a task of establishing grain exports from Kazakhstan to Egypt. Despite the fact that our grain is not competitive in the Egyptian market today due to high transportation costs, it remains a crucial area of cooperation, as Kazakhstan is among the six largest exporters of grain in the world, while Egypt is the largest importer in the world (importing about 7-10 million tonnes per year). Moreover, we did have positive experience of cooperation in this field. The largest supply of grain from Kazakhstan to the Land of the Pharaohs was made in 2008 (750,000 tonnes) and 2010 (467,500 tonnes).

A separate topic of our cooperation is tourism. Nowadays, Egypt desperately needs to develop

this sector. Egyptian authorities are planning a series of activities aimed at promoting Egyptian tourist destinations among the citizens of Kazakhstan. ... An exciting prospect of our plan is to launch regular Sharm el-Sheikh-Almaty-Sharm el-Sheikh flights.

Among the projects in the cultural and humanitarian sphere, I would like to emphasize the plans to improve the performance and quality of teaching in Nur-Mubarak University in Almaty, so its graduates can be granted the right to enrol directly into master's courses at Al-Azhar University in Cairo...

However, the main event designed to boost bilateral relations and determine the contours of the new Kazakh-Egyptian partnership is the upcoming official visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov to Cairo in the beginning of next year.

You are also Kazakhstan's ambassador to Morocco. How would you describe relations between Astana and Rabat now?

The development of political, economic and cultural cooperation with Morocco is of considerable interest to Kazakhstan, heightened by [Morocco's] important geopolitical position at the crossroads of Africa and Europe, close to important sea lanes in the Atlantic and Mediterranean regions.

Today, our countries enjoy a firmly established political dialogue. Last April, a Moroccan parliamentary delegation headed by Muhammad Al-Sheikh Biyadi, chairman of the House of Councilors of the Parliament of Morocco, visited Astana... with the first official visit at such a high level in the history of relationship between the two states. ...

We are currently taking appropriate measures to expand trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian ties by organising mutual visits, establishing an intergovernmental commission and business council, developing a legal framework.

Until 2014, Kazakhstan's embassy in Egypt was its only diplomatic mission on the African continent. In this regard, what can you say about our relationships with African states? What are the prospects for their development?

On Nov. 14, 2013, Kazakhstan gained observer status in the African Union, the only pan-

African organisation. This status opens up excellent opportunities for Kazakhstan to establish mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries on the continent. It is no accident that in the new Foreign Policy Concept of Kazakhstan for the period of 2014-2020, Africa has been indicated as one of the top priorities.

At present, Kazakhstan has established diplomatic relations with the majority of African countries. South Africa has an embassy in Kazakhstan; last January, the Embassy of Kazakhstan opened in South Africa. Soon our embassy will be opening in Ethiopia.

Astana is observing political and economic transformations in Africa with great interest. We can see a serious geopolitical struggle between the major powers of the world for its rich natural resources.

At the same time, it is a rather complex region where peace, stability and security have been significantly undermined. Kazakhstan intends to significantly contribute to the establishment of safety on the continent. Kazakhstan has decided to send officers to UN peacekeeping missions in Western Sahara, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia.

African countries in total have a lion's share of votes in international organisations, including the United Nations, which is an important factor, considering Kazakhstan's active and progressive foreign policy. For example, we were able to gain the right to host EXPO 2017 in Astana thanks to the support of African countries during the voting process.

Now, we aim to attract more African countries to participate in EXPO 2017.

Another foreign policy priority today is the promotion of Kazakhstan's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the period of 2017-2018. Our agenda is quite similar to [African states'], which includes issues of food, water and energy security, UN reform and the battle against terrorism. We rely on the support of African states in these issues as well.

In the trade and economic sphere, there are good prospects for establishing mutually beneficial relations in agriculture and mining, as well as the participation of Kazakh companies in implementing infrastructure projects. Africa is also a huge

market for the possible export of Kazakhstan's grain.

In the context of expanding collaboration with Africa, the key event was the first official visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov to Addis Ababa in December 2013, which launched multilateral high-level contacts with the African Union and laid the foundation for mutually beneficial cooperation between Kazakhstan and

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Ethiopia, one of the leading countries of the continent.

During the visit, the minister met with Erastus Mwencha, vice president of the African Union Commission, and delivered a speech to permanent representatives of the 54 member states of the African Union. He held important negotiations with Hailemariam Desalegn, prime minister of Ethiopia; Mulatu Teshome, president of Ethiopia; and with his counterpart, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, during which agreements were made concerning establishing a legal base of bilateral relations and trade and economic ties.

Our cooperation with the African continent is at the formative stage, and we are determined to move forward in this direction.

You also serve as Kazakhstan's permanent representative to a number of other international organisations, such as the League of Arab States and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [ISESCO]. What kind of work is Kazakhstan doing in these organisations?

The interaction with the League of Arab States is useful for Ka-

zakhstan in terms of promoting the interests and foreign policy initiatives of Kazakhstan in the Arab world. This includes expanding trade, economic and cultural ties. Astana and the LAS have similar views on many current issues. Arab countries highly appreciate Kazakhstan's continuous support of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and its aspirations to help create in the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons.

This year, at the initiative of Saudi Arabia, a new mechanism for interregional cooperation was launched: the Forum on Economy and Cooperation of Arab Countries with the Central Asian States and Azerbaijan. On May 13, 2014, Riyadh hosted the inaugural session of the forum with the participation of foreign ministers and economy ministers of the member states. Minister Idrissov headed the Kazakh delegation.

The forum adopted the Riyadh Declaration, which among general positions on the development of comprehensive relations between member states, reflected the call for active participation in EXPO 2017, the contribution of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries to nuclear disarmament processes and support of Kazakhstan's initiative to convene the Congress of the World and Traditional Religions.

Government officials and the leaders of Kazakhstan's National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO participate in the activities of the organisation in all its fields of competence.

Developing a culture of dialogue is one of the main activities of ISESCO. In this regard, the organisation has recently shown an increased interest in the activities of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, and delegated a representative to the conference marking the 10th anniversary of the congress in Astana on Sept. 25, 2013.

In accordance with the decision taken at the sixth General Conference of ISESCO, Almaty was declared a capital of Islamic culture for 2015 and is currently organising a number of cooperative activities, including conferences, book and handicraft exhibitions and performances of folk ensembles.

In the context of further expansion, we are working on opening a regional ISESCO branch in Almaty.

Kazakh Space Industry Growth Will Help Country Develop

By Erkin Shaimagambetov

The first and largest cosmodrome, Baikonur, has an interesting and eventful history.

The Baikonur complex was built in the 1950s on the vast steppes of Kazakhstan. During the Soviet period, about 1,000 carrier rockets with satellites and spacecraft for various purposes were launched from the facility. It is a big part of what made the Soviet Union the greatest space power on the face of the earth.

Since obtaining independence in 1991, Baikonur has been governed by Kazakhstan, even though it was originally planned to be shared by the newly created states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) along with other space exploration facilities across the former Soviet Union.

In 1991-1993, a number of intergovernmental agreements on cooperation in space amongst the CIS countries were signed, but they could not provide a real recovery of the lost space capabilities because of the unwillingness of the majority of CIS states to invest. This was primarily because of economic circumstances.

In 1994, the leaders of Kazakhstan and Russia reached an agreement on the lease of the Baikonur complex by the Russian Federation. But Kazakhstan, as part of its economic development aspirations, in addition to collecting \$115 million per year in rent, gradually began to exercise its rights regarding Baikonur, which include joint space projects with Russia and the



financing and development of new space facilities.

On Jan. 9, 2004, the presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia signed an intergovernmental agreement on the effective use of Baikonur, providing for continued, mutually beneficial cooperation with Kazakhstan in joint space projects. In particular, the agreement highlighted the importance of modernising the spaceport's infrastructure, the creation of new, environmentally safe space rocket complexes for the phased reduction of boosters, which use toxic propellants, joint work on environmental safety and solving environmental problems related to satellites and other space related activity. The term of the lease with Russia was extended until 2050.

In order to implement the above-mentioned agreement, on Dec. 22, 2004, the parties signed an intergovernmental agreement on the creation in the spaceport of the Baiterek space rocket complex

for joint commercial and Russian and Kazakhstan state launches. In 2005, Russo-Kazakh joint stock company Baiterek was established to create new environmentally friendly space rocket complexes at the cosmodrome. The company employs Kazakh and Russian specialists and experts.

The Treaty on Good-Neighbourliness and Alliance in the 21st Century signed by the heads of state of Kazakhstan and Russia on Nov. 11, 2013 reflects the mutually beneficial cooperation taking place in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. The parties agreed to develop their strategic partnership through sharing the Baikonur complex, promoting mutual involvement in infrastructure modernisation using advanced and environmentally safe technologies, implementing joint space projects and sharing responsibility for launch services.

During the Ninth Forum of Interregional Cooperation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation in Pavlodar, which took place on Sept. 19, 2012 and the working visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Russia on Oct. 9, 2012, the two leaders agreed to develop a "roadmap" for sharing Baikonur.

Currently, Kazakhstan is working on the implementation of this so called road map which protects the constitutional rights of citizens living in the city of Baikonur as well as on improving residents' socio-economic conditions. This is largely happening through the 2014-2016 Comprehensive Plan for the De-

velopment of the city of Baikonur, the village of Toretam and Akai district. Kazakhstan is trying to find its place in the agreement with Russia. Kazkosmos, Kazakhstan's space agency, is actively working with the Russian Space Agency to develop joint space projects.

At present, Kazakhstan is interested in producing both light and heavy launch boosters at Baikonur. The availability of small launch boosters will allow small satellites to be launched from Baikonur; such satellites will be manufac-

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tured at the assembly and test complex in Astana. A new space rocket complex for heavy boosters will ensure the successful phased reduction of the use of Proton boosters which use highly toxic propellants. Unfortunately, there are no alternatives to Proton boosters today and therefore, the only way to phase them out is to develop

new ecologically safe space rocket complexes.

In Astana last July at the International scientific-practical conference "Kazakhstan and Space," dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the first flight of Independent Kazakhstan's first cosmonaut, representatives of foreign space agencies and organisations made presentations with innovative ideas and new high-tech projects on space exploration, including Baikonur. In particular, it is proposed to implement a space tourism

project in collaboration with the French company Airbus Defence and Space, i.e. commercial sub-orbital flights with the use of the passenger spacecraft designed by this company.

Another major international project suggested is a space rocket complex for a super heavy class of interplanetary rockets for missions

to study the Moon and Mars. Such projects are expensive and require the efforts of several countries. Baikonur allows Russian company RSC Energia and the Ukrainian enterprise DB Yuzhnoye, which both expressed interest in the project, to implement large-scale projects.

The National Space Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan is doing everything necessary to create a full-fledged space industry that can meet the interests and needs of the state and society as a whole. Activities in this area contribute to the strengthening of national and information security and the socio-economic and scientific-technical development of Kazakhstan through the effective use of advanced technologies. Modern space activity involving global satellite communications and television, high-precision navigation, remote sensing to study natural resources, meteorological, environmental, and agricultural monitoring, mapping and so on are also common functions of Kazakhstan's space agency.

We can confidently say that the space industry, which is one of the most high-tech, serves as an integrator of many scientific fields and as a manufacturer of products with high added value. The space industry will do a lot to help Kazakhstan develop in the direction the President is guiding the country.

The author was Deputy Chairman of the National Space Agency of Kazakhstan until it was merged into the newly created Ministry for Investment and Development.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

Turkmen FM Visits Astana, Discusses Kazakh President's Visit in Fall



Deputy Chairman of Turkmenistan's Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov (l) and President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev (c) met in Akorda to discuss expanding bilateral ties on Aug. 12.

By Zhanara Abdulova

ASTANA – Deputy Chairman of Turkmenistan's Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov paid his first official visit to Astana on Aug. 12 to enhance bilateral ties and discuss the upcoming visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Ashgabat.

"Turkmenistan is a close and brotherly nation for Kazakhstan. We have always had good economic and political relations with your country and we are looking forward to developing our partnership," President Nazarbayev said, welcoming his Turkmen guest in the Akorda presidential residence.

"A very important project, a railroad running from Kazakhstan through Turkmenistan to Iran and the Persian Gulf, will be completed soon. The railroad's completion will push the bilateral relations between our countries to a new level," he added.

During the meeting, the sides noted the growing level of cooperation between the two countries in various fields and discussed the implementation of previous agreements. Meredov conveyed warm greetings from President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov and informed Nazarbayev of the date the railway is expected to be put into operation. He highlighted the development of bilateral cooperation in economic, trade, energy, transport and communication, cultural and humanitarian spheres.

"We are now working to prepare your official visit to Turkmenistan. Sending me to Astana, President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov stressed that we are ready to organise the visit at any convenient date for you, according to our preliminary agreements – during the end of October and the beginning of November. We will be opening the railway at that time," Meredov said.

As part of his visit to Astana, Meredov met with his Kazakh counterpart, Erlan Idrissov. During their negotiations, the foreign ministers discussed the current state and future prospects of Kazakh-Turkmen bilateral cooperation, as well as regional cooperation issues and topics on the international agenda. The talks also focused on the Kazakh President's visit to Turkmenistan this autumn.

"We are very hopeful of the outcomes of the top-level meeting, including the announcement of the completion of the largest transportation and logistics project not only in our region, but also far beyond its borders," Idrissov said at a press briefing following the meeting, referring to the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway.

Meredov said, "We are neighbouring states and brotherly nations. The level of our relations today confirms the historically close relationship between us. The main factor of dynamically developing relations between our countries is the trust-based dialogue and understanding between the two heads of state, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov and President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. The main purpose of my visit today is to prepare the visit of the President of Kazakhstan to our country this autumn, and I am sure that this visit will be an important historical step towards strengthening the relationship of friendship and cooperation between our two countries."

The foreign ministers expressed their satisfaction with the level and content of multilateral cooperation between the two countries within the framework of international organisations.

During the meeting, the sides paid close attention to the need to intensify cooperation in trade, energy and transportation. In this context, Idrissov and Meredov discussed the implementation of agreements reached within the framework of the Turkmen-Kazakh Intergovernmental Commission on economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation.

In 2013, the trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan reached \$392.9 million. The sides stated there was serious potential for much deeper cooperation in trade and identified ways to increase trade volumes.

"We are glad that the representatives of both Kazakh and Turkmen business circles are increasingly interested in mutual cooperation, exchange of experiences and expansion of business relations," Idrissov said.

He also noted that the Kazakh-Turkmen business forum to be held this year in Ashgabat should become an efficient mechanism to build bridges between the business structures of the two states.

A significant outcome of the talks was the signing of the Programme of Cooperation between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries for 2015-2016, which is intended to strengthen the political dialogue between the two states.

Joint CSTO Military Exercises are Held in Karaganda Region



By Yelden Sarybay

ASTANA – In the multi-day exercises beginning on August 18th, the armed forces of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan will work on possible contingencies in the Central Asian collective security region. Titled Interaction 2014, the event will be held in the Spassk training field.

The aim of Interaction 2014 is to solidify the cohesiveness of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) Collective Rapid Reaction Force governance structure. Kazakh Minister of Defence Serik Akhmetov travelled to the site for a preliminary inspection of the preparations and the garrison.

Military units from the Air Assault Brigade of the Russian Airborne Troops, the Air Forces of Kazakhstan, the mobile team from the Special Operations Forces of Belarus, the Special Forces of the Armed Forces of Kyrgyz Republic and a commando squadron from Tajikistan will participate in the exercises. The total number of exercise participants will be about 3,000 people. The exercise will involve more than 200 pieces of

military equipment and about 30 aircraft.

Besides fulfilling practical missions, issues of information and psychological warfare will be addressed for the first time during the training. The exercises will also include the provision of cybersecurity and ways of affecting the software of potential enemies.

The aim of Interaction 2014 is to solidify the cohesiveness of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation Collective Rapid Reaction Force governance structure.

CSTO Joint Staff Lt. Gen. Alexander Studenikin will be leading the training. CSTO Secretary General Nikolai Borduzha is also to be in attendance.

Bulgaria Seeks to Deepen Relations with Kazakhstan

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Relations between Kazakhstan and Bulgaria haven't been as active as they could be in recent years, according to Chargé d'Affaires of Bulgaria to Kazakhstan Ivan Dimitrov. In the past year, the two countries have made quite a few steps towards achieving new levels of cooperation.

Dimitrov has only served one year as Bulgaria's envoy in Astana. He became chief of mission in August 2013, but a lot has happened at the embassy in that short period of time.

"In the grand scheme of things, a year is not much time, but nonetheless, for our embassy, it was a very effective year, as our relations have grown, because this country has good potential and so does Bulgaria," he said during an interview with The Astana Times.

According to Dimitrov, he decided that establishing goals for his term was a key priority.

"Since my arrival, through my constant contact with the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, in particular with Deputy Minister Alexey Volkov and his colleagues, we have outlined a plan to further promote bilateral ties between Kazakhstan and Bulgaria called Road Map 2014," he said.

"The plan includes a few projects that would strengthen relations between the two nations to a point we all find satisfactory. Road map 2014 includes a step-



Chargé d'Affaires of Bulgaria to Kazakhstan Ivan Dimitrov

by-step plan for the development of relations such as continuing to support our intergovernmental commission for economic cooperation, which we have benefitted from for over a decade. Both sides agreed that such a commission was needed for quite some time. A political consultation was also held between deputy minister's. The last one was held about six years ago. We have discussed the possibility of a visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov to Bulgaria in depth. I am glad that this visit is scheduled to take place in the fall of this year, I should emphasise that this is a historic visit, as this is the first time a Kazakh minister of foreign affairs will visit Bulgaria."

Dimitrov mentioned that the last time a Bulgarian Foreign Minister visited Kazakhstan was in 2007

and said "considering the dynamics of modern times, this is a long period of time."

Within Road Map 2014, the Bulgarian prime minister also has been invited to visit Kazakhstan in the beginning of 2015, the Bulgarian head of mission stated.

"We now have inter-parliamentary contacts and the Kazakh Speaker of the Senate has officially invited the Bulgarian [parliamentary] delegation. We have also established friendship groups in both countries' parliaments, all of these steps build up to the presidential visit that will perhaps take place at the end of next year."

"We have also appointed the first honorary consul of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Kazakhstan in Karaganda, Anvar Osin, who is an activist, member of Nur Otan party and is well respected among the populace.

Kazakhstan's and Bulgaria's scientific academies have signed an agreement on cooperation during the May 22-23 Astana Economic Forum.

"These were a few steps that gave impetus to the relations between the two countries and I would like to proudly say I am very pleased with my year here; my counterparts in Kazakhstan's government are also pleased," he said.

Deputy Minister Volkov awarded Dimitrov a Certificate of Honour on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. "I must say [everything] worked out,

because both Bulgaria and Kazakhstan are willing to further develop relations based on what we have achieved so far and based on the historical connection between the countries," Dimitrov added. "I recently met with the Chairman of the Science Academy of Kazakhstan [Marat Zhurinov] and he told me an interesting theory that still needs to be confirmed. He mentioned that there is a river in Kazakhstan called Aspar, the founder of the First Bulgarian Empire was Khan Asparukh - ruler of Bulgars. He lived in the second half of the seventh century. The chairman said that the cherished historical roots connecting the two countries are currently being explored."

Dimitrov hopes that the two sides will increase dialogue on economic cooperation as well.

According to the National Statistics Institute of Bulgaria, trade between Bulgaria and Kazakhstan totaled \$104 million, including Bulgarian exports worth \$44.8 million and imports totaling \$59.6 million. Bulgarian exports comprised of medicines (20.3 percent), electrical transformers (14.2 percent) and power generating units (13.5 percent), while imports were mostly of oil gas (86.9 percent), refined and unrefined copper (11.3 percent) and chemical fertilizers (1.2 percent).

Bulgaria was always known to people in Kazakhstan and in recent years, it has become a preferred tourist destination. "In the past

year, we have also managed to open a direct chartered flight from Astana to Burgas [the fourth largest Bulgarian city, a resort town in the south east of the country along the Black Sea.] There used to be a flight only from Almaty, but now we have two.

"Last year, more than 7,000 Kazakhstan citizens visited Bulgaria as tourists, the majority of them traveled to the Black Sea for vacation. This year, the number has picked up 40 percent. Kazakhs are rediscovering Bulgaria, its nature, climate and the similarities between the Russian [that most Kazakhs speak] and Bulgarian as well as similarities in mentality. Bulgaria's low prices are also appealing to visitors from Kazakhstan."

Bulgaria also introduced a facilitated visa regime for Kazakhstan's citizens by issuing a one year visa for Kazakhstan nationals that have already been issued a Bulgarian visa in the past and have not violated the terms of stay. Kazakhstan citizens who own property in Bulgaria may be issued a three year visa; a small Bulgarian real estate boom is being seen in Kazakhstan today.

Dimitrov, who studied at Moscow's Diplomatic Academy and is completely fluent in Russian, German and English, said he has enjoyed his brief stay in Kazakhstan.

"I was warned about the harsh winters in Astana before coming here and I must say surprisingly, it wasn't as cold as I expected. I

live on the Yessil River embankment and I with my family would often go down to the frozen river for walks, we really enjoyed them, especially in the sun, when there was no wind."

The envoy's diplomatic career has taken him to Germany and Denmark, yet he seemed to especially enjoy talking about his impressions of Astana and Kazakhstan.

"What struck me most about Kazakhstan are the close family ties that people have woven and cherish. I admire that and find it [fascinating] that family members help each other and spend so much time together. I am also fond of Kazakhstan's national dances. Bulgarian dances are more dynamic, while Kazakh ones are more gracious.

"Before [moving] to Astana, I read a lot about [Kazakhstan], but what you read and what you see can be two completely opposite things. What I've seen [here] amazes me. I was amazed by the city [Astana,] the idea of building a city designed by world-class architects in 17 years truly impresses me. I am also amazed by the foresight of the [Kazakh] government. The country has [planned] everything and knows what needs to be done to move forward. I am sure that the Strategy 2050, Kazakhstan's plan to propel itself onto the list of the 30 most-developed countries by 2050 will be realised if the country maintains its current mindset and trajectory."

Nation&Capital

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

CULTURE
"Guardians of the Galaxy"
Learn Kazakh

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COUNTRY
Men's Health Centre to
Collaborate with Urology Centre

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SPORTS
Dauletova Wins Bronze Medal at
World Chess Olympiad

B7

Almaty Prepares to Celebrate City Day



Almaty City Day will be celebrated throughout the month of September.

By Julia Rutz

Almaty City Day is a day in name only. Though it is technically celebrated on the third Sunday of September, city residents and visitors will be celebrating their city throughout the month of September.

This year, the holiday programme will be opened by the Fifth Arbat Fest International Festival of Contemporary Art. The festival will include art exhibitions, workshops as well as dance

and drama performances on city streets. A unique multi-sensor exhibition of Van Gogh masterpieces that immerses guests in the artist's vibrant colours and vivid details has already opened in the Space Gallery, Kazakhstan's first multimedia gallery.

The annual Festival of Puppet Theatre of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) will take place in Almaty from Sept. 5 to 12. The Almaty – My First Love retro music festival will launch on Sept. 6 and include Kazakh as well as

foreign artists. And a traditional open air orchestra parade will entertain Almaty residents Sept. 10 and 12.

The Omsk State Drama Theatre tour will also take place in Almaty as part of the City Day celebration programme. The premiere of the "Magic Flute" fairy tale will be on Sept. 15 in the Natalya Saz Russian Theatre for Children and Youth. The "Abai" opera staged by Italian directors Andrea Cini and Benito Leonori will also premiere on the Abai Kazakh State

Opera and Ballet Theatre stage in September.

Almaty residents can also visit a Eurasia film festival, which will take place Sept. 15-21, a concert dedicated to the new Gakku TV Channel opening on Sept. 13, a song contest about Almaty on Sept. 17, an annual Muz Zone music award ceremony on Sept. 20, an Apple Fest and a firework show on Sept. 21.

Last year, City Day celebrations drew a crowd of more than 120,000 and this year's crowd is expected to be even larger.

Kostanai Designer Gains Attention at Paris Fashion Week



By Julia Rutz

Designer Svetlana Kushnerova presented her new collection during the recent Paris Haute Couture Fashion Week 2014.

"I still cannot believe I was invited by the Federation Francaise de la Couture to become a part of Paris Fashion Week. It is complicated to gain acceptance from French designers, as they used to think only they could feel fashion and style as no one else can. They would never allow a collection that was made out of Paris to be presented on their runway. For instance, some handmade details can be created only in several ateliers in Paris, whose employees studied at one of the oldest Chanel schools," said Kushnerova.

Kushnerova's team includes about 40 people who created a short dramatic performance on the runway during the fashion show. According to Kushnerova, her collection is feminine and sexual, including flowing fabric, lace and jewels. Her garments are meant for official events.

It is worth saying that the collection made by the Kazakh designer gained attention and was welcomed by the audience, including leading editors of fashion magazines and the director of Chanel fashion house. Moreover, three outfits from the presented collection were taken right after the show to be shown on the glossy pages of fashion magazines.

Continued on Page B2

Kazakhstan's Junior Para-Athletes Win 29 Medals at IWAS Games

By Nadezhda Khamitova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's para-athletes won 10 gold, nine silver and 10 bronze medals at the 10th International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS) World Junior Games, which took place at the U.K.'s

Stoke Mandeville Sports Stadium from Aug. 3-8. Three hundred fifty athletes under the age of 23 from 35 countries gathered in Stoke Mandeville to compete in seven sports: archery, athletics, wheelchair racing, powerlifting, swimming, table tennis and wheelchair fencing.

Nineteen junior athletes represented Kazakhstan in four sports: table tennis, swimming, powerlifting and athletics.

"IWAS is pleased that we can return to Stoke Mandeville in 2014, where the 10th IWAS World Junior Games will revive the spirit of the International Stoke Mandeville

Games," IWAS Games Committee Chairperson Dina Sotiriadi said in a press release.

On the first day of competition, 14-year-old Yerassyl Soltangaliuly won two track medals: silver in the 400-metre distance and bronze in the 200 metres.

Continued on Page B7

National Geographic Silk Road Exhibition Returns to Kazakhstan

By Julia Rutz

Along Shokan Ualikhanov's Caravan Track, an educational expedition organised by the National Geographic Society and dedicated to the 180th anniversary of the scholar's birth, came back to Kazakhstan on Aug. 6. National Geographic Society representatives, as well as Ordenbek Mazbayev, a professor at Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Smailzhan Iminov, a researcher of Ualikhanov's expeditions, a Tengrinews.

kz reporter and CTB TV channel cameraman, flew to Urumqi, China on July 24 to start the expedition.

The route included the cities of the Great Silk Road Ualikhanov visited 155 years ago while traveling to Kashgaria, China. During 12 days, the expeditionists went by vehicle to territories in China and Kyrgyzstan, visiting Urumqi, Karashar, Korla, Kuchar, Aksu, Kashgar, Artush, Yangisar, Yarkend, Kagalyk, Hotan, Kashgar, Turagat, Narayn, Tash-Rabar and Bishkek.

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Vladislav Ligai (r), the gold medal winner in the 400-metre freestyle and the 50-metre and 100-metre backstroke.

THINGS TO WATCH AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

SCHOOLCHILDREN PALACE

August 24 at 08:45 Group run

ASTANA MALL

August 24 at 18:00 K-pop Cover Dance Festival

BLACK DUCK RESTAURANT

September 2 at 20:00 Poetry reading

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

ATOM Project Seeks 100,000 Signatures Against Nuclear Weapons



Karipbek Kuyukov

Continued from Page A1

Why did you agree to campaign with The ATOM Project?

I have been campaigning against nuclear weapons all my life; it has become my cause as well as that of my family. I have heard too many stories from my father who has seen the terrible impact these tests have left on our country with his own eyes. Just recently, I came back from a funeral in Yegindybulak [100 kilometres from the former Semipalatinsk's test site's ground zero]; that family was also impacted by the tests. The person who had died suffered from a rare cancer; the past's transgressions

are still manifesting themselves years later.

What are you looking to accomplish before August 29, the UN International Day Against Nuclear Tests?

At the moment, we are preparing for the UN International Day Against Nuclear Tests on Aug. 29. First of all, we are seeking to reach a 100,000-signature milestone. At the moment, we have a little over 92,000 names. We are also planning to host two exhibitions on this day, one depicting the legacy of nuclear disarmament in Kazakhstan and the other of my paintings, because my works, especially the

recent ones, are related to nuclear weapons. I continue adding more and more paintings to my exhibition and we will continue spreading the word and educating the youth about the consequences of nuclear weapons. This day is our big day to do so. The International Day Against Nuclear Tests is held in hopes that one day, all nuclear weapons will be eliminated. Until then, we need to promote peace and security around the world. On Dec. 2, 2009, the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly declared Aug. 29 the International Day against Nuclear Tests. This day was proposed by our President, Nursultan Naz-

arbayev, to commemorate the closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site on Aug. 29, 1991. The day calls for increasing awareness and education "about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

What would you say to your supporters?

To those who have signed the petition, I would like to say the following: If people want to leave a bright future for their children and live in a safe world full of fresh air, they should do as these people have. I also would want to encourage them to spread the word about our mission and The ATOM Project; people need to pass the news onto their kids, friends, neighbours, accountancies, colleagues and everyone they know as this is an important message. Sign the petition! Spread the word!

And to those who have not signed yet?

I call on them to sign the petition because so much is being spent on arms proliferation, senseless wars and demonstrations of power. All of this evil originates in greed. Those who have not yet signed might think that this issue will pass by, but they're mistaken. The problems caused by radiation and nuclear explosions don't discriminate based on race, hair colour or skin tone. Should this world see a nuclear war, the issue will concern all of us, so I think everyone should sign the petition and together we need to strive to create a nuclear-weapons-free world.

Kostanai Designer Gains Attention at Paris Fashion Week



Svetlana Kushnerova from Kostanai (c) presented her new collection during the recent Paris Haute Couture Fashion Week 2014.

Continued from Page B1

Kushnerova has been interested in fashion since an early age, however, her parents insisted she study law. After graduating from a German university, she came back to the city to continue her childhood obsession. Kushnerova created several sketches, one of which was a garment for her sister's high school graduation ball. That was the turning point for Kushnerova to make fashion her lifetime business.

Kushnerova presented her first collection of leather gowns during

Kazakhstan Fashion Week, which took place in Almaty. According to the designer, she met interesting people there who taught her how collections she has created can be successfully promoted. After that, Kushnerova participated in Moscow Fashion Week, where her collection was seen by French fashion representatives who invited her to come to Paris.

Kushnerova's boutiques can be found today in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Singapore and she is also expecting to open a store in Kazakhstan in the future.

NUCLEAR TERRORISM. THE THREAT IS REAL.
DENY THEIR CHANCE TO DESTROY OUR LIVES.
SIGN ON FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE WORLD.

TheATOMProject.org

CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

“Guardians of the Galaxy” Learn Kazakh

By Bakhytбек Aduov

ASTANA – “Guardians of the Galaxy” has become the ninth film to be dubbed into Kazakh and the third movie of 2014 to be screened in the Kazakh language.

The Bolashak Association, supported by the ruling Nur Otan party and sponsored by the Baiterek National Holding, organised the film dubbing project, which cost 9 million tenge (US\$49,445).

“Guardians of the Galaxy” is one of this year’s worldwide blockbusters and rated one of the best movies of the year by some. Critics are calling it the best work of Marvel Studios, and its IMDB (Internet Movie Database) rating is 8.7/10 based on feedback from more than 100,000 movie fans.

“While choosing a project, we took into consideration such factors as its level of innovation and social orientation, as those are some of the directions of our holding’s activity. It is good that among

the 18 languages the film has premiered in, there is the Kazakh language, too. We all continue to support projects promoting the study of the Kazakh language by

“Guardians of the Galaxy” has become the ninth film to be dubbed into Kazakh and the third movie of 2014 to be screened in the Kazakh language.

Kazakhstan’s population,” head of the Baiterek Holding executive office Anurbek Sultangazin said at the premiere of the film in Astana.

The film has been dubbed into 18 languages, with Kazakh one of two Turkic languages it has been screened in. Not many movies in Kazakhstan are screened in Kazakh – but the ones that have been are among the world’s biggest and best. They include “Cars 2,” and “Men in Black 3” in 2011; “Brave” and “The Amazing Spiderman” in

2012; “Monsters University” and “The Lone Ranger” in 2013 and “The Amazing Spiderman 2,” “Maleficent” and “Guardians of the Galaxy” in 2014.

Dubbing projects also help promote Kazakhstan’s film industry. This project was a good experience for young director Timur Balymbetov. “In some scenes, the Kazakh dubbing sounds even better than original,” he said.

The main protagonist of the movie, Peter Quill, was voiced by the well-known voice actor Timur Piyazov, who has experience in dubbing films in Kazakh.

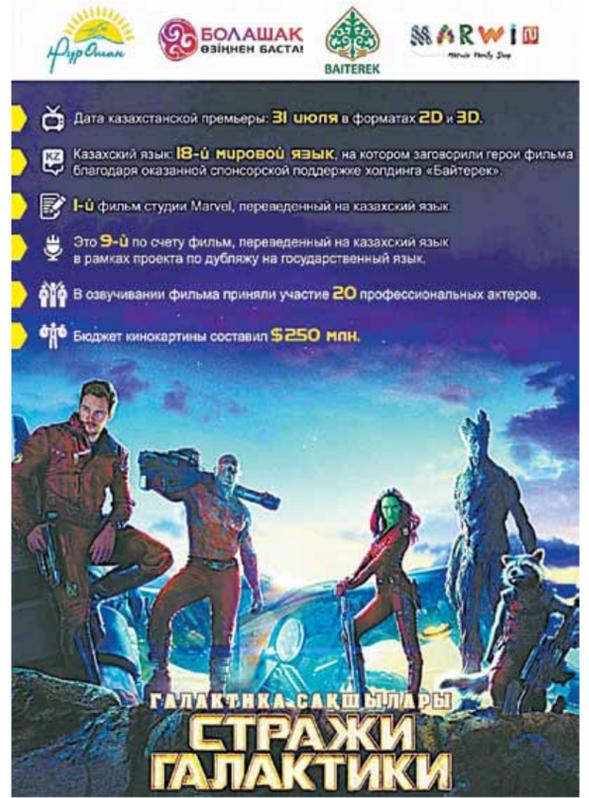
Gulnaz Auesbayeva, also the voice of the witch from “Ma-

leficent,” voiced the main female character of the movie, Gamora.

Fully animated characters of the film, including tree-like humanoid Groot, martial raccoon Rocket, demonic Drax (Destroyer) and the villain Ronan, were voiced by Baurzhan Kaptagai, Yerzhan Zharylkasynov, Ruslan Senkebayev and Beybit Kamaranov, all of whom work every year dubbing Hollywood films. About 20 actors participated in the project.

Secretary of the Nur Otan party Kumar Aksakalov and Chairman of the Baiterek Holding Kuandyk Bishimbayev attended the premiere on Aug. 1, as did other officials and representatives of the business and science sector.

Orphans, students, bloggers, Bolashak scholarship programme graduates, members of national youth organisations and the Bolashak Association, project organisers and other partners were also invited to the film’s premiere.



Folk Ensemble Blends Kazakh, World Music

By Yelena Kuznetsova

The Kazakh band Beles blends Kazakh traditional music with other melodies and instruments. Manager Madiyar Malybayev discussed the team and their music.

How was your group established and why is it called Beles?

The group was formed as a creative union long ago. Alexey Yefremenko and Marat Nukeyev performed as a duet while in school. Assel Nurkenova also graduated from the Kulyash Baisseitova Specialised Music School.

Alexey is not just an accordion player, competition winner and virtuoso, but also knows Kazakh folk music and folk songs very well. The dombra player, Marat, is also a virtuoso and winner of international competitions. Assel is the top kobyz player in Kazakhstan today. Professor Raushan Mussakhodzhaeva called these three musicians rarities.

I myself play dombra, shankobyz, sybyzgy and percussion. We all graduated from the conservatory and joined the Presidential Orchestra of the Republican Guard in 1997. With the transfer of the capital, we moved to Astana, and continued working in the orchestra for 15 years. I met a lot of foreign delegations, to whom we were the first to present our national culture, and for each guest we prepared folk music of their country. Doing that, we developed a large repertoire.

The name Beles in Kazakh means “a stage on the path of development,” “a certain point.” The Kazakhs have a blessing: “Belesten beleske zhetpe ber” (“Conquer peak after peak”). This is our motto.

Why did you decide to form a band?

We have been working on our own for two years. But even in the orchestra, we began to perform in this format; it was our own project. Young people don’t listen to folk music in its pure form, and we decided to popularise it in plain language for young performers, which is what we have been doing now for eight years.

Have there been any review concerts during this time?

We haven’t had review shows, but we have performed in many countries. The farthest point of our travels was Colombia, Latin America, where we had the privilege of representing Kazakhstan at the World Travel Exhibition. We are often invited to Moscow – on the Day of the City, for example, and this spring, the Moscow city administration organised a big concert in honour of the Nauryz holiday. Beles is probably best known in Turkey. The mayor of Ankara saw our presentation in Astana by chance and invited us to participate in the Grand Ankara International Festival. The stadium where the concert was held



Kazakh band Beles, wearing Kyrgyz hats, Uzbek camisoles, Kazakh boots and modern jeans, blends Kazakh traditional music with other melodies and instruments.

attracted a record number of spectators – about 40,000. We were given 45 minutes to perform, but in the end we took the stage for about an hour and played almost our entire repertoire. In total, we’ve had more than 30 concerts in Turkey.

Why do you think you are better known abroad than in Kazakhstan?

It’s simple: those with money are broadcast most on domestic channels, and it does not matter whether they are professional musicians or random people. But we hope that in the end, Kazakh airwaves will be filled exclusively with worthy soloists and bands.

Are you involved in combined concerts in the country?

Yes. We perform on holidays primarily: Constitution Day, Nauryz, Independence Day, New Year. We have participated in festivals, including Almaty is my First Love, and in Taraz, Pavlodar, Karaganda and other cities. But still, we travel abroad more. Embassies invite us.

What makes your group special?

Firstly, we are professionals; secondly, instrumental music does not need to be translated to be understood. In addition, ethnic music is popular among foreigners and we have bright costumes and different instruments. For example, Assel plays kobyz and kылkobyz and even the harmonica. In addition to dombra, shankobyz and sybyzgy, I play Scottish bagpipes. We can perform traditional music in its purest form.

We were invited to Madrid, where we had an hour-long concert for adopted Kazakh children so they could hear the music of the steppes, the music of their homeland. In Berlin, we performed at the ITB [Internationale Tourismus-Börse] exhibi-

tion. There were many interesting booths, but thanks to the bright music, Kazakhstan attracted special attention. We’ve been to Canada, three times to America, almost all over Europe – Spain, Germany, France, England – as well as Korea, Mongolia and China. But we haven’t been to Australia or Japan yet.

How does your ensemble differ from groups like Turan and Ulytau?

Each ensemble has its own niche.

Ulytau is a rock band that uses the dombra. Turan is a purely folk ensemble and plays only Kazakh music. Ulytau plays kuis [folk instrumentals] in a rock style. Our songs are a synthesis of the music of different peoples.

There are women in all three bands...

The main thing is they are talented. Our Assel was a presidential scholar twice; she attended the meetings of Nursultan Nazarbayev

with gifted children. He knows her well and after the transfer of the capital he personally invited her to work in Astana. She has won the Grand Prix at all competitions existing in Kazakhstan.

Who makes your costumes?

We develop them together. Our costumes, like our music, are a mix. For example, our hats are Kyrgyz, our camisoles are Uzbek, our boots are Kazakh – the jeans are modern. The ideas are ours and tailors sew the costumes for us. We have our own style and colourful costumes to catch the eye.

Who makes the arrangements?

We do them by ourselves. We get together and discuss. We take as a basis some Kazakh theme and, as on a canvas, we embroider a colourful pattern of other melodies. The prevailing topic becomes the title. If the basis is, for example, Zartunk Armenian music, then the overall composition has the same name. But we’ll add improvisations on dombra and kobyz for a Kazakh theme. Chinese, Peruvian, Oriental, Turkish, American music ... our repertoire includes about 15 songs. If we play them in a row, it takes about one and a half hours – that is a full-fledged concert. You may ask why in 7-8 years we have only 15 songs, when some performers in a year release an album of 10 songs. We are very sensitive: the creation of a single composition can take half a year. We carefully check different options. And when we finally come to the arranger, we give him

a little ready-made material and explain what we want.

Currently, we work with the talented musician Khamit Shangaliyev. With Khamit, we found a common language. We do not want to repeat anyone; we have developed our own style. That is important for us.

Who were your mentors?

The Presidential Orchestra where we started to work was headed by Arystanbek Mukhamediyul; the current minister of culture and sports, [Mazhilis deputy and folk singer] Bekbolat Tleukhan, was the artistic director and Rustem Beisenuly headed the folk music ensemble. We are very grateful to them.

What problems do you encounter most often?

Today, in my opinion, sport gets more attention than culture. The rewards of athletes and musicians can’t be compared. There are almost no professional sound engineers in the country and little good equipment. Sound engineers are trained in St. Petersburg, but even those who’ve studied there are not in demand in Kazakhstan: because of the low wages, they go into business. A palace director would rather pay 50,000 to a non-professional than three times as much to a professional. ...

European culture is known worldwide; now, it is necessary to show Kazakh art and folk music. In our compositions, Kazakh music makes friends with melodies from different countries in a model of integration.



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

Reforms Needed in State Asset Management

By Nurman Abylkassymov

The steady growth of Kazakhstan's economy underlines the need for reform of how the state manages public assets.

It's been proven that the quasi-public sector is a key economic pillar of any country's economy and is one of the most important areas in public administration. Currently, the quasi-public sector consists of 6,963 organisations, 398 of which are property of the national government, 6,023 belong to municipalities and 734 belong to state-owned national holdings and national companies.

Kazakhstan's policy of state assets management is aimed at ensuring transparency in the management of state property and is being implemented in four main areas:

1. Improving the efficiency of state property management.
2. Restructuring state assets.
3. Conservation and management of strategic assets.
4. Improving legislation regarding state asset management.

Currently, much work is being done to improve state property management and create a system for its planning, monitoring, evaluation and control based on the Register of State Property.

It's worth noting that corporate governance in the public sector has improved dramatically. Some quasi-public sector entities such as KMG EP, KEGOC and Air Astana are evaluated by international rating agencies and receive ratings on their corporate governance.

Elements of corporate management are introduced in state-owned enterprises in the fields of education and healthcare. In the future, it is planned to create supervisory boards in all state-owned enterprises. These measures will help ensure effectiveness and increase the transparency of the quasi-public sector. In addition, we intend to introduce a system of effective management and internal control and monitoring to identify all risks the sector is facing in any economic situation. This will allow quasi-public sector entities to optimally interact with their environment and effectively distribute resources, which in turn will increase their financial performance.

This year, in order to optimise the quasi-public sector, the government approved a list of entities to be transferred to the competitive

environment. Thus, 782 quasi-public organisations will be transferred and 380 companies and firms will be reorganised or liquidated. National holdings and national companies will transfer 337 assets to the private sector. This includes the Samruk Kazyna National Welfare Fund – 106 assets; the Baiterek Holding – 15; Kazagro – 32; Parasat – 8; Zerde – 2 and Social-Entrepreneurial Corporations (SEC) – 174. The list of objects to be privatised will be published on the web portal of the State Property Register at www.gosreestr.kz.

In 2017, the number of quasi-public sector entities will be reduced by 15 percent, including nationally owned properties – by 28 percent; housing and public utilities – by 10 percent, SEC – 60 percent and national holdings and companies by 36 percent.

In addition, as part of the People's IPO programme, an IPO issuance timetable of candidate companies was released. Shares of KEGOC will be placed on the stock market in 2014; Samruk-Energo will go public in 2015 and Kazakhstan Temir Zholy and Kazatomprom in 2016.

Kazakhstan's Civil Code identifies key strategic organisations with socioeconomic importance to the country's sustainable development that impact national security and regulates their ownership, transfer and liquidation. The list of these strategic facilities was approved by a governmental resolution.

A special commission concerned with strategic organisations was created by the government. In addition, in order to improve legislation for the management of public assets and prevent the uncontrolled growth of companies with direct and indirect state participation, the government has drafted and submitted a bill to limit state participation in entrepreneurial activities to the Mazhilis (lower chamber of the Parliament).

We will create a transparent and efficient system of state asset management, determine the optimum number of state-owned enterprises and organisations and stock shares that belong to the state. We will also work to reduce redundancy in quasi-public entities.

The author is head of the Department of State Assets Management of the Ministry of National Economy.

Men's Health Centre to Collaborate with Urology Centre

By Aigul Bidanova

SEMEY – The new men's health centre in Semey will partner with the Dzhambursynov Scientific Centre for Urology. The decision was made by specialists from both of these organisations during a meeting of the Republican Action School of Men's Health hosted by In Vitro, a private clinic.

"During the meeting, we conducted free medical exams for 150 citizens who have urology related problems," Chief Urologist of Kazakhstan Myrzakan Alchinbayev said. "In addition, we examined the personnel of one of the military units and delivered lectures to local colleagues who specialise in urology and andrology."

According to scientists, today prostatitis is not just a disease, it is a social problem. According to international studies, benign prostatic hyperplasia is one of the most common diseases among older men. It affects more than 50 percent of men under the age of 50 and almost 90 percent of men under 80.

"In the results of men's reproductive health screening studies across 14 regions of Kazakhstan, signs of mild erectile dysfunction were discovered in 53 percent of cases. Men with a moderate level of ED constituted 28 percent of those studied and seven percent of men studied suffered from severe ED," Alchinbayev said.

The Dzhambursynov Scientific Urology Centre has hosted the Action School of Men's Health



The new men's health centre in Semey partnered with the Dzhambursynov Scientific Centre for Urology.

across Kazakhstan for many years and actively promotes opening medical centres that deal with the problem. As explained by Galia Zhuasbayeva, deputy head of the East Kazakhstan Regional Healthcare Department, they have already prepped personnel and allocated space for the Semey centre.

In the past year, SCU specialists held similar events in Shymkent, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Karaganda and Almaty. It is difficult to overestimate their importance, because according to statistics, male life expectancy is 10 percent lower than that of women. By the age of 75, cancer deaths among men are two times higher

than among women, cases of coronary heart disease occur at rates three times more often among men than women and diabetes is six times more frequent. This situation is compounded by the fact that men visit doctors three times less often than women. This is why the early detection of disease amongst men is so low.

Mangistau Civil Servants Attend Management Personnel Training Through EU Programme

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – On Aug. 4, over 100 civil servants from the Mangistau region attended a seminar in Aktau on integrated information systems and the role of new technologies in their work, including Kazakhstan's new E-kyzmet integrated information system for civil service personnel management that is planned to be completed by the end of next year.

Representatives from more than 40 government agencies, including all five district akimats (local governments) as well as the

Zhanaozen and Aktau city akimats, attended the seminar, where speakers discussed the importance of the new system in supporting efficiency and productivity in staff management. Participants were also acquainted with a Dutch programme, P-Direkt, offered as an example of European personnel management best practices.

The seminar was organised and funded by the four-year, \$6.1 million EU-funded project, Civil Service Reform and Modernisation of the Government of Kazakhstan, which is intended to support legislative reform and improve the

institutional capabilities of Kazakhstan's civil service and public administration bodies. Most recently, it supported study trips to Europe by civil servants and journalists. The Aktau seminar was also supported by Kazakhstan's National Centre for Civil Service Staff Management.

Vice President of the National Centre for Civil Service Staff Management Issatai Sagindykov presented the Kazakh E-kyzmet system under development, which is designed to automate agency activities and the personnel services of Kazakh state bodies. He em-

phasised the importance of up-to-date information technologies in improving the function of government bodies.

Experts from the EU project Konstantin Sokulskiy and Maximilian Foedinger presented the Dutch system, which centralises and standardises the processes of 10 ministries in The Netherlands. They also discussed the activities of the overall EU programme in Kazakhstan.

Similar training seminars are to be held in Karaganda, Pavlodar and South Kazakhstan this year.

Organ Donor, Heart Transplantation Conference Held in Astana

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – "Transplantology in Kazakhstan: From the Present to the Future," an international scientific and practical conference, was held Aug. 8-9 at the National Research Cardiac Centre (NRCC) here. The topics included the fundamentals of transplant coordination and were dedicated to organ donation and transplantation.

According to the NRCC, 163 transplants of donor organs were made in Kazakhstan in 2013, with an additional 116 transplants of various organs completed to date this year.

Advanced transplantation techniques, including technology for implanting artificial circulatory support devices with various modifications, have been successfully implemented at the level of world standards, not only in major research centres in the country, but also in regional hospitals. A unique device called Transmedics is used for transporting donor hearts.

To facilitate the transport time, the Ministry of Internal Affairs jointly with the Civil Aviation

Committee has provided sanitary aviation. The National Coordination Centre for organ transplantation, with representatives in all regions, was established.

"The whole crew, a team of usu-

ally up to 80 people, flies over to the needed destination and the transplant coordinator manages the entire process," explained First Deputy Chairman of NRCC Makhabbat Bekbossynova. "Not

only medics are involved in such operations, but also the [newly-structured] Ministry of Internal Affairs and a traffic police escort. You know that it is very important when every minute, every hour counts."

In accordance with international practice, great importance is attached to arranging transplant service coordination. Regional transplant coordinators have been introduced in every region of Kazakhstan. The coordinators are responsible for organising the further development of organ donation and transplantation, and above all, to detect patients with brain death in a timely manner and inform the transplant centres.

"I cannot speak for everyone, but I can talk about heart surgery, especially here in this institution, as it is compared to some of the best cardiac institutions in the world," said Jan Pirk, a professor at the Prague Institute of Clinical and Experimental Medicine who assisted in 2012 during the first heart transplantation surgery in Kazakhstan. "A new artificial heart model also began here as a clinical trial. The new model is implemented only in five other clinics around the world and one of them is here."

According to doctors, one donor can save seven lives. The misunderstanding surrounding the idea

of organ donation and transplantation in Kazakhstan has led to a 69 percent death rate of patients whose lives could be saved.

"With the new heart I think I will continue to live and be happy. I will work as always, like all other citizens of Kazakhstan. I think I was cured. I am now spreading the idea of organ transplantation, that is to make people understand the need for transplantation," noted heart recipient Khaidar Kairbekov.

Among other guest speakers were cardiac surgeons from Japan, South Korea, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Russia and Belarus, who also held master classes at the NRCC and state hospital No.6. Conference participants were not only professionals in the field of organ and tissue transplantation but also representatives of various government agencies and nongovernmental and religious organisations, as well as lawyers, psychologists and organ transplantation recipients.

The Kazakh government fully finances the costs of high-tech organ transplants and subsequent rehabilitation of recipients.



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'Road to School' Programme Aids Vulnerable Children



By Rufiya Ospanova

The "Road to School" campaign to provide support for schoolchildren from low-income families and orphans in the Pavlodar region began on Aug. 1 and will continue until Sept. 30.

This year's campaign is being conducted under the heading "Give the Good to Children" and is expected to provide a total of 86.6 million tenge (US\$475,668) assistance to more than 9,500 school children.

Children in the region who are living with families that are not registered in the region will also be helped with clothing, shoes and school supplies, according to Korlan Kuspekova, deputy chief of the department of education. All school children in the region should be at their desks on Sept. 1.

In the North Kazakhstan region, more than 8,000 children from socially vulnerable families will also receive assistance through the "Road to School" campaign. More

than 200,000 tenge (US\$1,099) has been allocated so far from the region's educational fund for assistance to children there from low-income families and those without parental care.

Among the first students to receive aid under this year's programme were students from Kozhabergen Zhyrau High School No. 6.

"We have eight children from large families, four without parents, 13 from low-income families. Today, we give children backpacks and stationery. I think it's a huge help from the state for such families. They need it," said Zhadyra Kospayeva, a social worker at school No. 6.

More than 50,000 children overall have been helped by the campaign since 2007 at a cost of more than 208 million tenge (US\$1.14 million). Each year, local akimats (administrations), government agencies, large enterprises as well as urban and rural businessmen participate in the campaign, ac-

ording to the regional department of education. Also this year, fairs will be held in districts and cities in which businessmen will sell school supplies at discount prices.

"Road to School" is organised by the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan. Its purpose is to support children from low-income families in their preparation for the new school year, to draw attention to the problems of families in difficult circumstances and to create conditions for charitable activities of organisations and citizens.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan allows all citizens to help child in need providing various forms of assistance, including school supplies and clothing, office equipment or teaching aids, furniture, toys, household appliances and sports equipment, food or books. These items help prepare children for the new school year and improve conditions for learning and recreation.

Youth Debate Societal Challenges, Civic Engagement on International Youth Day

Continued from Page A1

Marina Mironchik, UN Development Programme (UNDP) programme assistant, gave a presentation that generated a discussion on the role of youth in the country's development. The UNDP operates more than 30 projects in Kazakhstan, frequently with youth as a target group or partner. Projects integrating repatriated Kazakhs and disabled people into local economies and societies often impact Kazakhstan's youth, she said. Youth entrepreneurship programmes provide training and grants to businesses started by young people, and more than 10,000 young Kazakh citizens have come to the UNDP's 32 entrepreneurship and business information centres for consultations.

Young participants at the conference had questions about pilot transportation programmes and recycling initiatives, and were exhorted by UNDP Kazakhstan's head of governance and local development Ainur Baimyrza to start their own projects if they didn't see the UN or government work addressing their concerns.

"Sometimes it takes more than just a government or UNDP project – sometimes it takes you, personally, to change your lifestyles," she said. "Start changing your attitudes – then, I think, a big change can be done in society. Every project that we do is just a small pilot or start up. It's just something to show that it works. [T]hen we ask for people in Kazakhstan to pick it up and do it. That's what makes the real success afterward," Baimyrza said.

Ji Hyun Yang, communications specialist with the UN Volunteers, discussed the significance of volunteerism among youth and the UN's

efforts to increase youth involvement in their activities, including its Joint Youth Initiative 2014, which is intended to increase youth communication with the organisation, increase their understanding of UN activities in Kazakhstan, promote youth participation in the post-2015 development agenda, coordinate youth programmes in the country and create broader partnerships between the UN, the private sector, diplomats, academics, media and others on youth issues.

One new measure is the Youth Advisory Council of 10 members aged 15 to 29 who are closely linked to local youth and professional organisations, who will advise Kazakhstan's UN country team and participate in meetings with them and UN agency heads.

"We're happily surprised that you are here," Yang told the young participants. Past youth-focused events had not been very well attended, she said. "This is one of the things we're trying to increase – communication and youth accessibility to UN colleagues."

Participation in politics and civil society was the theme of the closing discussion, when participants debated their role and interest in politics in response to a question put earlier by the UN permanent representative. He asked what the gathered young people thought about statistics indicating weakening youth involvement in politics in the country.

It's true: young people are not generally interested in politics, participant Iskander Beisen answered. "The reason, primarily, is priority. It's like our President has said ... economics comes first, and our population seems to think the same way. A lot of youth at this moment prioritise their material wealth

rather than their civic engagement or their contribution to the political development of the country."

Diana Madibekova disagreed, saying young people do care about politics, but changing values and notions of what is public get in the way of engagement. "From year to year, month to month, Kazakhstan is becoming more technological, digital. We are living in a digital world, where everything is recorded – everything you say, everything you do. In Kazakh culture, we like being discreet, we don't like being watched. But I think we need to face that barrier and overcome that challenge. We need to speak out." Kazakh young people want new values, including democracy, she said.

An education system that leaves politics out is the problem, said Yermorat Aitkhozha. Others argued that being stuck between media machines in Russia, China and the United States made it dauntingly difficult to decide what might be true in the torrent of information, and blamed a general lack of trust between the population and authority figures for a waning of interest in politics by the entire population. Increasing transparency, increasing activity, increasing trust between individuals and doctors, teachers and then akims will make people more confident of their ability to have some political impact, he added.

Participant Asset Mukhatalin noted that it's important to analyse Kazakhstan in the context of the world. It's the global economy that's pushing a business rather than political agenda. "I think we're just in the context of a global change where politics becomes less important and economics and progress becomes more important," he said.

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TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

Expedition Uncovers Secrets about Ancient Kangyui

By Lyubov Dobrota

SHYMKENT – The expedition of the Kazakhstan Central State Museum, led for two months on the Kultobe site by Professor Alexander Podushkin, Doctor of Historical Sciences, collected rich material about the ancient state of Kangyui (Kantszyuy) recently.

The archaeologists worked on the scientific programme “Archaeological and written records of the Kangyui state” that existed from the second century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. within the boundaries of the Arys and middle Syr Darya rivers between the Karatau and Karzhantau mountains.

The history of this state is still considered the most enigmatic and little-known. Even the slightest archaeological information is very valuable, because it allows researchers to gather information about those who lived there in ancient times and shed light on the early stages of ethno-genesis of the Kazakhs as a nation.

Podushkin is inclined to believe that the centre of the Kangyui state was in the Arys area. Moreover, the scientist feels the Karaspantobe settlement, located in close proximity to the ancient settlement and burial site of Kultobe, is the city of Bityan, which is mentioned in the Chinese written sources as the capital of the Kangyui state.

The Kultobe mound was dis-



Professor Alexander Podushkin

covered and initially explored in 1964 by the archaeological team of the Shymkent Pedagogical Institute under the direction of Nikolai Podushkin. Since 1991, his son has led excavations on the eastern group of mounds.

The settlement is located a kilometre from the village of Saryaryk in the Ordabasy district. Here the archaeologists found more than 100 mounds. Each season brings dozens of archaeological artifacts – catacomb burials, pottery and a variety of jewelry and household items, which the scientists and historians can use to reconstruct the burial rites and lifestyle of our ancestors. Any finding, regardless of whether it is a ceramic jar or a precious ruby

set in gold, is equally important for scientists.

This time, researchers also collected rich material about the life of the ancient state. For two months they excavated three burial constructions, two of which were collective tombs. All of them were catacomb-type family vaults traditional for this area.

It is a complex structure, which includes an underground chamber, a small hole and a corridor (dromos) where the burial procedure took place. All three uncovered catacombs demonstrated a certain level of social development. Historians were interested in the fact that one of the collective burials was at a depth of five metres. Its size, the method and



depth of burial and more diverse set of artifacts indicated high social status of the deceased; the deeper catacombs and more powerful the mound over the grave, the higher their social status. The burial chambers fully preserved all the ceremonial paraphernalia and a few hundred artifacts, in particular beads, inlaid bracelets, knives, a fibula in the form of a crossbow, a lot of ceramics, a mirror, a bronze bell, gold jewelry and many other things related to the life of the people of that time.

“We have a very interesting cross-section, which shows the stage of development of the Kangyui society,” Podushkin commented on the results of the expedition. “For example, we are sure that it was multiethnic.

The single female burial clearly leads us to the Sarmatians of the northern Black Sea region. They used such bronze mirrors, inflicting ritual damage on them after the death of the owner. The Sarmatians used gold to decorate clothing, wearing bracelets on their arms and legs. This means

that the area of living space of the Sarmatians at that time had already expanded to the current southern regions of Kazakhstan.”

In two collective graves, the archaeologists also found remains of representatives of a settled population, which means that nomads and farmers lived and got along with each other.

After description and study, all artifacts will be passed to the Kazakhstan Central State Museum, which already has a special fund for Podushkin’s most significant findings.

National Geographic Silk Road Exhibition Returns to Kazakhstan

Continued from Page B1

The expedition participants collected materials about the history, geography, ethnography, and linguistics of Kashgaria and learned the routes of Ualikhanov, Marco Polo, Nikolay Przhevalsky, Karl Mannerheim, Gunnar Jarring and Yuri Rerikh.

According to Director of the Kazakh Institute of Geography Akhmetkala Medeu, the expedition gave the opportunity to inquire about changes that took place in population composition, natural conditions and lifestyle throughout the centuries.

“The expedition to Kashgaria is a very interesting project. We have to learn the territory of our neighbours in order to understand them better,” explained Medeu.

The head of the expedition Smailzhan Iminov said that despite the fact that Ualikhanov finished his expedition more than 150 years ago, this region still remains unknown and less explored and a lot of secrets have to be exposed.

“Kashgaria was always a mysterious land. A lot of researchers of that time wanted to discover it. Ualikhanov spent five months there and de-

spite the fact he wrote a book about his journey, a lot of facts remain to be unveiled. We will visit the cities that were poorly described,” said Iminov.

Candidate of geographical sciences Kadyr Musa said that he collected a lot of useful data about landscape changes.

“This is a unique route. We passed through ridges, intermontane valleys and gorges. The landscape has changed dramatically, I should say. Some of the rivers dried out or changed their streamway,” said Musa.

Biologist and regional ethnographer of the Eurasian National University Zhashayir Karagozhin noted that plants described by Ualikhanov can still be found. However, the climate has changed in some parts of the region, so we can assume that Ualikhanov saw another kind of nature concerning flora and fauna. New types of plants have emerged. For instance, expeditionists noticed dog roses in the Kyzyl Yar canyon, which are not typical for the region.

“I think it was a successful trip. I could only imagine how challenging it was for Ualikhanov to complete the expedition. It was snowing

heavily when we were climbing up the mountains and as we know, the Ualikhanov expedition took place in the fall and the return trip was organised in March. Moreover, he was only 22 years old. Despite the young age he created a great treatise which is highly valued in the history of orientalism,” explained Iminov.

The expedition also had a tourism purpose. Researchers noted that Central Asia has a lot of interesting places for discoverers. Collected materials will be used in the project called Central Asian Golden Ring, which is aimed to unite touristic opportunities of the Central Asian states together with China.

Ualikhanov, who decided to participate in the expedition in 1858, passed the route as part of the merchant’s caravan. He traveled in a mask as a merchant named Alimbay. After 11 months, he came back to Verna (now Almaty) and wrote a report, “About Altynshar condition or about six oriental cities of the Chinese province Nan Loo (1858-1859)”. The treatise was highly appreciated by Russian orientalists and soon after was republished in English.

Ancient Ornek Added to UNESCO World Heritage List

By Taraz Zaurekhanov

ZHAMBYL REGION – The Ornek settlement has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The Ornek settlement dates to the eighth-twelfth centuries. It is located 7.7 kilometres south of Ornek village on the banks of the Altynsu and Shybyndy rivers, in the Sulutor gorge of the Ryskulov district. Arab maps composed by Ibn Khordadbeh and Kudam give clear evidence that settlements such as Kasribas, Kulshub and Dzhulshub were located among Taraz, Lower Baryskhan and Kulan.

There is also an opinion on the identity of the city of Kasribas and the Akyrtyas settlement. In this case, Ornek must correspond to Kulshub which, as well as Kasribas, belonged to the Karluk people and was one of the encampments of Karluk feudal lords. Archaeological materials suggest that the camp emerged on the place of permanent sedentary settlements, which apparently had been formed on the territory

of spring and autumn pastures of one of the nomadic tribes. Most likely, part of the nomadic population grew wheat on the fenced fields and in turn, the reinforced camp served as the nucleus of the city.

Scientists say that international trade played a decisive role in the Ornek settlement, for its strong fortifications, mosques and mausoleum indicate that it was a developed and populous city.

The central part of the settlement is a rectangular area measuring 155x160 metres and oriented to the cardinal angles with the entrances in the form of breaks in the mound. The roads running from the entrances intersected at the centre of the ancient city. Big stone boulders separated the sections of land located mainly along the Sulutor gorge. The total area of the array is about 500 hectares.

During the excavation of the central part of the settlement archaeologists found a 40-x-20-metre rectangular building with stone walls and columns oriented to the cardinal points. One of col-

umns, made of gray sandstone, is stored in the regional history museum. On its upper part are four relief medallions in a circle with stylised images of human faces. The diameter of the medallions is 31 centimetres. The remains of the building are most likely a pillar-type mosque known in Central Asia. Such temples are typical for early stages of Islam.

The remains of a residential house with stone walls and a street, traced on the area of 1.1 kilometres, were discovered opposite the mosque. The excavations showed part of the street was used for canals that supplied drinking water to the population of Ornek. Also among the findings were irrigated and non-irrigated dishware and crockery, including loop-handle pots, pitchers, jars, mugs, glazed cups, disk-trays and plates.

The study of such monuments as the Ornek settlement allows us to trace one of the most important processes of history – the settling of nomads and the appearance of their urban centres.

Kazakh Cultural Tourism Has Untapped Potential

By Token Moldakynov

During a speech at an expanded government meeting, President Nursultan Nazarbayev said that most economic growth in Kazakhstan stems from the service sector. Its share of GDP has reached 53 percent.

“Countries that persistently take measures to improve the competitiveness of their service sectors increase productivity. We still don’t pay enough attention to our service sector,” he said. “For example, each job created in tourism creates additional jobs in utilities, food and transport.”

Cultural and historical tourism has a lot of untapped growth potential here in Kazakhstan. There are more than a dozen historical and cultural sites in our region that were completely restored. We are now ready for tourists thanks to the Cultural Heritage State Programme.

Now, we should pay special attention to the three supporting pillars behind the tourism industry – food, accommodation and our roads.

For example, Akyrtyas, one of our nation’s unique monuments, is located only 45 kilometres from the city of Taraz and only 8 kilometres from the road. If we build a good road, the number of tourists, both domestic and foreign will increase markedly. Also, it is necessary to bring water, telecommunications and electricity to other facilities. Then, entrepreneurs will willingly build hotels, catering facilities and open souvenir shops. Making souvenirs is a great way to create jobs and demonstrate our nation’s heritage to the world.

Our region is very rich and in addition to historical tourism, we can develop mountaineering and organise hunting in the desert (in the 1990s, Arab sheiks came to Kazakhstan for these purposes.)

But in order to preserve nature and prevent poaching, we need a strong legal framework.

Everyone has heard of our cultural history sector, which includes the mausoleums of Aisha Bibi, Babaji Khatun and Karakhan. The biggest oriental bath-house in Kazakhstan, Kali Yunus Hammam is in the centre of the city of Taraz. These tourist sites were created jointly by patrons of our organisation and local authorities. There are also roads, telecommunications and retail outlets in the region.

We launched an initiative in Taraz to revive patronage. Last year, according to philanthropists, facilities at the mausoleum of Aisha-Bibi worth \$1.2 million were built. Now more than 10 people work there.

The author is director of the Monuments of Ancient Taraz Historical and Cultural Reserve Museum.



The Ornek settlement dates to the eighth-twelfth centuries.

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Kazakhstan's Junior Para-Athletes Win 29 Medals at IWAS Games

Continued from Page B1

Eighteen-year-old Azizbek Torakulov took third place in the 800-metre distance on the second day, while 19-year-old Bakhyt Bekbai took bronze in the javelin throw.

Kazakhstan's physically-challenged athletes are traditionally strong in swimming, and this competition was no exception. Dmitry Li, 18, won gold in the 100-metre freestyle event, the 200-metre medley and the 100-metre breaststroke and took silver in the 50-metre freestyle.

"I have been practicing swimming since I was six years old, but I did it to improve my health. I only started to practice it professionally when I turned 11," Li said. "My first competitions in Almaty gave an impetus to my further development. Now, I cannot imagine what I would do instead of swimming. Swimming is my passion. I like to follow the results of my rivals and to compare my current results with past ones."

"In my opinion, these Junior Games were successful for our

team. A year has passed since the previous Asian Junior Games [and] our junior team has become stronger and more experienced, and thus our swimmers demonstrated good results. We proved that we are ready to compete with the strongest athletes at the Asian Para Games [in Incheon in 2014]" he underlined.

Vladislav Ligai, 16, won gold in the 400-metre freestyle and the 50-metre and 100-metre backstroke. In the 50- and 100-metre freestyle, he won silver.

Sergey Kinakh, 22, took home gold for the 50-metre butterfly and the 50-metre freestyle and took second in the 100-metre and 400-metre freestyle, the 100-metre butterfly and the 200-metre medley.

Anastassiya Ogneva, 17, took the third place in the 50-metre backstroke; Leonella Burdina, 19, won the bronze medal in the 50-metre butterfly. Beksultan Zhanibektarkhan, 16, took bronze in the 50-metre backstroke and 50-metre freestyle events.

Yegor Bolinger, 20, a powerlifter from the Pavlodar region, won the silver medal in the under-88



kilogramme event. He also set three world junior records.

Eldana Baduova, 14, took first

place in table tennis, while her partner from the team, Shynar Kenzhebayeva, 18, won bronze.

Kazakhstan's junior para-team was supported by the National Paralympic Committee of Kazakh-

stan, the Samruk Kazyna National Welfare Fund and regional sports clubs.

Dauletova Wins Bronze Medal at World Chess Olympiad



By Azat Abyroi

The Kazakh Women's Chess Team achieved great success at the recent 41st World Chess Olympiad held in the Norwegian city of Tromsø.

International Master and Kazakhstan resident Gulmira Dauletova became the bronze medalist of the players who played at the fifth, back-up board. With eight undefeated parties, she scored seven points. Only Rout Padmini of India and Chu Guo of China scored more than Dauletova. In the composite rating of all participants, Dauletova placed sixth. Her win rate was 87.5 percent.

Another Kazakh player, 17-year-old Dinara Saduakassova continued here unbeaten streak, gaining 2,488 rating points against the strongest rivals from other countries.

Player Grossmeister Saduakassova entered the list of the top five players who competed on the second board. In 11 meetings, she scored 8.5 points without losing a single game. In this category, she lost only to Valentina Guginin from Russia, Bela Khotenashvili of Georgia, Venyun Yu of China and Sarasadat Hademalsharikh of Iran.

In the most successful World Olympiad for Kazakhstan chess players, the team finished in sixth place. The team included Dauletova and Saduakassova as well as Guliskhan Nahbaeva, Zhansaya Abdumalik and Madina Davletbayeva.

More than 2,000 players from 177 men's and 136 women's teams from around the world participated in the 41st World Chess Olympiad.

East Kazakhstan Children's Bike Race Honors History of Domestic Cycling

By Svetlana Abenova

Schoolchild of Kazakhstan 2014, the 45th international multi-day bicycle race that started Aug. 4 in the East Kazakhstan region, was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of domestic cycling and supported by the national newspaper, Kazakhstanskaya Pravda.

For eight days, 120 young bicycle racers, including athletes from Uzbekistan, overcame various distances on the mountain slopes. Shortly before the start of the marathon, the Astana Pro Team won the Tour de France, which affected the mood of the competitors who were contending for the 15th time in a row.

"The East Kazakhstan slopes presented a variety of profiles, so they are ideal for the bike races. And every year the stages of the competition become more complex," said Alexander Antyshev, permanent director of cycling for Schoolchild of Kazakhstan.

At various times, Olympic champion Alexander Vinokourov and such famous athletes as Andrei Kivilev, Andrey Kashechkin, Marat Satybaldiyev, Sergei Navolokin, Nikolay Markov, Igor Potenko and others participated in the small bicycle academy. The executive director of the Na-



Schoolchild of Kazakhstan 2014, the 45th international multi-day bicycle race.

tional Cycling Federation Dmitry Muraviyev, who was recently appointed to the position, climbed the pedestal three times to honor the most famous and prestigious cycling in the world.

Muraviyev is from Ust-Kamenogorsk, and according to him, he was happy to come to his hometown where he started his sports career. The main purpose of the famous cyclist's arrival was not only participation in the closing ceremony of the race.

"The credit, of course, goes to the regional akimat (administration) and, of course, the head of the region Berdybek Saparbayev

who does a lot for the promotion of sports in the east of the country. In particular, it was he who initiated the cycling Tour d'Oskenmen scheduled for mid-September of this year. We expect a lot from these events and hope they strengthen the image of our country in the eyes of the world community," Muraviyev said.

Sergey Garkushenko, the representative of the national scientific and practical centre of physical education of the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science, noted that the annual competitions of young riders have been held under the auspices of

the centre of physical education since 2002. According to him, the current cycling race is different in that there was not a single complain by the participants.

Sergey Bredikhin, national judge and USSR Master of Sports, is sure that the commemorative cycling will be decisive for many of its participants. And, of course, the future world champions are among its winners.

Winner of the second stage of the race Vadim Pronsky took the leader's yellow jersey with him. The student from the Astana 2 team repeatedly got on the podium, as his results were the best in all seven stages of the marathon. He also got the special prize Schoolchild of Kazakhstan 2014 established by Kazakhstanskaya Pravda. The champion of the sixth stage Eugeny Gidich from the Akmolka region won the mountain racer nomination. Maxim Satlikov, of Astana, won the active racer nomination.

Astana 1 team won the team competition, the capital's team Astana 2 took second place and cyclists from the Almaty region were in third. The team from the North Kazakhstan region was in fourth place and the team of students from Uzbekistan finished fifth.

Boxer Golovkin Nominated for Best Boxer 2014, Could Face Marco Rubio Next

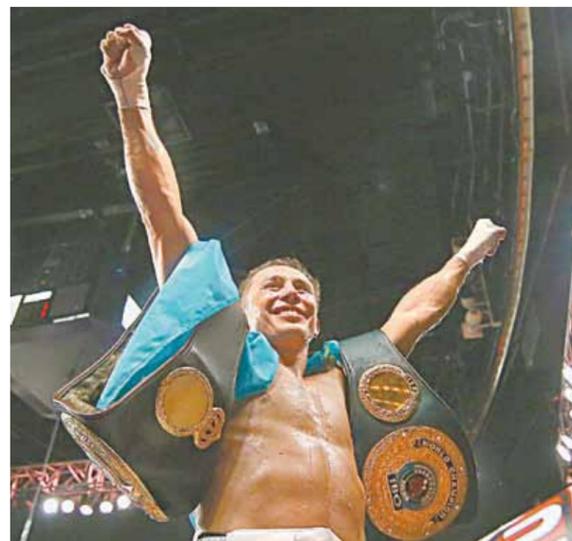
By Dmitry Lee

World middleweight World Boxing Association (WBA Super) and International Boxing Organisation (IBO) champion Gennady Golovkin of Kazakhstan has joined the list of contenders for the title of best boxer for 2014, according to Bleacherreport.com.

The site included the first seven contenders with Golovkin currently listed fourth. In 2014, the Kazakh had two bouts, which he won by technical knockout. On Feb. 1, he stopped Ghanaian Osumanu Adam and on July 27 he defended his title in a fight against Australian Daniel Geale.

According to Bleacherreport.com, Golovkin could be named boxer of the year if he wins fights against either Miguel Cotto or Andre Ward.

However, Golovkin's next fight is scheduled for Oct. 18, and although nothing has been finalised,



IBO champion Gennady 'GGG' Golovkin of Kazakhstan joined the list of contenders for the title of best boxer for 2014.

there is a name and it's neither Cotto nor Ward but the Mexican Marco Antonio Rubio. The 34-year-old Mexican tweeted earlier "Since [Miguel Cotto] didn't want to fight me, we're fighting [Golovkin]https://twitter.com/gggbboxing Oct. 18. I never back-down from anyone. The battle is coming!"

Rubio will be a challenge for Golovkin as he is known for taking good punches, what the Kazakh is feared for. However, Golovkin's camp has not confirmed the deal yet, only announcing that the next fight will be in Los Angeles on Oct. 18. Rubio is an experienced veteran fighter, but has had success only against mid-level fighters. He has challenged champions only twice and failed both times Golovkin is favoured in the match-up, having won 30 bouts with no defeats in his career.

Earlier, 40-year-old Australian Sam Soliman refused to fight Golovkin, although just under two months ago he claimed he would. Soliman opted to fight American Jermain Taylor on Oct. 4 and try to defend the title he just stripped off German Felix Stu

CAPITAL

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014

Astana Exhibition Depicts Horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki



Pictures of the "Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" exhibition depict the devastation of those atomic bombings carried out by the United States against Japan in 1945.

By Ruliyana Ospanova

ASTANA – The "Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" exhibition, which depicts the devastation of those atomic bombings and is dedicated to 23rd anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in eastern Kazakhstan, opened here on Aug. 6.

"It is a great honour for us to hold the exhibition in Kazakhstan, because the residents of your country are familiar with the tragedy that was experienced by Japan. During the Soviet times, the nuclear test site was operating in the country. It is the common fate of our peoples. This must never be forgotten," said Masanobu Chita, director of the Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Complex, which organised the exhibition at the Palace of Independence with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, the Kazakhstan-Japan Centre for Human Resources Development and the Astana akimat (city administration).

"Aug. 6, 1945 entered into human history as a day of tragedy for the Japanese people, affected by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and [later] Nagasaki," said Barlybai Sadykov, Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, in his welcoming speech. "For nearly 70 years, this day has been marked as a day of remembrance and mourning. For the people of Kazakhstan, who experienced tragedy of nuclear testing, the pain and suffering

of the people of Japan are deeply understood. At the Semipalatinsk test site during the 40 years of its existence, from 1949 to 1989, over 450 nuclear explosions took place, affecting over a million people."

Sadykov also spoke about the ATOM Project, an international education campaign launched by Kazakhstan to galvanise global public opinion about the need to rid the world of nuclear weapons testing and, ultimately, the nuclear weapons. Under this project, which tells the stories of nuclear weapons testing survivors, every person, who is against nuclear tests, can sign the online petition to the governments of the world calling for abolishing nuclear tests forever.

The Nagasaki Peace Memorial Complex has held exhibitions annually since 2005 around the world to inform the public about the dangers of nuclear weapons and the need to maintain peace in the world.

"I witnessed the tragedy in the dormitory. We tried to escape with my group-mates. I am the only one who is still alive today. Others died of the consequences of the nuclear catastrophe," said Souhei Tsuiki, eyewitness of the bombing in Nagasaki, during the launch ceremony for the exhibition.

Tsuiki was 18 years old when the atomic bombing in Nagasaki occurred. He was sleeping in the dormitory of Nagasaki Pedagogical College, which was located 18 kilometres from the epicentre. Students of the college were mo-

bilised for work in the Mitsubishi military plant in Akasako.

The exhibition includes large photographs depicting the tragedy of the bombings and their consequences, eyewitness statements, documentaries about the bombings, survivors' diaries and paper cranes popular in Nagasaki and Hiroshima as a symbol of a prayer for peace. Visitors can also leave messages, which will be delivered to Nagasaki for storage in the Peace Memorial Complex.

Kazakhstan is the tenth country where the "Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" exhibition has been held. The United States was the first and, according to Tsuiki, many Americans cried and asked for forgiveness when they heard his story.

The exhibition will remain open to the public in Astana until Aug. 25 before it travels to Semey, where it will be displayed until Sept. 3 in Semey's historical museum. The exhibition will then be displayed in Almaty from Sept. 10 until the end of the month.

The Nagasaki Peace Memorial Complex is a National Institute of Japan dedicated to the victims of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, which took place on Aug. 9, 1945. The memorial complex was built as a place of remembrance and prayer for those who died in the explosion of the atomic bomb. Photographs, memories and personal items related to the bombing are stored there.

"All four schools are located on the left bank: two are in the Yessil district, two in the Almaty district. This will remove the overcrowding of schools and three-shift training. In this case, there are no emergency schools in Astana," Sengaziyev said.

He also said that this year about 7,000 children from low-income families will receive support from sponsors in preparing for school. In the past year, 6,803 children received such aid, mostly first grade schoolchildren.

Sengaziyev, during the Aug. 4 briefing on the 7th annual national campaign, "Road to school," also reported that by the end of the year, eight new schools will be opened.

"By the end of the year, we plan to open eight schools overall [including four by Sept. 1]. We had planned to open a total of nine schools, but one school is already open now," he said.

According to him, the facility which is scheduled to open on Sept. 1 is 100 percent ready. Others are nearing completion. Each school will be able to accommodate 1,200 students. "Schools are for 1,200 people. This is more than 8,000 seats only, when we need 23,000," he concluded.

This year, according to preliminary data of the city's Department of Education, 13,000 children will go to school.

Astana Opera Searches for Young Talent



The Astana Opera children's studio accepts applications until Aug. 30.

By Alina Usmanova

The Astana Opera recently announced it will accept applications from Aug. 1 to Aug. 30 for enrollment in its children's studio.

Some applicants will then perform for judges on Sept. 6-7. Children ages 7 to 16 years old are eli-

gible for inclusion in the choir and orchestra and children from 8 to 10 years old are eligible for the ballet studio. Once accepted, the cost for training will be 10,000 tenge (US\$55) per month for one child and half price for a second child from the same family. The training

will continue until July 31, 2015.

Anyone wishing to take part in the competition is requested to complete an application, which can be found on the website www.astanaopera.kz. On Sept. 2, the list of participants admitted to compete for children's choir, children's orchestra and children's ballet will be available on the theatre's website in the "About the theatre," "Children's Studio" section.

The studio began its work in November 2013. During the last season, about 150 people ranging in age from 5 to 16 years studied opera, ballet and instrumental ensemble.

The children have the opportunity to not only work, but perform in Astana Opera productions. Professional children's groups of the studio perform musical stories, participate in concerts, opera and ballet performances. Young performers have repeatedly performed at the Chamber Hall of the Astana Opera independently and with well-known Kazakh cultural figures in productions such as Puccini's "La Boheme," "Tosca," Minkus ballet "Don Quixote."

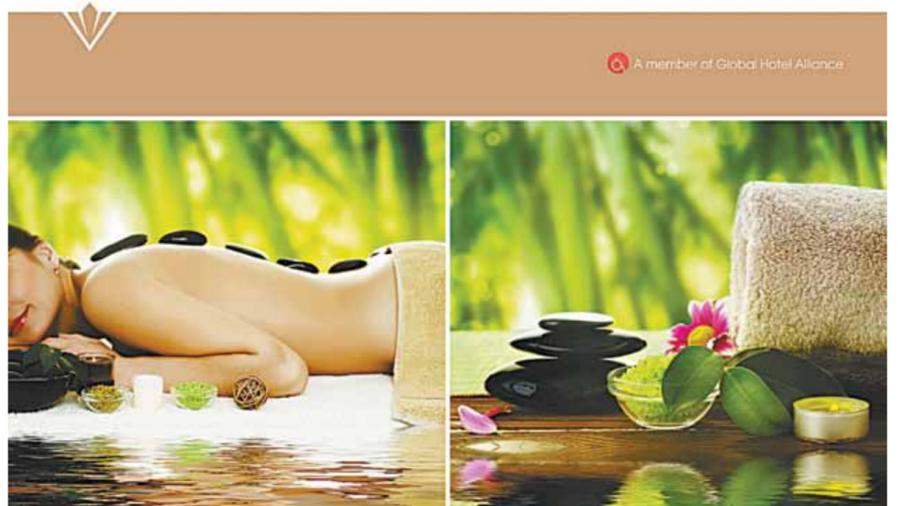
Eight Schools will be Opened by Year's End

By Alina Usmanova

ASTANA – For the new school year, four new schools will open



in Astana," Kassymkhan Sengaziyev, deputy head of the Department of Education told Kazinform news agency.



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