



In Surprise State of the Nation Address, Kazakh President Unveils Massive Infrastructure Investments



President Nursultan Nazarbayev delivers the unexpected state-of-the-nation address introducing a new economic policy emphasising massive state investment in infrastructure over the next several years.

Kazakh, Kyrgyz Presidents Reaffirm Countries' Historic Roots, Growing Economic Relationship

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev reaffirmed their two countries' growing economic and cooperative relationship during the Nov. 7 fourth Supreme Interstate Council meeting in Astana.

"The council was established seven years ago. Through all these years, it has demonstrated activism as the supreme body helpful in making important policy decisions and addressing the emerging problems between the two countries. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are

interacting in international organisations, integration associations, together countering modern challenges and threats, terrorism and extremism," Nazarbayev said during the meeting which took place as part of the state visit by the leader of the neighbouring country.

Nazarbayev noted that since the previous meeting in 2012, many events have taken place in Bishkek and that bilateral trade relations have shown an upward tendency. Over the past two years, the turnover has stably exceeded \$1 billion. In the first eight months of this year, it saw a 5.2 percent increase despite difficulties in the region.

Continued on Page A3

Stalled IPO Programme Relaunches with KEGOC Stock Release

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's stalled People's IPO programme has been revived to hold a new public stock offering, this time in the state-operated Kazakhstan Electric Grid Operating Company (KEGOC). Shares have been available by application to citizens of Kazakhstan since Nov. 5 and will be until Dec. 3; they will begin to be traded publicly on Dec. 19 when they will also be available to foreign investors.

The KEGOC's current sole shareholder, the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund, is offering 10 percent minus one share of its stock in the KEGOC, what is being reported as 25,999,999 shares

at a price of 505 tenge [US\$2.79] per share. Shares are being made available first to securities dealers, with 14,000 set aside for individual investors.

The IPO will be buttressed by Kazakhstan's Unified National Pension Fund (ENPF), which will pick up shares of KEGOC in the event that more shares are issued than are bought by the public. "If the number of applications is less than the number of emissions, ENPF could buy KEGOC shares in accordance with its contributors' interests. It will fulfill the role according to governmental decree," Director of the People's IPO Call Centre Vladimir Kovalev told The Astana Times on Nov. 14.

Continued on Page A4

By Danna Buzepzhanova

ASTANA – President Nursultan Nazarbayev unexpectedly delivered his new state-of-the-nation address in Astana on Nov. 11 at an extended session of the Political Council of the Nur Otan party, introducing what he termed a new economic policy heavily emphasising massive state investment in infrastructure over the next several years.

In previous years, the President's address has been delivered in January and February, sometimes in December. Yet, reflecting the

urgency of preventive measures needed to help steer the economy towards sustainable growth, Nazarbayev decided to move forward the date of his address so that the government would have time to introduce proposed anti-crisis steps into the budget plans for the upcoming year and proceed to work promptly. Kazakhstan's economy has grown 4 percent in the first nine months of 2014, slower than expected, and is already feeling the heat from both the 25 percent reduction in the oil price, its key export commodity, over the past two months and the reciprocal

sanctions between the West and Russia over Ukraine.

"I, on the basis of my experience, feel that the next few years will be a time of global challenges. ... Kazakhstan as a part of the global economy and a country situated close to the epicentre of geopolitical tensions is affected by these [changes in the world economy]. We see decreases in prices on international markets and a general slow-down of the economy. ... The World Bank and IMF [International Monetary Fund] have re-evaluated their global growth forecast for 2014. That is why we need to

quickly examine our positions and adjust plans for the coming years," the President said in the address televised live on several TV channels.

In response to challenges facing the nation, the President announced a new economic policy called "Nurly Zhol" (Bright Path). In some respects, the new policy resembles what Kazakhstan has done rather successfully to alleviate the pressure from the 2007-2009 global economic slowdown, as well as the New Deal policy by U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1930s.

Continued on Page A2

South African Official Promotes Business, People-to-People Connections in Astana

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Nomaindiya Mfeketo visited Astana from Nov. 5-6 to co-chair the fourth round of South Africa-Kazakhstan Bilateral Consultations with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Askar Mussinov and address the first Kazakhstan-South Africa Business Forum held under the bilateral consultations.

Her mission also included a lecture at the Kazakh Humanitarian Law University (KAZGUU) and promotion of people-to-people contacts. Mfeketo suggested students, artists, religious leaders and other members of both communities become conduits for creating deeper connections.

During the bilateral consultations, the countries agreed to cooperate and exchange experience in mineral mining and geology; oil, gas and renewable energy; agriculture and agro-processing; tourism; science and technology; higher education and training; trade and investment and innovation.

Addressing the business forum on Nov. 5, Mfeketo noted that South Africa hoped this first forum would become permanent, as South Africa has not yet fully explored the opportunities of Kazakhstan in business. Total trade between the two countries in 2013 was \$5.41 million, but the potential is far greater, she said. The two countries have much to learn from each other on their development paths, Mfeketo said.

"South Africa and Kazakhstan enjoy excellent bilateral relations and the strong bond of friendship between our two countries deserves to be translated into tangible trade and investment benefits on both sides," the deputy minister said. "South Africa attaches great importance to its relationship with Kazakhstan and regards the country as an important player in the global energy sector as well as a leader within the Central Asian region."

"The challenge today is to find and link – through our networking interactions – those areas of our economies which are complementary and mutually beneficial..."

Continued on Page A5

Ilyin Breaks Record to Become Four-Time Weightlifting World Champion

By Dmitry Lee

Two-time Olympic weightlifting gold medalist Ilya Ilyin of Kazakhstan set a new world record Nov. 15 in Almaty en route to winning his fourth Weightlifting World Championship.

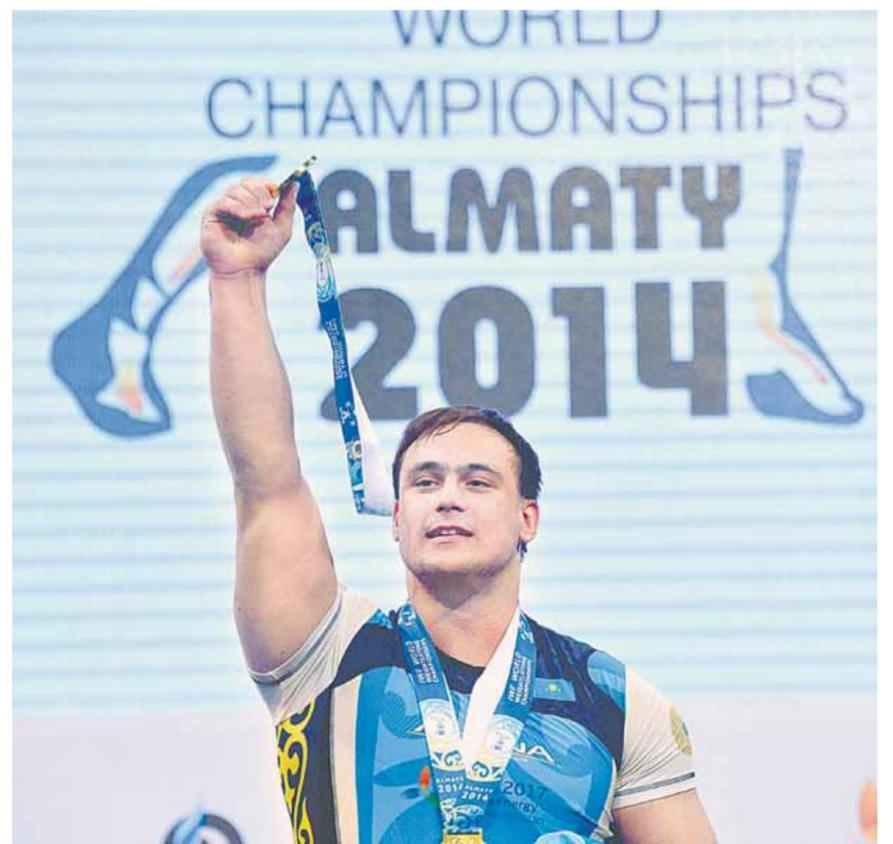
Ilyin snatched first place from Uzbek Ruslan Nurudinov, who minutes earlier had set a new record. Nurudinov eventually settled for silver with 432 kilogrammes (snatch 193 kg + clean and jerk 239 kg). Russian David Bejanyan took bronze with a total of 427 kilogrammes (127+240). Ilyin totaled 432 kilogrammes overall (190+242) to win the championship. Even though his result was similar to Nurudinov's, Ilyin still won because he weighed less than his opponent.

The 26-year-old champion from the Kyzylorda region, however, says he would still like to break even higher records.

"I don't want to stop at this point and I want to beat the record set by Yury Zakharevich or at least get close to it. That's my goal," he said after the tournament.

Ilyin admitted that clean and jerking 242 kilogrammes was a surprising result even for himself.

Continued on Page B7



Ilya Ilyin, two-time Olympic weightlifting gold medalist won his fourth Weightlifting World Championship in Almaty on Nov. 14.

NATION
Advisory Body Addresses Freedom of Movement in Kazakhstan, Accepts Recommendations from Civil Society A2

ECONOMY & BUSINESS
International Forum Examines Almaty's Role as Central Asian Financial Hub A4
Kazakh-German Business Council Focuses on Infrastructure, Mining, Investment Hub A5

EDITORIAL
New Poll Shows Kazakh Citizens Have Positive Outlook on the Country, And Fundamentals Explain Why A6

INSIDE

OPINIONS
ABDRAKHMANOV: From Almaty to Vienna, New Prospects For LLCs A6
NAZARBAYEVA: Reforms Should Not be Campaign Fodder, Says Mazhilis Deputy Chairperson A7

NATION & CAPITAL
Geoparks Can Tell the History of Kazakhstan, Attract Tourism Dollars, says Geologist B1
Second Astana Public School Joins German University Preparation Programme B1

NATION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Advisory Body Addresses Freedom of Movement in Kazakhstan, Accepts Recommendations from Civil Society

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – The right to freedom of movement was the theme of the regular meeting of the Consultative-Advisory Body Platform for Dialogue on Human Dimension held Nov. 10 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the chairmanship of Ambassador at Large Usen Suleimen.

Participants emphasised the special importance of this topic because the right to free movement is the natural right of a citizen and one of the ideals of his or her personal liberty.

The right to freedom of movement and right to choose a place of residence within a state, as well as the right to leave and return to the country without hindrance, is recognised by the international community and recorded in all the basic international instruments on human rights.

“The goals of our dialogue platform are clear. We work on estab-



lishing a greater synergy between the government, parliament and NGOs in joint efforts to solidify a democratic foundation in Kazakhstan. We want to strengthen the culture of open dialogue and political debates,” Suleimen said.

“As practical and deliverable, we want to work out a joint plan for the future development of Ka-

zakhstan within the framework of [the Kazakhstan 2050] Strategy and prepare recommendations to the government and parliament to be incorporated into a draft of the Human Rights Action Plan to 2020,” he added.

During the meeting, reports were presented by Deputy Chairman of the Department for Migration Po-

lice of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Dulat Iskakov, Chairman of the Board of International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law Yevgeniy Zhovtis and Director of International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law Roza Akyzbekova. Presentations of projects and funding programmes of the Kazakh nongovernmental sector from the side of international organisations were made by Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) office in Astana Nils Bergeson and Deputy Chairman of the Association of Civil Society Development (ARGO) Kaisha Atakhanova.

Representatives of the nongovernmental sector had raised a range of issues relating to the current system of registration of citizens, existing regulations governing the actions of the bodies of internal affairs in case of temporary restrictions of the rights to freedom of movement of citizens

and the rights of refugees and stateless persons.

Materials and recommendations by the civil society sector voiced at the meeting were accepted by the state bodies for further study and work aimed at the development of democracy and civil liberties, as well as the rule of law in Kazakhstan.

In the framework of this dialogue platform the Kazakh Foreign Ministry has undertaken systematic and comprehensive work with national NGOs since 2013 in the field of human rights and democracy. The trilateral platform allows leaders of national and international nongovernmental sectors to build a direct dialogue with the representatives of the Kazakh government and parliament with the participation of Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UN and European Union representatives.

Thus, as a result of the advisory body's work during 2013, more than 150 recommendations were developed, from which government representatives agreed on 40 for implementation. Sixty are under discussion and about 50 are still being debated. On the recommendation of the NGO sector, participants are developing three road maps relating recommendations based on the degree of its adjustment.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Gulshara Abdykhalykova was appointed Kazakhstan's Secretary of State on Nov. 11, becoming the first woman to occupy such a high position in the country's political system and the highest ranked woman in Kazakhstan's modern history. According to state protocol, the Secretary of State is ranked after the President, the Chairman of the Senate, the Chairman of the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) and the Prime Minister. The Secretary of State oversees numerous interagency commissions, such as on citizenship, the Bolashak scholarship, state awards, state symbols and on fighting corruption, among others, and is a top advisor to the President. Before her appointment, Abdykhalykova served as deputy prime minister of Kazakhstan responsible for social issues, such as education, healthcare and social protection.

“Eighty-two percent of children from three to six years old receive pre-school education in the Mangystau region,” said Akim (Governor) of the Mangystau region Alik Aidarbayev at a Nov. 14 Central Communications Service (CCS) briefing. “The network of pre-school education institutions increased by 82 organisations in 2011-2013 by means of construction of new and reconstruction of existing kindergartens, establishment of mini-centres and opening private organisations within the implementation of the Balapan Programme,” the head of the region said. According to the akim, as a result of the measures, the inclusion of children from three to six years old in pre-school education reach 82 percent in 2014.

In Kazakhstan, about 18,000 people with special needs are involved in the Paralympic Games movement, President of the National Paralympic Committee Darkhan Kaletayev said at a Nov. 17 briefing. In addition, he noted that in preparation for the 15th Summer Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, the focus will be on swimming and track and field events (athletics). “The Paralympic Committee decided to establish a national swimming team in Astana, athletics in Almaty. We will strengthen the two centres,” he stressed. According to the agency, today in Kazakhstan there are eight sports clubs for disabled people and two schools with sports for the physically challenged. At the 11th Summer Asian Games, Kazakhstan's Paralympic team, which included 84 athletes, took 11th place, winning seven gold, six silver and 11 bronze medals. This is a record number of medals in the history of the Summer Asian Games since 2006.

Grain harvest finished on 14.5 million hectare fields and 18.3 million tonnes of grain at the average harvest of 12.6 centner/hectare was obtained, Minister of Agriculture Assylzhan Mamytkov said at a Nov. 17 briefing in the Mazhilis (lower chamber of the Parliament). According to the minister, 64 percent of oil and vegetable and 96.6 percent of the potato harvest was gathered. This year, yield capacity of vegetable cultures is 12.1 centner/hectare higher than last year, potatoes are at 15.9 centner/hectare. Thus, according to Mamytkov, in some areas of North Kazakhstan and the Kostanai region, the harvest is still continuing, but two areas in the Ak-mola region are nearing completion. The other districts have completed the harvesting campaign. “This year, the gross grain harvest after completion is forecast at about 17.6 million tonnes, which allows increasing the export potential up to seven million tonnes,” Mamytkov concluded.

The eco-bridge “Kazakh Elim – Zhaysyl Zherim” (“Kazakh Land is Green Country”) launched in educational institutions in the Aktobe region on Oct. 14 and the Pavlodar region on Nov. 13. The purpose of the eco-bridge held within the Zhandanu projects is to form an environmental conscience and culture within the younger generation. The peculiarity of the event is that rural school students from Algabai village and Aksu town in the Pavlodar region will take part in it. The campaign will begin with an exhibition of children's drawings called “Planet of Childhood,” which is also expected to launch a similarly-named nationwide contest for the youngest citizens of the country aged five to ten years. A presentation of documentaries titled “Earth Heritage” will complete the campaign.

In Surprise State of the Nation Address, Kazakh President Unveils Massive Infrastructure Investments

Continued from Page A1

Uncorking the National Fund

The policy embraces all aspects of economic growth, including finances, industry and social welfare, but especially emphasises investments into the development of infrastructure and construction works. Given recent decreases in revenues from the export of raw materials, funds will be used from Kazakhstan's National Fund.

Created in 2000 and modelled on Norway's Petroleum Fund and other similar “rainy day” funds, it has accumulated \$76 billion from Kazakhstan's oil and other raw material exports revenues.

“In the years when the situation on external markets favoured us and prices for our export commodities were relatively high, we directed those revenues into the National Fund. Its aim was to increase the sustainability of our economy in the face of external shock, including low prices on our commodities,” the President reminded.

In 2007-2009, the government used \$10 billion out of the National Fund to mitigate the effects of the global financial crunch that negatively impacted Kazakhstan's economy.

“The remaining money [in the National Fund] was not spent, instead we saved [those funds] and more. Now is the period when we should use these reserves. They can help us weather tough times and stimulate growth in our economy,” Nazarbayev emphasised as he announced an important change of approach to the National Fund.

He said the new allocation should be used for building objects of transport, energy, industrial and social infrastructure, as well as supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

“I've made a decision that the National Fund will allocate an additional \$3 billion annually to support our economy in the upcoming three-year period. To this end, the government is to prepare the corresponding decree in a week and allot the necessary funds in the draft national budget for 2015,” the President announced.

Nazarbayev added that “a special commission will strictly observe the use of each tenge” and report to him personally.

He underlined that the second tranche of 500 billion tenge (US\$2.8 billion) from 1 trillion tenge (US\$5.6 billion) allocated by the National Fund in February to boost economic growth and employment in 2014-2015 should

contribute to implementing five key goals.

First, 100 billion tenge (US\$560 million) will be allocated for concessional lending to SMEs and ensuring implementation of important projects in the food and chemical industries, mechanical engineering and service sector.

Second, 250 billion tenge (US\$1.4 billion) would provide additional capitalisation for the government-run bad loans fund. This would help further rehabilitate the country's banking sector by buying out the private banks' non-performing loans.

Third, 81 billion (US\$447.7 million) will be channelled into the construction of infrastructure of the special Khorog economic zone, which serves as Kazakhstan's gate into the enormous market of China, and the national industrial petrochemical technology park objects in Atyrau and Taraz.

Fourth, the head of state ordered the allocation of an additional 40 billion tenge (US\$220 million) into construction of the EXPO 2017 complex in Astana.

Fifth, with the global exhibition event getting closer, President Nazarbayev directed 29 billion tenge (US \$160.2 million) be allocated to expand the Astana airport, including constructing a new terminal and reconstructing the air strip, as the existing facility has already reached its maximum capacities in serving a passenger flow of 3.5 million annually and as this number is expected to grow significantly in the coming years, especially in connection with EXPO 2017.

Massive Infrastructure Investment to Help Boost Economic Growth

The new economic policy Nurly Zhol itself will be centred around the infrastructure development plan, designed for five years, to coincide with the second five-year Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (PAIID). The plan's overall investment portfolio is estimated at 6 trillion tenge (US\$33.1 billion), of which 85 percent would come from private investors, including from foreign countries.

The plan envisages extensive development of transport networks and logistics infrastructure as part of shaping the macro-regions inside the country, which are to be concentrated around their hub cities.

The nationwide network would connect macro-regions with each other and with Astana through roads, railway links and airlines. Most attention would be paid to

implementing major road projects: Western China – Western Europe; Astana – Almaty; Astana – Ust-Kamenogorsk; Astana – Aktoke – Atyrau; Almaty – Ust-Kamenogorsk and Karaganda – Zhezkazgan – Kyzylorda; Atyrau – Astrakhan. A large-scale ferry service from the port of Kuryk along with the Borzhakty – Ersai railway link would contribute to increasing export potential in the direction across the Caspian Sea. To that end, the government will examine opportunities to build or lease terminal facilities and dry ports and sea-ports in China, Iran, Russia and the European Union.

In energy infrastructure, the government is to focus on developing two high-voltage lines: Ekibastuz – Semey – Ust-Kamenogorsk and Semey – Aktogai – Almaty – Shymkent that would ensure a balanced energy supply by local power plants to all regions of the country.

Other significant issues on the agenda include upgrading public utilities infrastructure and water supply systems, attracting investment from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), as well as private investors. This would require an annual allocation of no less than 200 billion tenge (US\$1.1 billion) until 2020, the head of state said.

As the President noted, increasing urbanisation is creating additional stress on the housing market. In this respect, Nazarbayev announced an upgrade to the state programmes on the construction of rental houses (with apartments available for long lease with a purchase option). The change would exempt less affluent candidates from the need to make an initial deposit and help get lower interest rates from banks. To this end, 180 billion tenge (US\$995 million) would be allocated in 2015-2016. If implemented, the programme is clearly going to make rent and housing more affordable to the citizens.

In education, 70 billion tenge (US\$387 million) would be allocated toward repairing a number of schools on an emergency basis and eliminating by 2017 three-shift education where it remains. Regional authorities would receive and additional 20 billion (US\$111 million) to radically reduce overcrowding in the preschool system.

At the same time, the new industrialisation programme previously designated 10 key universities as hubs for training specialised personnel and enhancing links between science and the real econo-

my. The President instructed the government to allocate 10 billion tenge (US\$55.5 million) by 2017 to upgrade their equipment and other relevant infrastructure.

Highlighting the importance of SMEs for the national economy, Nazarbayev reminded that the earlier allocation of 100 billion tenge (US\$560 million) from the National Fund helped create 4,500 new jobs. In line with the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, the work on increasing SMEs' share in the nation's GDP to 50 percent is to be continued, he said. In this respect, he instructed that loans totaling 155 billion tenge (US\$857 million) over the next three years from the ADB, EBRD and World Bank be used efficiently.

President Nazarbayev underlined that structural reforms in relevant areas of the economy should accompany investments from the National Fund, and this requires drawing from international financial organisations to implement joint projects. He stated that the World Bank, ADB, EBRD and IDB were ready to allocate about \$9 billion to 90 priority projects to support investment activity, prevent a decrease in incomes and stimulate job creation. This would ensure the sustainable growth of the economy in the short and medium term, the President said.

Overall, according to the address, the Nurly Zhol new economic policy will help create up to 200,000 new jobs through road construction projects alone, as well as create a multiplier effect on other sectors of the economy including the production of cement, steel, machinery, bitumen, equipment and related services.

At the end of his speech, President Nazarbayev highlighted that economic growth was heavily dependent on domestic peace and interethnic accord in the country. Celebrations of 550 years of statehood, 70 years since the end of the Second World War, 20 years of the Constitution and the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan in 2015 must help promote unity and tolerance, he said.

The younger generation has never seen interethnic conflicts, nor the depression and strife of the 1990s, Nazarbayev said.

“Many treat stability and a comfortable life in Kazakhstan as something omnipotent. But what is stability? It is the well-being of our families, security and a roof over head. Peace is the joy of parenthood, the health of our own parents and the happiness of our kids. Peace is a steady job, salaries paid and confidence in the future. Peace is stability, a public heritage that should be protected, preserved and

enhanced day by day,” the head of state concluded, stating the values that are most important to the people of Kazakhstan.

Experts, Politicians Support New Policy, Stress Accountability

The President's message was welcomed by many politicians and experts who noted the relevance of strengthening investment policy at home and the importance of the strict implementation of the programmes announced.

Political analyst Marat Shibutov commented to bnews.kz that the President was right to conclude that the falling prices on oil and the slowdown in the key international markets of the EU, China and Russia would take a toll on Kazakhstan and the best response would be in the development of infrastructure.

“This allows livening up the economy and creating new growth points inside the country. ... I believe the recipe is tried and tested, and it will be successful. Moreover, around 40 percent of money spend would return as taxes. So the Nurly Zhol [programme] would help the country, especially if the roads are good technically,” he said.

Azat Peruashev, leader of parliamentary opposition party Ak Zhol, known for its pro-business stand, emphasised that enormous sums are allocated to boost growth, even more than during the crisis of 2007-2009, the Kazinform news agency reported.

“To prevent ‘hand washing hand,’ to suppress the temptations, there is a need for an alternative point of view from [other political] parties,” Peruashev stressed in parliament.

Nur Otan party's parliament member Kamal Burkhanov commended the Nurly Zhol programme and agreed on the importance of strict control over the efficient use of the money to be allocated from the National Fund.

“The President demands control and I believe all [of the projects] will be implemented. We have no doubt about that. ... If more people as good citizens will contribute [to control], then each tenge will end up where it must,” he said, according to Kazinform.

The same day, on Nov. 11, Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov convened a cabinet meeting where he instructed the ministries to start work on the President's instructions and promptly introduce the changes into the budget programmes needed for their timely implementation.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov met with Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili when the latter officially visited Kazakhstan. At a Nov. 12 meeting, Massimov and Garibashvili discussed a wide range of issues related to the development of bilateral trade and economic, investment and transit-transport cooperation. Following the talks, the heads of the governments held a joint press conference. "We reached a consensus on development of trade and economic cooperation. We are interested in the development of promising areas of the economy, such as transport, communication, the agriculture sector, tourism, etc.," Massimov said. The head of Kazakhstan's government underlined that a key point of the agenda was expanding the transport corridors that connect the two countries. In this regard, Massimov declared that Kazakhstan is interested in completing the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line that will ensure the export of Kazakh products to Europe by way of the Caspian Sea, as well as Georgian goods through Kazakh territory to the countries of Central Asia and China. "We are interested in the development of private sector, trade and economic cooperation, tourism, export of agriculture products of our countries and deepening cooperation in the fields of science, education, information, culture and sport," the Georgian Prime Minister stated.

The dynamics of the emigration processes have reduced in Kazakhstan, Vice Minister of National Economy Madina Abylkassymova said at a Nov. 12 meeting on migration processes. "According to the statistics, in 2013 the number of emigrated citizens reduced by almost two times than in 2008," Abylkassymova noted.

Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, hosted a high-level conference Nov. 7-8 to review the progress made within the Council of Europe policy toward its immediate neighbouring regions and exchange views on further development of this policy. Addressing the conference, the head of the Kazakh delegation Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Volkov underlined the significant potential of Kazakh-European dialogue in all dimensions, including the rapidly-developing cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Council of Europe. He stressed that Kazakhstan considers the mutual desire to cooperate with the Council of Europe as an opportunity to exchange experiences and good knowledge in order to ensure stability, security, economic development and prosperity in the region. He also highlighted the importance of the action plan in the framework of the "Neighbourhood Cooperation Priorities for Kazakhstan 2014-2015: cooperation activities on Council of Europe's conventions in criminal matters," adopted in December 2013. Moreover, the head of the Kazakh delegation spoke about support for Kazakh authorities in improving the quality and efficiency of the Kazakh justice system, the joint programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe launched in July and aimed at the convergence of the Kazakh and European systems of justice within the above-mentioned action plan.

Rio de Janeiro hosted the tour of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Nov. 6, with the assistance of the Kazakh Embassy in Brazil and the Ministry of Culture and Sport, as well as Dell'Arte, the Brazilian production company. The tour programme included concerts in Brazil and Argentina aimed at further expanding and strengthening cultural ties with these countries, as well as introducing Kazakh culture and art to Brazilian and Argentinean audiences. The orchestra included talented violinist Galina Bissengaliyeva, graduate of London's Royal Academy of Music and laureate of international competitions and famous French conductor Nicole Krauss. The concerts were also held in the Brazilian city of Vitoria, and Buenos Aires, Rosario and Córdoba, the major cities of Argentina. In particular, in Buenos Aires the concert was conducted at the world-famous Colon Theatre.

Kazakh, Kyrgyz Presidents Reaffirm Countries' Historic Roots, Growing Economic Relationship

Continued from Page A1

Nazarbayev stated that about 86 percent of the electricity, 90 percent of dairy products and 56 percent of the fruits and vegetables that Kyrgyzstan exports go to Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, provides nearly 100 percent of Kyrgyzstan's needs for wheat, 97 percent for flour, 70 percent for minerals and 53 percent of its non-organic chemicals. Since independence, Kazakh businesses have invested \$1 billion in the Kyrgyz economy.

Nazarbayev also reiterated Kazakhstan's readiness to support Kyrgyzstan, including as far as its current efforts to join the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia and the Common Economic Space of the same three countries. Both unification initiatives are precursors to the fledgling Eurasian Economic Union, which is set to enter into effect on Jan. 1, 2015.

"Kazakhstan is the largest trade partner for Kyrgyzstan. Works are ongoing on the launch of a Kazakhstan-Kyrgyz Fund of Direct Investments. Kazakhstan is financing the construction of two schools in the north and south of Kyrgyzstan," Nazarbayev said at a joint press briefing after the talks.

As announced at the press briefing, Kazakhstan will provide as-



President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev (right) awarded Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev the order of Dostyk (Friendship) of first degree for his contribution to strengthening the friendship and mutual understanding between the two countries.

sistance to Kyrgyzstan in supplying 1.4 billion kilowatts per hour of electricity next year. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan will ensure steady supplies of water for farming purposes during the growing season.

"Kazakhs and Kyrgyz have been brotherly nations for centuries.

We are closely observing developments in Kyrgyzstan. I believe that your visit and documents signed today are evidence of the high level of relations between our countries," Nazarbayev said.

Nazarbayev, pointing to the difficult geopolitical situation in the world, also said: "The events in

Afghanistan and Syria, disputes between Russia and the West are affecting our countries. Jointly, we must resolve all the issues that face us today."

The head of state awarded Atambayev the order of Dostyk (Friendship) of first degree for his contribution to strengthening the

friendship and mutual understanding between the two countries.

"I signed a decree on presenting you the highest award for foreign leaders, the Order of Dostyk of Kazakhstan for your great contribution to securing friendship and understanding between our two countries and brotherhood between Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. Hopefully, this will serve to further the trust between our two countries. I congratulate you. We believe that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are close nations by spirit, history, religion, language, culture and mentality," Nazarbayev said.

In turn, the Kyrgyz president thanked Nazarbayev for the award and Kazakhstan's willingness to assist Kyrgyzstan in resolving various problems.

"I would like to wholeheartedly thank you for the award and for the support that you have always rendered to the Kyrgyz people and to me personally. Visiting you is always a joyous event because on every meeting I learn something from you. And of course, I will not hide that many of the problematic issues I resolve with your support. This time, there is a difficult situation again; we have serious energy problems. All the people of Kyrgyzstan are grateful that you have decided to assist us in this matter, as in many others," Atambayev said.

New Brussels-Based Think Tank to Focus on EU-Central Asia Relationship

By Altair Nurbekov

BRUSSELS – Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov visited Brussels on Nov. 12 to address an audience of European politicians and scholars at the launch of a new think tank dedicated to fostering the region's relationship with the European Union.

The new dialogue platform is called the Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs (ECFA) and is headquartered in Brussels, according to its press release. It was founded to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices, as well as strengthen the links between Central Asia and the European Union.

Prominent European statesmen, academics; EU, NATO and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) officials and respected voices from around Europe attended the launch.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the former EU Commissioner for External Affairs and Foreign Minister of Austria was named the chairman of the ECFA Advisory Council. Idrissov was named the first honorary president of the new organization, which the country's foreign ministry has supported with a grant. Rauan Kenzhekhanuly, the head of Kazakhstan's Wiki Bilim public foundation and a graduate of the Bolashak programme, is the ECFA's first founding director.

Other notable guests present at the ECFA launch ceremony included Lamberto Zannier, Secretary-General of the OSCE; Patrick Child, managing director of the European External Action Service, and Iveta Grigule, Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan and EU-Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees, and for relations with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia as well as the ambassadors of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Brussels.

In his opening remarks, Idrissov said the ECFA is not only historic, but also timely, because it is not always easy to bridge the cultural and psychological gaps between Europe and Asia.

"I believe the geographic, cultural and psychological gap between Europe and Asia will be increasingly bridged and blurred and



Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov addresses an audience of European politicians and scholars in Brussels on Nov. 12.

everything will come together here in Brussels, in Europe and in the Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs," Kazakhstan's foreign minister said.

Idrissov further talked about how for Kazakhstan, 2014 has been a memorable year. "2014 has seen the conclusion of important negotiations with the European Union on a new enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement (PCA) and on our imminent accession to the World Trade Organisation," he stressed.

The completion of talks over PCA agreement, which is expected to be formally signed next year, was announced following a meeting between Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev and President of the EU Commission José Manuel Barroso in Brussels last month. The PCA agreement will enhance cooperation in 29 fields, including the economy, trade and investment, rule of law, democracy and nation building.

In his speech, Idrissov underscored the nation's new economic strategy, the Nurly Zhol (Bright Road) announced by President Nazarbayev during a snap state-of-the-nation address on Nov. 11 in Astana. It serves as a clear vision

for efficient and sustainable development in Kazakhstan, he said.

"In this period of global economic instability, the strategy will allow the country to not only weather this difficult stage, but also strengthen its already strong trajectory of sustained growth to achieve the objectives of [the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy]," he said.

Former Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini, another member of the ECFA advisory council, said Kazakhstan plays a very important role in Central Asia, as well as in promoting intercultural and intercivilisational dialogue and nuclear nonproliferation and therefore, it is essential that the European Union cooperate with the country in the most effective manner possible. "President Nazarbayev is making vital contributions to ensuring stability and sustainable development not only in Kazakhstan, but across the region. Therefore, the development of transportation in Kazakhstan is and will be important not only from an economic perspective, but regarding the development of people-to-people contacts."

According to Ferrero-Waldner, the conclusion of negotiations between Kazakhstan and the EU on a new enhanced PCA is "very

important for moving relations to a qualitatively new level. Kazakhstan has made impressive progress since independence and is now moving towards new levels of growth."

Aleksander Kwasniewski, the former President of Poland and also a member of ECFA advisory council, believes that Kazakhstan is now known to many across the world and is now an important player not only regionally but also globally. "Hopefully, due to Kazakhstan's active participation, we will be able to solve urgent security problems, including those pertaining to the ongoing tensions between the West and Russia regarding tensions in Ukraine."

Other members of the ECFA advisory council include Vaclav Klaus, former president of the Czech Republic, Kjell Magne Bondevik, former prime minister of Norway, Georgi Parvanov, former president of Bulgaria, Peter Lilley MP, former British secretary of state for trade and industry, and Lord Lamont, former British chancellor of the exchequer. It also includes Josef Joffe, publisher and editor of Die Zeit, and Olzhas Suleimenov, one of Kazakhstan's most prominent poets.

The ECFA's launch coincided with the publication of its first detailed opinion research poll inside of Kazakhstan, which was commissioned from U.K.-based polling agency Ipsos MORI. It provides an insight into the attitudes of Kazakhstan citizens towards their government and its key policies.

The results show that 90 percent of respondents feel fairly positive or very positive about their country – an increase of 4 percent from a similar survey taken in late 2013. Respondents generally noted an improvement in Kazakhstan as a place to live over the past 10 years, with 83 percent stating that it has gotten a lot better or a little better. Meanwhile, the top five descriptive words most associated with Kazakhstan were hospitable (47 percent), stable (39 percent), peaceful (37 percent), improving (36 percent) and successful (32 percent).

According to a press release from the Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs, the organisation is modeled on the Council on Foreign Re-

lations in the U.S., the U.K. Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House and the European Council on Foreign Relations. It is envisaged that over time, the new think tank working at the heart of the European Union will become a valuable and independent source of high-quality research, publications and information that will keep Europe abreast of the rapidly developing political and economic landscape of Central Asia.

While in Brussels, Idrissov also delivered a keynote address at the opening of an international conference titled "Towards Eurasian Security: Europe and Central Asia's Post-Afghanistan Strategy," which was organised in cooperation with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Germany's national foreign policy network.

Addressing conference participants, Idrissov said one of the main challenges currently facing regional development stemming from Afghanistan is countering drug trafficking and production. In Idrissov's opinion, without an integrated resolution to the narcotics problem, it will be difficult to restore the economy and ensure both the rule of law and stable development.

"Central Asia's current security challenges stem from the fact that a political settlement in Afghanistan may not hold. The next step is especially important for the country. We welcome the results of the presidential election and the peaceful transfer of power and responsibility to the government of this country. International forces have played a historical role in the restoration of Afghanistan's statehood and the strengthening of institutions that serve Afghan society," Idrissov said.

"I am confident that all of us have a vested interest in Afghanistan's further development and stand ready to continue our efforts within the international community to remedy the dire situation in the country," he stated.

On the same day, in an interview with Reuters News Agency, Idrissov discussed the prospects of Kazakhstan's development in the light of the Nurly Zhol new economic strategy, the country's relations with the EU and Russia, as well as the situation in Ukraine.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

International Forum Examines Almaty's Role as Central Asian Financial Hub

By Yelden Sarybay

A high-level forum exploring the investment potential of Almaty as the newly redefined financial hub of Central Asia titled "Financing Growth in Kazakhstan" was held at the Ritz Carlton hotel in Almaty on Nov. 7.

The event, which was presented by the Financial Times' The Banker publication in partnership with the Kazakh-British Chamber of Commerce and with support from the National Bank of Kazakhstan, included discussions on banking news, the conditions needed for optimal performance in a changing global economy, key trends and various opportunities for the development of the financial sector.

Speaking to forum participants via a video link, Prime Minister Karim Massimov stated that Kazakhstan's financial reserves have exceeded \$100 billion, accounting for 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product. He called the further economic plans of the government responsibly ambitious and said that the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy should be completed successfully on time. Almaty and its potential as a regional financial hub are set to play a large role in that effort.

"The financial services industry will remain the engine of growth. We have achieved significant progress in this field," stated the prime



minister. "Since 2006, the government has been working intensely to develop a regional financial centre here, has been engaged in building infrastructure, developing human capital and improving the regulatory environment."

Massimov noted that recently, Almaty climbed 15 places on the global index of regional financial centres and has reached 43rd place, passing cities like Brussels, Milan, Moscow, Prague and Rome.

Brian Caplen, editor of one of the world's largest business information resources, The Banker, noted: "[In Kazakhstan.] We see an increase of about 5 percent; based on the ratio of external debt to gross domestic product, a small budget deficit. These are figures of which the EU only dreams about."

Chairman of the National Bank of Kazakhstan Kairat Kelimbetov discussed the major current issues of the times in the banking industry and their solutions.

Kelimbetov stressed that the main challenges for Kazakhstan today are ongoing problems pertaining to bad loans. "Much has been said about this subject and a lot is being done over multiple stages. There are the unprecedented tax incentives that the government will provide in the near future to allow most banks to write off nonperforming loans in a painless manner," Kelimbetov said in reference to government plans to aid the banking sector.

"There is also a problem that arose in the banks that have passed through the crucible of restructuring. Since independence, none of the top

10 banks have declared bankruptcy. This shows that the state stands behind the banks – both through guaranteeing deposits and through the work that was done during the crisis," continued Kelimbetov.

According to him, another important issue is the involvement of the population in banking and financial services. "To address these questions, we need to keep up with the times. The financial world is constantly undergoing technological revolution. This means we should not just follow trends, but also to try to get ahead of them," added Kelimbetov.

Speaking of the latest trends in Kazakhstan's banking sector, Magzhan Auezov, the managing director of Kazkommertsbank, reminded the delegates that while Kazakh banks are conducting mergers, foreign

banks are not keen on developing their networks in Kazakhstan, which creates the opportunity to increase the volume of domestic banks and introduce new products at home.

"This year, we introduced a line of credit that allows commercial banks to adjust currency positions through funding secured in Kazakhstan tenge. The programme will help remove many historically acute problems for managing foreign exchange position. Thus, the result was a significant stabilisation of domestic funding and the ability of banks to increase tenge loan portfolios. It is important to note the timeliness of decision-making. The third quarter of 2014 will be a turning point in our sector in terms of the volume of mergers and acquisitions in the market. Combining Kazkom and BTA, Alliance, Temirbank and Forte, and the acquisition of HSBC's subsidiary bank in Kazakhstan by Halyk Bank will lead to substantial reforming of the sector in the near future," said Auezov.

"An important metric that is seeing a continuing decline is the share of foreign banks in Kazakhstan. Today, we see that almost all the major banks, in the implementation of their programmes to overcome non-core markets, have left Kazakhstan. Uni Credit bank this year sold its subsidiary bank; HSBC also significantly reduced its operations in RBS's Kazakhstan operations. They had one objective – to provide the best possible funding to the best borrowers. Banks have played an important role in actively promoting a wide and high quality product line. For us, filling the vacuum that has formed is important," concluded Auezov.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

"Work on establishing high technology productions for export in Special Economic Zone Seaport Aktau continues," said Akim (governor) of the Mangystau region Alik Aidarbayev at a Nov. 14 Central Communications Service (CCS) briefing. "Currently, five companies are operating in the territory of the special economic zone and 29 billion tenge [US\$160.25 million] has been attracted. Products worth 223 billion tenge [US\$1.23 billion] have been manufactured. Taxes amounting to 9.5 billion tenge [US\$52.5 million] were paid to the budget. More than 1,000 jobs were created," he said. In 2014, it is planned to launch five projects totalling 5 billion tenge [US\$27.62 million]. They will also create 365 jobs. In 2015-2017, it is planned to launch another 14 projects with a total cost of about 375 billion tenge [US\$2.07 billion], creating more than 7,000 jobs. Presently, infrastructure is being built in the special economic zone.

"The latest address of the President is the main stimulator of the growth of our economy," said Akim (Mayor) of Astana Adilbek Dzhabdybekov at a Nov. 13 meeting dedicated to discussing the state-of-the-nation address. "Expanding the horizons of the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, we have reached a new phase of a breakthrough of the economic policy of Kazakhstan: 'Bright Road.' It is a crossing point of two vectors: one of them is a way of Kazakhstan's development and the second one is the achievement of essential success. I think it is one of the most important events of this year, which is definitely going to go down in the history of our country," the akim said.

Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov attended the sixth Expert-200-Kazakhstan forum, held on Nov. 14. Massimov noted the importance of implementing tasks from the President's address to the people, "Nurly Zhol." "The head of state adopted the decision to allocate money to stimulate Kazakhstan's economy and its financial stability. We are making reforms together with world financial institutes the World Bank, the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Bank of Development (ADB), the Islamic Bank of Development (IBD), [and] in cooperation with the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). I think that will allow Kazakhstan to avoid average earnings and attract private investment," Massimov said.

Kazakhstan's ambassador to the Netherlands, Mainura Murzamediyeva, and Minister of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands Henk Kamp met in The Hague on Nov. 6 to discuss important issues of bilateral trade and economic cooperation and intensifying business relations, particularly in the framework of the forthcoming visit of Kamp to Astana to participate in the 25th session of the Energy Charter Conference at the end of November. Murzamediyeva briefed Kamp on existing opportunities for developing cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Netherlands, including in the framework of implementing the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (SPAIID) and international exhibition EXPO 2017. She underlined the Kazakh government's initiatives to establish a new stimuli package for foreign investors. Kamp stressed the growing interest of the Netherlands in enhancing multi-tier cooperation. He also commended the social and economic transformations of Kazakhstan and the political stability and increasing attractiveness of the state and the region. At the end of the meeting, the parties reached agreed to intensify economic dialogue and start joint preparations for the visit of the Dutch delegation to Kazakhstan.

EBRD President Visits Tajikistan, Signs Financing Agreements with Private Sector

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) President Suma Chakrabarti visited Tajikistan on Nov. 17-18, the first official visit by an EBRD president to that country in nine years, an EBRD press release announced on Nov. 17. Two agreements were signed during the visit, and Chakrabarti met with high-level officials and addressed Tajikistan's investment climate council.

Chakrabarti signed financing agreements with two companies during the visit, one with micro-finance institution IMON International on providing funds to increase lending to small enterprises and another with Schiever Tajikistan, which plans to open the country's first modern supermarket. The past year has been a record year for EBRD investment in Tajikistan, the bank reported, and a new EBRD strategy for the country is being developed.

The EBRD's priorities in Ta-

jikistan are supporting the private and financial sectors and infrastructure development. More than half of Tajikistan's gross domestic product is estimated to come from remittances, the World Bank reported in its April 2014 Migration and Development Brief.

With President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, Chakrabarti discussed the country's growing private sector. He then addressed a special session of the Consultative Council on the Investment Climate under the President of Tajikistan, reviewing recent economic developments in Tajikistan, including the country's improved ranking in the latest World Bank Doing Business report, investment reforms and Tajikistan's activities as a member of the World Trade Organisation.

Chakrabarti also met with the ministers of finance, energy and foreign affairs; the governor and the deputy governor of the country's national bank; representatives of the business, in-

vestor and diplomatic communities and international financial institutions, EBRD clients and civil society representatives, in-

cluding women's organisations. The EBRD delegation was also to visit the Nurek hydropower plant, participate in an energy

sector round-table discussion and meet with local authorities.

The EBRD has invested about 360 million euros in Tajikistan to date.

Kazakhstan is growing fast. We're doing our part to help it continue. Chevron and our partners have spent more than \$100 billion here. And there's more to come. More jobs. More local contracts. More growth. Energy is helping our country today. And tomorrow. Learn more at www.ChevronKazakhstan.com

CHEVRON and the CHEVRON logo are registered trademarks of Chevron Intellectual Property LLC. HUMAN ENERGY is a trademark of Chevron Intellectual Property LLC. ©2014 Chevron U.S.A. Inc. All rights reserved.

Stalled IPO Programme Relaunches with KEGOC Stock Release

Continued from Page A1

Interested buyers can purchase shares through brokers, Kovalev said. Buyers in more remote areas can access brokers through Kazpost, which will act as agents of brokers outside of Almaty and Astana. Buyers may sign agreements with as many brokers as they want, he said.

The sale is generating slightly more attention than the 2012 offering of KazTransOil, Samruk Kazyna's press centre reported on Nov. 13, noting that 1,156 applications for more than 1,150,000 shares of KEGOC stock were received between Nov. 5 and 12, slightly more than the 947 applications that were received in the same period in 2012 for KazTransOil stock. KazTransOil floated 38 million shares on Dec. 25, 2012, and nearly 34,000 citizens of the country became shareholders in the company.

Samruk Kazyna reports that 30,000 people in 25 cities around the country have attended information sessions about the IPO as of Nov. 13.

The People's IPO programme was approved in 2011, with the first IPO offered in 2012. In February, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev criticised the government for allowing the programme, which was supposed to quickly float shares in five national companies, to falter. He commanded the government and the country's National Bank to come up with a plan for both the Unified National Pension Fund and the securities market by June 2014.

Now, Kovalev said, plans are again on track for more public stock offerings, including Samruk-Energo in 2015 and both Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, the national railway company, and KazAtomProm, the national atomic company, in 2016.

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

“Under the law on improvement of conditions for business, the number of procedures during the registration of enterprises will be reduced by three times,” said Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dosseyev said at the sixth Economic Forum of National Business Experts 200 Kazakhstan on Nov. 14. “Under the law, it is planned to reduce the terms of registration for subjects of [small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)] to one hour and reduce the number of procedures and terms in the sphere of export-import operations, construction and registration of enterprises by three times,” Dosseyev said. According to him, the law will be adopted by the end of the year.

Slightly more than 20,390 jobs were created in the Mangystau region in 2014, Akim (Governor) of the Mangystau region Alik Aidarbayev said at a Nov. 14 Central Communications Service (CCS) media briefing. 2,973 jobs were created in the industrial sphere, 3,753 in the construction sphere, 1,124 in the transport sphere, 858 in education, 136 in agriculture and 5,586 in other spheres of economic activity. And just more than 2,310 people who applied to employment centres signed social contracts and became participants of the Employment Road Map 2020 (79 percent of the total number of people who applied). Of those, the share of unemployed was 82.6 percent (1,913), the share of self-employed was 15.4 percent (356), Aidarbayev reported.

Twenty-three projects were implemented in the Mangystau region within the Industrialisation Map in 2010-2013, which total 160.3 billion tenge (US\$887.4 million), said Alik Aidarbayev, Akim (Governor) of the Mangystau region, at a Nov. 14 media briefing. “In 2014, it is planned to launch 14 projects totaling 104.9 billion tenge (US\$580.5 million). They will help create 902 new permanent jobs. Three of them amounting to 53.3 billion tenge (US\$295.1 million) have already been launched. 468 jobs were already created. The following projects have been launched this year: Kaspi Cement LLP, a cement plant in the Shetpe village of the Mangystau region, a gas-turbine power station by MangystauMunayGas and a clothes manufacturing and dry cleaning plant in the Karakiya district,” the Akim informed.

Kazakhstan produced goods worth 15.5 billion tenge (US\$85.8 million) during the first five years of industrialisation within the innovation grants programme, Chairman of the Board of the National Agency for Technological Development Sanzhar Iztelevov said at a Nov. 17 briefing in the Central Communications Services (CCS). “In the course of the programme for grant funding, about 680 million tenge (US\$3.8 million) in taxes were paid and products worth 15.5 billion tenge (US\$85.8 million) were produced, of which about 50 percent was exported,” Iztelevov said. According to him, during the first five years of the programme, more than 1,400 applications have been processed and reviewed, 227 of which received financial support. “According to the grantees, there were 83 innovative patents, four registered trademarks and 28 applications for international organisations,” the head of the agency said. In addition, he said that there are five international technology transfer centres in countries such as the United States, Korea, China, France and Norway with whom the Kazakh agency is looking to cooperate.

“Kazakh constructor bureaus have developed 198 kinds of new products,” said Sanzhar Iztelevov, Chairman of the Board of the National Agency for Technological Development (NATD) on Nov. 17. According to him, the commercialisation centres handled about 406 applications, of which 122 projects were supported. As Iztelevov noted, the NATD has eight technology parks, four industrial design offices and five international technology transfer centres. There are four foreign and three domestic venture capital funds and 21 commercialisation offices, which operate at universities and research institutes. “In general, over the last five years we have launched about 4,000 ideas and developments, 570 of which were supported,” the head of the NATD stated.

Kazakh-German Business Council Focuses on Infrastructure, Mining, Investment Hub

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – At the Kazakh-German Business Council held on Nov. 10 in Astana during the visit of German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the focus was on promoting Kazakhstan’s investment opportunities, particularly in infrastructure development, mining and innovative technologies, as well as the access Kazakhstan provides to neighbouring markets.

Addressing the council in Astana’s Hilton Garden Inn, Minister for Investments and Development of Kazakhstan Asset Issekeshev listed tourism, mechanical engineering, the chemical industry and construction as the most attractive sectors in the Kazakh economy for German investors.

He also emphasised Kazakhstan’s role as an investment hub, offering access to other markets from Kazakhstan’s business friendly territory. “Our economic policy is to be an investment hub of the region. We create good conditions for for-

eign investors, so they can create and develop their business in Kazakhstan and go to neighbouring markets, such as Russia, Central Asia, East China et cetera,” he said. Issekeshev also noted Kazakhstan’s desire to partner with small companies as well as large ones.

Kazakhstan’s desire to position itself as an investment hub seems to be reaching investors. “Currently, Kazakhstan is, I think, maybe the best, most convenient country in Central Asia to start any kind of business. It’s a good place: you can move to neighbouring countries like Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. We have a joint venture in China, so it’s also a possibility to connect those activities, and so on and so on,” managing director of German animal breeding venture Master-rind Rolf Strassemeyer said after the forum.

The visit here and the networking it offered had been enlightening, he said. “We tried to have closer discussions with our partners in Kazakhstan to construct possibili-

ties ... It’s also really important to know what the Kazakhstan side is thinking about the development of animal production here.”

Visiting German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier told the assembled delegations that the two countries had a broad base for establishing deeper cooperation, particularly in energy-efficient infrastructure development. Steinmeier met with President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov on his Nov. 9-10 visit.

Infrastructure, particularly that which uses innovative technologies, is a sector with major potential in developing Kazakhstan, especially in light of the coming EXPO 2017 in Astana and the innovative infrastructure and materials that will be necessary to fully develop its theme of “Future Energy.”

Manfred Grundke, general partner of Knauf Group, told Kazakh TV at the forum that his organisation wants to bring German technologies and German standards of

quality to construction in Kazakhstan, and to produce their projects in Kapchagai, near Almaty. Knauf Group wants to provide their materials for use in building EXPO 2017 infrastructure, he told The Astana Times after the council meeting. He said he had learned about some interesting investment opportunities on the trip to Kazakhstan. “I think that [Kazakhstan] is serious about their investment and really interested in new technologies,” he said.

Rare earth metals mining is also an area in which the two countries intend to begin cooperation in the very near future, Deputy Minister of Investment and Development Albert Rau told the council. German businesses have received information on 15 interesting metal deposits in Kazakhstan and the Kazakh side was looking forward to continuing the dialogue, he said.

He added that the government of Kazakhstan was considering two proposals for the construction of an agricultural machinery factory:

the German CLAAS and America’s John Deere. “We really need such factory, so I would ask the leadership to make this project a priority for us, if the government accepts it,” Rau said.

Executive Director of the National Association of Mining and Metallurgical Enterprises Nikolai Radostovets told the council about the potential for cooperation in metallurgy, mountain metallurgy, geologic exploration and subsurface use in general, and mentioned amendments to Kazakhstan’s law on subsoil use that will facilitate foreign investment and cooperation.

According to German statistics, Kazakh-German trade has amounted to some 6.5 billion euros over the past year and the two countries have implemented 12 joint investment projects over the past 3 years. This was the seventh meeting of the Kazakh-German Business Council so far. More than 1,200 German companies are currently operating in Kazakhstan.

Modernisation of Astana Airport to Be Part of President’s Infrastructure Plan

By Alina Usmanova

ASTANA – Nurdy Zhol, a new economic policy, presented by President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the Nov. 11 meeting of the Nur Otan Political Council emphasised the infrastructure development over the next five years.

The changes will affect large public facilities, including the main transport hubs. The President gave instructions to allocate 29 billion tenge (US\$160.2 million) from the budget for the construction of the new terminal and reconstruction of the runway of the capital city’s airport. According to the President, this will ensure that by 2017 the capacity will accommodate up to 7.1 million passengers.

The airport is one of the main connecting points in Eurasia, as 80 flights are made on a daily basis to the regions and abroad. Today, the airport is able to receive all types of aircraft without restrictions. The development of the airport is in accordance with the international standards of IATA (International Air Transport Association) and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation). Favourable conditions for cooperation with new airlines, both freight and passenger, are being created.

The airport can currently receive and dispatch aircraft with a visibility on the runway of 200 metres or more, whereas previously the aerodrome meteorological minimum was 350 metres. During rain or windy weather the airport al-

lows aircraft to make safe landings when the horizontal visibility is only 200 metres and vertical is 15.

Efficient improvement of aviation business processes is becoming an increasingly urgent task. Not long ago, the airport management staff showed interest in installing self-registration kiosks.

According to observations, with each new flight passengers are becoming more demanding on the list and quality of services.

With the approach of a new era of air transportation, the task of improving the efficiency of aviation business processes, combined with fast and pleasant service, is becoming increasingly urgent.

At the Aviation ICT Forum 2014, a European conference held Oct. 29 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Vice President of SITA, an air transport and communications company, in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Dmitry Krasnov discussed the interest of Kazakh air carriers and airports in implementing IT technologies.

According to Krasnov, almost all the major airports have expressed interest in installing self-registration kiosks that will allow passengers of the Almaty and Astana airports to register, select a seat and print boarding passes.

Astana International Airport has started using SITA solutions for planning operational activity in the preparation of its seasonal schedule, the first step in the use of new-generation technologies at the airport.

South African Official Promotes Business, People-to-People Connections

Continued from Page A1

We do indeed have the potential to develop dynamic partnerships in various industries, as was clearly demonstrated already, amongst others, by the ongoing contact between the PetroSA and KazMunayGas companies,” she said. Infrastructure development, mining, agro-production, energy, trade, the defence industry and tourism were among the industries she noted as having great business partnership potential.

Mfeketo called Africa, with its market of nearly 1 billion people and vast natural resources, the world’s next growth area. Kazakhstan, which has been pursuing closer ties with the region, establishing embassies in Ethiopia and South Africa, appointing an ambassador as an observer to the African Union and establishing diplomatic relations this year with Togo, is placing a high priority on expanding cooperation with the region in the coming years.

The two countries share a common role as regional leaders, Mfeketo said in an interview with The Astana Times on Nov. 5, adding that cooperation between them is key to extending cooperation in their respective regions.

During this visit, it was agreed to foster business-to-business development by forming a joint business council to be managed by the business community from both countries. The joint busi-

ness council will report to the bilateral commission that is held annually, Ambassador of South Africa to Kazakhstan Shirish Soni said in a Nov. 5 interview. Geology, mining technology and machinery, environment management, renewable energy, tourism and agriculture and food products were identified as the most promising sectors for cooperation.

“The business community from South Africa and Kazakhstan welcomed the idea and agreed to take the process forward in preparation for future high level visits,” he said.

But people-to-people connections are also a foreign policy priority for South Africa, and Mfeketo was keen to promote connections between the communities of the two countries, identifying women, business, students, academics, universities and artist to begin with. The nation is also interested in having South African religious leaders join the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions that meets every three years in Astana.

At KAZGUU University, Mfeketo directly invited students to come to South Africa. “South Africa is also committed to promoting the quest for a better world through our international engagements. Just earlier today, I addressed the business community from Kazakhstan and South Africa, and I emphasised the importance of people-to-people relations. Students are

a core part of that and you have an invitation from me, through my counterpart here, to come to Cape Town in South Africa as part of the delegation for genuine people-to-people relations.”

The KAZGUU Diplomatic Club, a foreign policy lecture and discussion platform, was launched this year with Soni appointed its chairman. During her visit, Mfeketo called on all diplomatic missions in Astana to participate in the Diplomatic Club and contribute books about their countries’ history, politics, economics, culture and languages to the library.

South African universities are in talks with Kazakhstan’s Bolashak Presidential Scholarship programme, Soni told The Astana Times, noting that South Africa is a major donor of books to Kazakhstan’s international library. The drive to build university-to-university partnerships was high on the agenda of this visit, he said, and the exchange of academics and students, joint research and course development, and harmonising standards were all topics of focus. South Africa is targeting Kazakhstan’s Al-Farabi National University, KIMEP, the Abylai Khan Kazakh University of International Relations, Gumilyov Eurasian National University, KazGUU and Nazarbayev University for partnerships, he said.

Kazakh Metallurgical Companies to Exhibit in Moscow

By Dmitry Lee

Kazakh metallurgical companies on behalf of the National Export and Investments agency KAZNEX INVEST are among 750 presenters at the Nov. 11-14 20th Metal-Expo 2014 in Moscow.

Companies from more than 35 countries, totaling approximately 30,000 participants, are presenting cutting-edge metal products and technologies.

The Kazakh companies are being presented as one dis-

play, as they were at the 2012 expo. Those companies include Byelkamit, Almaty Heavy Engineering Plant, ALE Association of Mining and Metallurgical Enterprises, Promplastik, Akto-beRail and Structural Steel Mill and FerrumVtor.

Numerous cooperation documents have been signed at the expo between Kazakh, Russian and other international companies.

Metal-Expo is one of the metallurgical industry’s largest annual professional gatherings.



EDITORIAL & OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

New Poll Shows Kazakh Citizens Have Positive Outlook on the Country, And Fundamentals Explain Why

So much of Kazakhstan is changing and modernising at an incredible pace: the country has entered into the ranks of the 50 most-competitive states, Astana has grown from a small town to a reputable capital hosting grand events and the people in general are becoming used to living in a market economy. The general attitude of Kazakhstan citizens regarding their homeland is improving, which can be seen not only from national television channels and news outlets but from the recent results of a survey conducted by Ipsos MORI, a leading market research company in the U.K.

The research, commissioned by the recently established Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs, used a sample of 1,000 adults aged 18 and over and followed quotas set on gender, age and location to ensure a national overview. The results of the ten-question survey compared answers from a similar study conducted in 2013. According to the report, "respondents display an increasingly positive attitude towards their country across the board, demonstrating growing support and consensus for the general direction of their government's policies."

Ninety percent of respondents replied that they feel fairly positive or very positive about their country, an increase of four percentage points from 2013. Only seven percent of those surveyed said they feel neither positive nor negative, down from 11 percent in 2013, and a mere one percent of respondents expressed feeling fairly negative or very negative. It is notable that 95 percent of those under 24 felt fairly positive or very positive, as opposed to 88-90 percent with the same response in other age groups, highlighting the optimism felt by those born in independent Kazakhstan. The highest level of optimism was reported in the northern region of Kazakhstan, where 97 percent of respondents said they felt fairly positive or very positive, compared to 83 percent in Astana and 88-91 percent in other regions.

Given the enormous amount of investment into infrastructure and the broad support provided for entrepreneurs through various incentives, it is not surprising to note an increase

of five percent in the respondents' perception of the country's economy. Seventy-five percent of participants in the study stated they feel fairly positive or very positive about the economic outlook of Kazakhstan. Only five percent of the sample group reported feeling fairly negative or very negative about the economy, while 18 percent reported they feel neither positive nor negative. In general, respondents in Southern and Northern Kazakhstan were more positive about the economy than respondents elsewhere, with 83 percent and 81 percent respectively saying they felt fairly positive or very positive.

More people noted an improvement in Kazakhstan as a place to live, with 83 percent (up from 81 percent in 2013) saying it has gotten a lot better or a little better, and 13 percent saying it has stayed the same. Only three percent (down from five percent in 2013) said it has gotten a little worse or a lot worse over the last ten years. The number of respondents saying life has gotten a lot better (the highest indicator) rose from 26 percent in 2013 to astonishing 40 percent in 2014.

Respondents were generally fairly satisfied with selected important aspects of life in Kazakhstan ten years ago, although only 15-32 percent said they were satisfied and very satisfied, while 5-16 percent said they were unsatisfied and very unsatisfied.

The categories selected in the research included road and transport infrastructure, prices of everyday goods, education, policing, overall quality of life, healthcare, justice system, the respondent's own standard of living, identifying and eliminating corruption, opportunities for individuals to progress in society and job opportunities. The percentage of respondents being satisfied or very satisfied went up on absolutely all aspects by 6-15 percent if compared to 2013 results.

Out of the 17 descriptive words the respondents were asked to associate with Kazakhstan, the most correlated ones were all positive, with the top five staying unchanged from 2013.

Words like "hospitable" (47 percent), "stable" (39 percent), "peaceful" (37 percent), "improving" (36 percent) and "successful" (32 percent)

were all used to describe the country. According to the authors of the survey, there were no noticeable differences in attitudes among men and women.

Furthermore, with the country actively preparing for EXPO 2017 and successfully navigating through Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) chairmanships, 78 percent of respondents think that Kazakhstan's global standing improved in recent years. Almost half (41 percent) believe the country's standing has greatly improved.

But even with an improvement in the country's international image, there are still issues the government needs to address to raise Kazakhstan's reputation even higher. Eighty-eight percent of respondents tend to support or strongly support actively combating corruption to help to raise Kazakhstan's international profile. President Nursultan Nazarbayev, well aware of the problem plaguing the country, unveiled the new Anti-Corruption Strategy adopted by the Nur Otan party on Nov. 11.

Other popular incentives disclosed by the survey were actively combating social inequality (87 percent), contributing more to combating environmental problems (85 percent) and participation in international trade (84 percent). While 15 percent tend to oppose or strongly oppose contributing more to resolving international conflict, 62 percent believe Kazakhstan should do more.

Finally, Kazakhstan's citizens are confident in their security. According to 67-87 percent of survey respondents, Kazakhstan deals very well and fairly well with food, water, energy and nuclear security, the key pillars of its UN Security Council bid.

The results of the poll explain the popularity of President Nazarbayev over the years. With the recent announcement of a new economic policy Nurlu Zhol, which emphasises heavy investment in infrastructure and social liabilities of the state, there are reasons to believe such a generally positive sentiment about their country among the people of Kazakhstan will stay on.

From Almaty to Vienna, New Prospects For LLDCs

By Kairat Abdrakhmanov

Kazakhstan being the world's largest landlocked country, and also the ninth largest country in the world of more than 2.7 million square kilometres, hosted in 2003 in Almaty the First United Nations Conference on Landlocked Countries.

The conference's outcome, the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA), practically the only one of its kind thus far, is a road map to ensure the special needs of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). It contains specific measures and recommendations concerning the policy in the spheres of transit and infrastructure development and for financial and technical assistance to specified group of countries.

The APoA, first developed in 2003, has helped create new linkages and strengthen existing partnerships between landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and development partners, including multilateral institutions.

Though there is noteworthy progress, we must also recognise that the majority of our economies remain vulnerable to external shocks and other emerging challenges.

We are also aware that we have not been able to reach most of the Millennium Development Goals, and our countries continue to be marginalised from the international trading system.

The structural impediments associated with landlockedness remain a challenge.

The government of Kazakhstan had organised a retreat in July this year in Astana for New York-based diplomats from LLDCs as a platform to deliberate on key recommendations for consideration at the Vienna Conference, and which have been included in its agenda.

The LLDCs constitute a vast range of countries with different political orientations, economic growth and development rates, national targets and levels of progress achieved.

I would however qualify saying that all LLDCs are making serious efforts but accomplishments vary from country to country. Global solidarity and partnerships through the APoA have helped to transform the LLDCs from being landlocked to becoming land-linked.

For the 32 LLDCs, the promotion of efficient transport systems is still an important objective but these efforts must not stop at their countries' borders and must also include cooperation with transit countries too and hence a blueprint for cross-border – and beyond, transport and trade facilitation infrastructure is a sine qua non.

Thus the areas of infrastructure connectivity between LLDCs, their transit countries, and increased integration of economies will have to feature prominently in the upcoming Programme of Action to be adopted in Vienna.

New goals will obviously be set in a more ambitious manner. At the same time, LLDCs should actively consider acceding to some of the existing U.N. conventions on international transport and trade facilitation in this regard.

LLDCs as a group have recorded impressive trade performance in the recent past, with total exports increasing almost fivefold between 2000 and 2010, while the share of the group in global trade is still modest and amounted to only 1.04 percent in 2010. The LLDCs have been marginalised in the global trading system.

However, the implementation of the APoA has resulted in the LLDCs making some gains with regard to expanding transit transport infrastructure facilities, reducing delays and inefficiencies in the border formalities.

The reality is that our economies show relatively high trade openness – but their absolute level of trade has yet to get close to its full potential. Infrastructure, trade barriers and insufficient technological capacities continue to hamper LLDCs.

At the same time, reliance on a narrow range of exports – often a limited number of commodities presents a significant weakness, like basic merchandise oil and natural resources.

Economic diversification must,



therefore, be an urgent priority to both resource-rich and resource-scarce LLDCs must feature in the Vienna Conference.

The Almaty Programme of Action is a most significant landmark and the record of accomplishments in all regions has been remarkable. The world has moved rapidly since then. And like then, some countries face greater impediments even more today, aggravated with changed circumstances, the global political and the economic crises, climate change.

Thus, in Vienna, a new comprehensive, common action-oriented framework of LLDCs for the next decade, should be developed, taking into account the unfinished agenda of APoA.

The new focus in Vienna must be to achieve structural transformation and economic re-specialisation through reduction of high transport and transaction costs, the establishment of efficient transit transport systems through increased investments in transport, energy and information and communications technology, increasing trade and productive capacity, diversifying exports, value-addition, technology transfer, developing the service sector, ICT, improved market access and strengthening institutions.

As we are moving into the new transformational phase of post-2015 agenda, attention will also be on poverty reduction, health, education, employment and economic self-reliance, together with food, energy and water security, and the overall peace and stability, rule of law, good governance and human rights required for achieving sustainable development.

Some 16 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa are at a special disadvantage and have the highest concentration of landlocked countries.

Despite strides in achieving MDG Goals, GDP growth rates above five percent under the Almaty Programme, with support from the U.N. and the Economic Commission for Africa, they have a high incidence of extreme poverty. Six of the lowest ranked 10 countries are African LLDCs.

They lack the well-developed markets around them as European landlocked countries do. Maritime trade is a small part of African external trade with very low value goods and enormously long distances to the closest seaports.

They encounter hurdles of long border delays, a proliferation of road checkpoints, and other practices that increase monetary and time costs that impede trade.

Thus, the policy recommendation for the extended PoA should be on trade policy reforms, cost reduction, infrastructure development, regional and sub-regional coordination, institutional framework and capacity building, public-private cooperation, and partnerships.

Since we are moving into the new transformational phase of post-2015 agenda, the focus on poverty reduction, health, education, employment and economic self-reliance, together with food, energy and water security will also gain attention in Vienna.

Overall peace and stability, rule of law and good governance are required all the more for the LLDCs to see progress and these new elements will be added to the APoA to keep pace with changing times and challenges.

The author is the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations.

This opinion was first published by the Inter Press Service news agency.

Secret Kazakh-US Mission to Secure Nuclear Materials Celebrates 20th Anniversary, Exemplifies Cooperation Needed Today

On Nov. 18, exactly two decades have passed since Kazakhstan and the United States concluded Project Sapphire, a joint secret operation conducted in 1994 to remove approximately 600 kilogrammes of highly-enriched uranium from the Ulba Metallurgical Plant in Eastern Kazakhstan. The then highly classified operation is no longer a secret, which makes it even more captivating for the public, experts, and politicians. The declassification unveiled the true historical significance of the step Kazakhstan made, changing the nature of its nuclear policy towards a more pro-active direction.

Project Sapphire started after the President of Kazakhstan asked the United States for help in disposing of about 25 Hiroshima-sized bombs-worth of weapons-grade Uranium-235 that had previously been stored at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant enrichment facility in the city of Ust-Kamenogorsk, unknown to Kazakhstan. The highly-enriched material had been located at the Ulba plant since at least 1976, where it was stored mostly in composite materials. Part of it was in a semi-processed state. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the fuel was poorly documented and secured and in danger of being sold for use in building nuclear weapons.

The amount of nuclear materials, initially aimed at producing a new type of reactor for Soviet submarines, was enough to produce more than two dozen powerful nuclear bombs. Processing the highly radioactive and, therefore, extremely dangerous material within Kazakhstan was technologically impossible and in order to avoid the risk of the uranium falling into the wrong hands and to comply with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the substance needed to be transported either to Russia or the United States.

It was during the second official visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to the United States in February 1994, during his meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton, when a joint Kazakh-U.S. secret programme to transport the uranium to the American nuclear facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, was masterminded. The specific details of Project Sapphire were conceived and executed in an atmosphere of high secrecy. In spite of the fact that the operation was characterised by multiple negotiations, expert exchanges and trips that involved many ministries, most of the participants knew only about their part of the operation. All information was held in secret until the plane carrying the cargo landed in the United States.

The successful conclusion of Project Sapphire was announced at a press conference both in

Kazakhstan and the United States in late 1994. In January 1995, the then Minister of Science and New Technologies Vladimir Shkolnik, summed up the essence of the event in a press interview. He emphasised that the operation was not a random, one-time occurrence. "Rather, it was part of a broader Kazakhstan government policy, which was being pursued on multiple levels," he said. On Dec. 23, 1994, White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Meyers announced that the United States and the Republic of Kazakhstan had successfully completed the transfer of nuclear materials for safe storage in the United States.

Project Sapphire became one of Kazakhstan's first and most serious steps on the road to full nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is perhaps the most emblematic of the nature of cooperation needed to help stave off another global arms race.

After the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, Kazakhstan inherited the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world after those in Russia, the United States and Ukraine. This arsenal included 1,040 nuclear warheads, each one megaton of TNT equivalent in strength, 104 SS-18 intercontinental ballistic missiles and 40 Tu-95 strategic bombers armed with 370 tactical nuclear warheads on air-launched cruise missiles. Additionally, Kazakhstan was home to the former Soviet Union's Semipalatinsk nuclear weapons test site.

Even before declaring independence, on Aug. 29, 1991, President Nazarbayev put an end to 40 years of developing and testing nuclear weapons at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Upon independence, he voluntarily renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal and by April 1995, Kazakhstan transferred all of its nuclear warheads to Russia, completely dismantling the nuclear testing infrastructure at the Semipalatinsk test site by July 2000.

For over 20 years now, Kazakhstan has been committed to achieving global nuclear disarmament and security. The legacy of the hundreds of tests that have taken place on Kazakh soil has had a terrible impact on 1.5 million people and led the country to initiate the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 64/35, which designated Aug. 29 as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. The commemoration is intended to increase public awareness of the risks and impact of nuclear testing to make political leaders accountable to their commitments.

Another of Kazakhstan's global advocacy campaigns, The ATOM Project, is mobilising people worldwide to call on their leaders to ban nuclear weapons testing. The name of the project is an acronym formed from the first four letters of the English alphabet which stands

for Abolish Testing. Our Mission. At its core is an international petition campaign designed to unify global public opinion against nuclear weapons testing that features the tragic and hopeful stories of survivors of nuclear testing from the Semey region. Under the project, anyone anywhere who stands against nuclear weapons can sign an online petition, urging world governments to abandon nuclear tests forever and ensure the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Acknowledging the right of every country to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Kazakhstan is negotiating to host the International Low-Enriched Uranium Bank under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) auspices. The major challenge in this area is enabling this expansion while taking precautionary measures against proliferation.

At present, Kazakhstan is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The country signed the Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in February 2004 and is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Kazakhstan acceded to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism on Sept. 16, 2005 and is an active partner in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. On Sept. 8, 2006, the foreign ministers of the five Central Asian States – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – signed the Treaty of Semipalatinsk, which established a Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ). It entered into force in March 2009 and the zone was recognised by the five nuclear weapon states in May 2014.

The threat of the uncontrolled expansion of the nuclear club remains one of the most serious problems of the 21st Century. Unless the international community shows political will, the number of states possessing nuclear weapons can increase irreversibly, leaving the entire world liable to feel the consequences.

Project Sapphire is a real success story and a great example of how cooperation, strong will and a sense of responsibility should be used to put an end to nuclear weapons testing and eliminate the world's nuclear arsenals. That is especially accurate twenty years on as we witness the distrust and disagreement gripping military and diplomatic elites in nuclear powers and in other countries contemplating the possibility of acquiring nuclear weapon capabilities. Astana has proved a reliable partner that is ready to go to great lengths when it comes to strengthening global and regional security, showing the kind of responsibility and leadership needed in this sensitive area.

THE ASTANA TIMES

Editor-in-Chief: Roman Vassilenko
Managing Editor: Tatiana Kostina
18a Pobeda Avenue Astana, 010000
Telephone/Facsimile: +7 7172 32 17 29
Distribution in Astana: +7 7172 44 51 53

Publisher: Svezhaya Pressa LLP
News and Editorial: +7 701 575 1055
Advertising: +7 727 252 08 82
E-mail: info@astanatimes.com
KazPost Subscription index: 64572

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

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

ORDER: 1098

PRINT RUN: 6,000

OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Reforms Should Not be Campaign Fodder, Says Mazhilis Deputy Chairperson

By Yerbol Tishkambayev

During the Mazhilis' (lower chamber of the Parliament's) most recent "government hour," which was focused on providing schoolchildren with textbooks and methodical resources, many flaws in the system were discussed. These and other questions were actualised in an interview with Dariga Nazarbayeva, deputy chair of the Mazhilis and head of the Mazhilis's Nur Otan party.



Dariga Nazarbayeva

You often raise the question of reforming the national education system. One of the most pressing issues is providing textbooks and addressing shortages. What are the causes of these failures in the supply? How, in your opinion, should the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) deal with these issues?

The timely and complete distribution of textbooks is raised every year, but it does not decrease the acuteness of the issue. When the first quarter of the school year finished, akimats (governors' office) report give the impression that 97 percent of pupils have textbooks. That means that 90,000 children were forced to buy textbooks through their parents. It is not just about this artificially created problem, but about a violation of the constitutional right of children to free education, including the right to free textbooks.

Parents, who until the very beginning of the school year, do not know the school programme, book lists and book delivery times, turn to us. Each year in the news, we see endless queues in libraries and shops and excitement and frustration. Those who cannot afford to buy a kit for 20,000-25,000 tenge (US\$110-\$138), have to buy cheap, unsanitary used copies.

Therefore, MPs are actually implementing the work of the MES scrupulously and have sorted out all matters of production and distribution of textbooks.

The biggest drawback of administrative reforms is the so-called decentralisation of management, in which no one is responsible for anything. The situation with textbooks clearly demonstrates this problem.

The whole process of designing, producing and distributing is divided into the following levels of responsibility: the MES approves the list of textbooks, publishing houses develop, publish and replicate them, the monitoring and evaluation department identifies the needs of schools and then finances procurement and supplies the schools.

Failure occurs at almost all levels. The MES orders the books in May or June. The list is reviewed annually. Various bureaucratic procedures, such as state procurement, etc., require time. Competitive procedures are not worked out, the rules are blurred; those who offer the lowest price win. The pursuit of cheapness is ultimately expensive to the country. Dubious companies receive the nation's textbook orders; they have neither the experience nor the resources to succeed.

The practice of akimats underfunding textbook orders is well established. The volumes of orders do not meet the real needs of schools. Besides, factors such as migration, population growth and the physical deterioration of textbooks are not taken into account.

There are no calculation methods for needs and school libraries are not updated consistently. There is no registration, or centralised statistics. The MES does not have general summary data. There are no clear rules and no one to ask. That's why officials end up with a slight shock for their ugliness and parents are forced to find textbooks in long queues in shops and markets and then paying a lot of money from their modest budgets.

The volume of orders, which all the participants in the process have to manage, is very large. We have a bad practice of promoting so-called alternative textbooks, which are materials not needed because there are already similar products on the market. Efficiency in the education system is zero. But a huge amount of money from the budget is spent. Just think about the numbers: there are more than 2.6 million students in the country and on the list of mandatory literature are 1,192 textbook titles, with costs averaging 500-1,000 tenge (US\$2.7-\$5.5). If we take into account that the average package in different classes varies from 13 to 18 textbooks, naturally, their price also varies from 11 to 13 thousand tenge (US\$61-\$72). This is only publishing house costs and in a market environment, this figure doubles or triples.

MPs say that at the state minimum for the social standard, it is necessary to leave the funding from the budget for one compulsory textbook for each subject. The other, so-called alternative textbooks should be made optional to teachers and students. They should be published using extra budgetary funds and be available in libraries or specialised shops.

What competencies should the MES have regarding textbooks? Is it necessary to toughen up on those responsible who fail to get students their materials?

We see systemic failures in all stages of operations.

MPs demand that the MES take control of the industry, rather than

rely to the akimats. The entire legal framework of the education system requires a review. In the shortest time, it is necessary to adopt uniform standards and methodologies for all regions and to introduce strict control over their observance on the ground, as well as establish personal liability for those in charge. Negligent officials should lose their jobs, not just be forced to listen to reprimands. There should be a mechanism for a ministry to influence the placement of personnel in the regions.

It is also necessary to revise the curriculum and timetable for the publication and delivery of textbooks. Textbooks for the new school year should be delivered to schools no later than June 1.

We should not entrust the delivery of books to local authorities. Practice shows that they cannot cope with this task. Publishers, or a single operator with an extensive delivery system such as "Kazpost" should implement delivery.

Should we trust publishers to develop textbooks?

Teachers, parents, students and scientists have many complaints about the quality of textbooks. This debate has dragged on for many years. The development of textbooks was assigned to publishers who are not willing to pay for quality. Then, their developments are examined according to the MES; then, the state finances publication and pays the publisher copyright fees annually.

There is a suspicion that the most elementary and egregious mistakes in textbooks are made deliberately to create grounds for republishing, at the expense of the state treasury, of course. ... There was not even a single case where publishers were responsible for mistakes and the damage they caused the treasury.

This whole system is inefficient for the state, not transparent and corrupt. That's why MPs for the past several years cannot achieve reform in this sphere. Prices are too high

and many want to extend this celebration of life as long as possible.

We are convinced that we cannot trust the content of textbooks to a competitive market environment. We are talking about ideology, about the outlook of our citizens, about that basic knowledge obtained by Kazakhstan's students for life. Such a task can be handled only by the state, represented by the MES. The Altynsarin Academy of Education is part of it. The academy should gather the greatest minds of the scientific and pedagogical environment and set them the task. We want a state monopoly in this area!

The publishers need to keep printing and distributing. The Mazhilis will raise these issues as needed until there is a shift for the better. Discussion on the quality of educational literature is already in our plans. We have to discuss the quality of textbooks in the system of vocational and higher education.

Lately, because of the actions of government reformers, Kazakhstan's schools have turned into experimental sites. For example, the head of the MES, Aslan Sarinzhipov believes that children should go to school starting at age six. Are you for or against such innovations?

In the educational process, all reforms should be tested, scientifically proven and justified. Scientists, physiologists and hygienists say that 6-year-olds differ significantly from 7-year-olds. Intensive development makes a 6-year-old very sensitive to various adverse effects, often leading to changes in the body, increasing the risk of disease. Therefore, the organisation of the educational process in teaching 6-year-olds has certain peculiarities. All these factors must be taken into account and calculated. It is not necessary to amend the legislation; there is no comprehensive health, legal and economic expertise.

Reform should not become a regular campaign buzzword. Education reform will never be complete

and no one has been held responsible for recklessly and inefficiently spent funds.

Recommendation is a Latin word meaning "auspicious review or council." The government understands recommendations from MPs exactly in the Latin style. But recommendations from numerous international organisations are far from realistic. These organisations are not really rushing to get to know us better either and issue suggestions that are perceived as obligations, and indications that it is necessary to perform, no matter what. This is a big mystery to us.

Today, the attitude towards the requirements of the Bologna Convention is ambiguous. In today's world, everything is changing pretty quickly, what was good yesterday is not working today. An aging population and labour shortages force many countries to take a fresh look at their situations regarding secondary education. We hear talks of a possible reduction in time required to graduate high school.

But we still mechanically idealise what has become irrelevant. Therefore, from our point of view, it is not necessary to hurry on this issue.

The existing 11 years education is not sufficient. We still have a shortage of qualified teaching staff and a lack of seats. Bad academic materials, technical bases at schools and quality of teaching is being observed. About 40 percent of children are still sitting at their desks in small schools, receiving only a symbolic education. Access to the Internet and learning electronically is still not possible at the majority of our schools. These problems should be resolved by the MES.

Introducing a 12-year course of education means increasing the number of pupils in schools and the number of teachers, developing additional programmes, educational materials and so on. This leads to additional costs and vague results.

There is much talk about the crisis, economic problems, reduced oil prices and the possibility of reducing costs. Despite this, we believe that saving at the expense of the education and health of our citizens is unacceptable. But this does not mean that one should abuse these services and mindlessly spend the people's money.

Increasing Regional Risks Call for Intensified Economic Reforms in Caucasus and Central Asia

By Juha Kähkönen and Hossein Samiei

The policymakers who met during the recent Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) faced some somber news regarding prospects for the global economy. Although global recovery continues, it remains uneven in advanced economies, and emerging economies are adjusting to rates of economic growth lower than those reached in the pre-crisis boom and post-crisis recovery. For the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA), increased geopolitical tensions and the related slowdown in Russia's economy are of a particular concern. With weaker economic prospects and long-standing vulnerabilities, it is becoming more urgent to implement reforms to increase competitiveness, reduce unemployment, and improve living standards.

GDP growth in 2014-15 for this region is projected to decline from about 7 percent in 2013 to 5.5 percent. The decline might not seem large while many other regions of the world are growing at much lower rates. However, this is a region accustomed to high rates of growth, witnessing nearly 7.5 percent growth during 2007-11, including during the global financial crisis.

For Kazakhstan, growth is projected to reach 4.6 percent in the 2014, compared with 6 percent in 2013, largely due to weaker external demand (from Russia and China) and continued regional uncertainty. Although the unemployment rate in Kazakhstan is low at around 5 percent, the projected real GDP growth is not sufficient to absorb new entrants to the labor force. Despite early upward pressures stemming from the February devaluation, inflation



Juha Kähkönen



Hossein Samiei

is likely to stay within the authorities' objective range of 6-8 percent, helped by slowing activity and administrative price controls. Risks to the near-term growth outlook are predominantly on the downside, largely related to Russia and falling oil prices. Over the medium term, growth prospects are driven by a projected increase in oil output.

The recent decline in oil prices adds uncertainty to the economic outlook. The region's oil exporters are vulnerable to a prolonged period of low oil prices. Growth in these economies may slow further as oil revenues fall, and unless their governments cut spending, their fiscal and external surpluses would also deteriorate. Although CCA oil importers would benefit from lower oil import bills at first, they are exposed to negative spillovers from Russia, an economy that itself depends heavily on oil.

The oil price shock is taking place against the backdrop of rising global risks. A further deepening of geopolitical tensions surrounding the situation in Ukraine could significantly impact the CCA economic outlook further, given the region's close links with Russia through trade, remittances, and investment. Our estimates suggest

that a temporary fall of 1 percentage point in Russia's GDP growth in a given year would lower that year's growth in the CCA oil exporters by about 0.3 percentage points and in the oil importers by about 0.7 percentage points. Moreover, a longer period of slower growth in other economic partners, particularly Europe or China, would also affect growth in the CCA through weaker external demand and investment.

What should governments and central banks in the region do in response to the rising risks? First and foremost, they need to focus on maintaining economic and financial stability and, where possible, providing short-term support to economic growth. In this sense, given heightened risks, a pause in fiscal consolidation is justifiable in the countries that have buffers, such as Kazakhstan and Georgia. Yet fiscal consolidation needs to resume once conditions improve, to rebuild buffers and place public debt on a declining path. In most oil and gas exporters, attention should be paid to ensuring intergenerational equity and adequate precautionary balances to protect against commodity price uncertainty. And, where inflation is creeping up, monetary tightening may be needed.

However, these immediate steps are unlikely to break the trend of slower economic growth over the medium term. A recent IMF study shows that the decline in potential economic growth in the CCA region has been sharper than in other regions of the world. The region's productivity has declined and reform has slowed down, reinforcing the longstanding problems of unemployment, emigration, and inequality in the region.

Comprehensive reforms of gov-

ernance, regulatory quality, and the rule of law are needed to create an environment conducive to increased productivity, investments, jobs, and growth. Priorities should be given to further diversifying commodity-based economies, improving access of firms and households to finance, strengthening the business climate, and pursuing balanced regional and multilateral trade integration. For its part, the IMF is working with the countries in the region to help them respond

to these challenges. Depending on country circumstances, this help can include policy advice, technical assistance, and financial support.

The recent global uncertainties only highlight further the need for a new economic model, less dependent on commodities, more integrated and diversified. This would help to propel the CCA countries permanently into the rank of fast paced emerging economies, allowing them to fully take advantage of their key geographic position and population dividend.

Juha Kähkönen is Deputy Director, Middle East and Central Asia Department, International Monetary Fund, and Hossein Samiei is IMF Mission Chief for Kazakhstan.



THE ASTANA TIMES

Dear Friends,

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

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

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

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

THE ASTANA TIMES
astanatimes.com

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Diplomatic Dispatch

Dear readers,

During the almost four years that The Astana Times has existed, foreign ambassadors, diplomats and officials at the offices of international organisations in Kazakhstan have been among our keenest readers.

And we have sought to cover their work extensively, by launching a series of interviews with ambassadors, publishing their opinions and the opinions of visiting ministers and other high-level officials.

We intend to continue doing so, as we believe there are numerous great stories that remain untold.

Where we see an even greater untapped source of information is in the area of day-to-day activities of embassies and the interesting cultural, educational, economic and social events they engage in or help plan.

To fill the information gap, so to speak, we are launching a new mini-section called The Diplomatic Dispatch, which will cover exactly these sorts of stories. But we won't be able to do it alone and we will only be able to do it properly if the embassies and our readers in general fill us in on what's new and what's happening in their lives in Kazakhstan.

So we would appreciate your feedback at info@astanatimes.com

With best wishes from wintry Astana,

Roman Vassilenko
Editor-in-Chief

P. S. Below is the first Diplomatic Dispatch.

The Academic Diplomatic Club Takes Shape

The KAZGUU Academic Diplomatic Club was launched by Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Askar Mussinov on May 5, 2014. All heads of mission and diplomats were invited to join the club. Shirish M. Soni, ambassador of South Africa to Kazakhstan, was appointed chairman of the new club.

Since May 5, a series of lectures and seminars have been hosted at KAZGUU, benefiting the students and academics from many universities in Astana. Many heads of missions have delivered lectures and hosted seminars at the university. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov was invited to deliver a lecture on Kazakhstan's foreign policy and role in multilateral organisations in October. The KAZGUU International Library project was also officially opened by Idrissov. Embassies based in Astana contributed books to stock the international library.

In discussions with heads of missions and stakeholders, it was decided to replicate the initiative in three universities in Almaty: Abylai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages, Al-Farabi National University and KIMEP University. Soni visited all three universities in Almaty on Nov. 17 and concluded very successful meetings with managers and academics there.

The initial discussions with the universities will result in an official launch of the initiative in Almaty and the preparation of a programme of seminars and lectures for 2015 - 2016. According to Soni, all the universities expressed openness to being fully involved in project and identified many areas for joint cooperation with foreign missions and international organisations.

2015 marks 70 years of the United Nations and, according to Soni, celebrations could be planned jointly with stakeholders to hold events to mark the anniversary, including lectures and seminars. In particular, students and academics can discuss the workings of the United Nations. He identified discussions on the Security Council as a topic that will generate a lot of interest in Kazakhstan during 2015.

Another topic identified during the meetings was BRICS. The 7th BRICS Summit of heads of state will be held in July 2015 in Ufa, Bashkortostan, in Russia. In keeping with the tradition set in South Africa during 2013, the BRICS heads of state will also meet with heads of states from the region.

It is intended that detailed consultations will be concluded by the end of December 2014 and the programme will be implemented during 2015 - 16.

Almaty Conference Examines G-Global Role in Addressing Global Challenges



By Malika Orazgaliyeva

Developing a new paradigm focused on solving global challenges was recently discussed for the first time at the G-Global platform.

An international conference titled "A New Paradigm of Sustainable Human Development: G-Global - A New Form of Global Dialogue" took place at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty Nov 5-7. The platform is a unique global dialogue of intellectuals, recognised public and state figures and prominent foreign and domestic experts.

Speaker of Kazakhstan's Senate Kassym-Jomart Tokayev delivered a keynote address at the conference and talked about sustainable human development and security

and the role of the G-Global initiative in that process.

"The theme of this conference is very acute. Contemporary challenges have created a need for a new paradigm on global development. That is why Kazakhstan is helping to tackle this problem. President Nursultan Nazarbayev launched the G-Global initiative in hopes of uniting the international community in establishing and securing peace for the world. This initiative offers an absolutely new form of global discussion. There is no doubt over the accomplishments of the elite G8 and G20 groups, yet we believe that the world should listen to the views of other countries and hear their proposals on current developments. In our opinion, such a redistribution of global roles is more consistent with the principles of democracy and inclusive responsibility and it pays due regard to the needs of a multipolar world," Tokayev said.

He went on to state that sustainable development requires political stability. As history shows, such guarantors of stability, as a rule, are democracies. But democratisation is an evolving trend that cannot be artificially accelerated



Speaker of Kazakhstan's Senate Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

or imposed, Tokayev maintained. Historical experience, cultural traditions and the uniqueness of the national mentality of each state must be taken into account. The experiences of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Egypt show that building democracy requires political tact and an extremely thoughtful, responsible and patient approach, stressed Tokayev.

He noted that Kazakhstan is interested in strengthening international cooperation to ensure

global sustainable development. President Nazarbayev's Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy reflects Kazakhstan's vision for long-term development and it should be carefully studied by foreign experts, he concluded.

The Almaty conference was organised by the World Academy of Art & Science, the World University Consortium and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in partnership with a consortium of leading international organisa-

tions, research institutes and universities to examine theoretical foundations and policy framework.

Co-organisers include the Club of Rome and Madrid, Green Cross International, as well as major international public associations, universities and foundations. The consortium brought together international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the UNDP (the United Nations Development Programme), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Movement International, the World Fund for Future Development and many more.

This forum has been held in both Europe and the Americas. This year, by a decision of the organising committee, the high-profile event was held in Kazakhstan. The conference consisted of four trans-disciplinary, inter-related tracks focused on issues related to governance, international security, human rights and law; economics and finance; employment, education and human development; and energy, resources and climate.

Kazakh, German Foreign Ministers Discuss Economic Relations in Astana

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA - Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov met Nov. 10 with visiting German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Astana.

Idrissov and Steinmeier discussed economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Germany,

together: a document on the completion of negotiations on the draft of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between Kazakhstan and the European Union and a document completing bilateral negotiations between Kazakhstan and the EU regarding Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Union parties is also development," Idrissov said.

The parties expressed satisfaction with the institutional framework designed to expand trade and economic cooperation at the state level. The activities of the Kazakh-German Intergovernmental Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation and the Kazakh-German Business Council for Strategic Cooperation were also underlined.

Idrissov told his German counterpart that Kazakhstan attaches great political and practical importance to cooperation on issues concerning ethnic Germans living in Kazakhstan. He stated that they

serve as a bridge between the two countries as do immigrants from Kazakhstan in Germany.

In addition, during the meeting, Idrissov briefed his colleague about preparing for EXPO 2017 and handed an official invitation letter from President Nazarbayev to Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel to participate in the exhibition.

"The theme of EXPO 2017, Future Energy, is focused on transitioning to a green economy. Our country is ready to share its experience in this field with our Kazakh partners," the German minister announced.

At the press conference, Steinmeier said that the issue of visa

facilitation for Kazakhstan's citizens will be reviewed by the German government, even though it is a long process, because Germany follows the rules applied by the European Union. This summer, Kazakhstan introduced a unilateral visa-free regime for citizens of the top 10 investor nations, including Germany.

Asked about the EU Strategy for Central Asia which he had led the process of crafting in 2007 during his first stint as German foreign minister, Steinmeier said the strategy has had its successes and updating it will be a subject for further discussions with the countries in the region.



German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (left) and Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov in Astana on Nov. 10.

which included a 2013 bilateral trade total of \$3.2 billion and a January-through-September 2014 total of \$1.95 billion. Seventy-two trade and investment agreements between the countries totaling \$3.2 billion have also been signed over the last three years.

"Kazakhstan is the leading trade partner of Germany in Central Asia. Today, I am accompanied with a big delegation from the German business community. Our country is interested in investing in Kazakhstan," Steinmeier stated at a joint press briefing with Idrissov after their meeting. In the beginning of the meeting, which took place with the media present, Steinmeier also called Kazakhstan the "anchor of stability" in Central Asia with whom Germany would like to strengthen ties.

"Germany sees great opportunities in taking part in highway, railroad and various other infrastructure projects [in Kazakhstan]," he added at the press briefing.

Idrissov reminded of the importance of two political documents that were signed in the wake of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Brussels in Oc-

"We consider the PCA an opportunity to bring our cooperation to a new level in all areas of cooperation. The document provides a framework for the strategic partnership and a significant growth of trade and investment," Idrissov said.

Also, the ministers exchanged views on international issues. At the press briefing, Steinmeier noted that during his conversations with President Nazarbayev earlier in the day and Foreign Minister Idrissov, conflict de-escalation was discussed. "We reviewed proposals that our countries, jointly as neighbours, can take towards the de-escalation of pressing issues in the Middle East, Iran, Iraq and Ukraine. Kazakhstan and Germany will continue to make efforts to ensure that the intensity of these conflicts are decreasing," he said.

The ministers also discussed developing interparliamentary and interparty relations between Kazakhstan and Germany.

"Deputies of Kazakhstan's Parliament hold meetings with members of the Germany - Central Asia parliamentary group in the Bundestag on a regular basis. The dialogue between the Nur Otan and Christian Democratic



Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.

THANKSGIVING BUFFET AT THE ASTANA MARRIOTT

November 27th
From 7 PM to 11 PM

Reservation is required
+7 7172 620 774

8.500 KZT per person

Children from 0 to 5 years old - complimentary;
Children from 6 to 11 - 50% discount.
Price includes VAT and are subject to a 5% service charge.
Astana Marriott Hotel
2 Dostyq Street, 010016, Astana, Kazakhstan



Nation&Capital

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

CULTURE

French Artist Finds His Muse in Kazakhstan

B3

SOCIETY

Shabyt International Festival Awards Creative Youth

B5

SPORTS

Kazakhstan Ranked Last in Euro 2016 Qualifiers Group

B7

Geoparks Can Tell the History of Kazakhstan, Attract Tourism Dollars, says Geologist



The basic principle of ecotourism is that the more a monument has been preserved, the more income tourism will bring. Geological monuments can tell a lot of interesting things, as each of them is a window into the history of the earth.

By Aliya Sadykova

In anticipation of Kazakhstan's upcoming EXPO 2017, geologists are proposing creation of presentational complexes known as geoparks.

The potential geoparks will be several thousand times smaller versions of the natural surface of Kazakhstan, with major mineral deposits as well as life-size sculptures of the ancient inhabitants of our earth – dinosaurs, rhinos,

mammoths, mastodons and others, situated exactly where paleontologists have found and studied their remains.

“At competent use, geoparks as objects of ecological tourism can make up a very significant part of the GDP,” said Professor Ilya Fishman, candidate of geological-mineralogical sciences and corresponding member of the Kazakh Academy of Mineral Resources.

In his words, the basic principle of ecotourism is that the more a

monument has been preserved, the more income tourism will bring. Geological monuments can tell a lot of interesting things, as each of them is a window into the history of the earth. There is a well-known stamp, “the stone pages of history chronicle the planet.” German traditions of nature conservation come to mind. King Frederick William IV of Prussia, in order to save beautiful monuments of prehistoric times for descendants, not just published a special decree in the nine-

teenth century aimed at preserving the geological monuments, he bought the land from the landowners where they were located.

His asceticism had the most favourable continuation. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who Fishman referred to as the brightest politician of today, was recently one of the leaders of the environmental movement in Germany and published a lot of materials on the topic of ecotourism.

Continued on Page B6

Second Astana Public School Joins German University Preparation Programme

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Astana's public school No. 67 is the newest partner in the German language programme DSD, a 22-year-old government-funded initiative that partners with public schools around the world to promote the German language.

The programme, funded by the German Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA), sends native German speakers to teach, supplies schools with teaching materials for its German courses and provides teacher training and other support. It also puts students in countries around the world on track to earn the German Language Diploma of the Standing Committee (DSD), an German language and university preparation test that offers a gateway to German universities.

Students who pass the exam can go on to study at German universities without further language testing.

As Germany recently scrapped tuition fees in its public universities, higher education in the country is free for any student, German or international, and the DSD programme represents a significant opportunity. Twenty-seven students from Kazakhstan went on to study in Germany through the programme last year, Frauke Woitsch, ZfA consultant and coordinator in Kazakhstan, told The Astana Times on Oct. 23. She points out that not all students in the programme reach the language level necessary to earn the German language diploma; for many the point of the programme is simply to learn and achieve a high level of German.

Continued on Page B8

Kazakh Culture, Traditions on Display During Days of Astana in Paris

By Julia Rutz

Kazakh culture, spiritual roots and traditions were presented to the French public during the Oct. 31 to Nov. 3 Days of Astana in Paris. The event will likely further develop bilateral relations between the two countries, according to Kazakh Ambassador to France Nurlan Danenov.

The Kazakh Auyl (Kazakh village) exposition, located in front of the entrance to the Louvre in the centre of Paris, gained immense popularity over the past week. White yurts, traditional housewares, colourful carpets,

skilled craftsmen making jewelry in front of amazed viewers, exotic dishes of Kazakh cuisine, live music and dancing, giant batyrs in military armour, girls in national garments – all this created an indescribable atmosphere of traveling to a distant and mysterious country of nomads.

Kazakh and Paris city officials also met during the event. A meeting between Astana Deputy Mayor Aida Balayeva, and Diplomatic Counsellor for the Mayor of Paris Aurélien Lechevallier gave both officials the opportunity to discuss cooperation between their cities.

Continued on Page B4

Confederation of Combat and Power Sports, Prepares Athletes for Rio

By Askar Beissenbayev

The Confederation of Combat and Power Sports will celebrate its second anniversary on Nov. 20. In such a short period, the confederation has achieved considerable success, becoming one

of the most recognisable sports organisations, not only in the country but also far beyond its borders.

Timur Kulibayev, chairman of the Kazakh Confederation of Combat and Power Sports, gave an interview on the early stages of its formation and its potential.

For what purpose was the Confederation of Combat and Power Sports established?

I must say that this was not just some new spirit of the times but above all a real need to combine into one family such sports as boxing, weightlifting, judo, wrestling and taekwondo. The aforemen-

tioned sports have Olympic status, they have a special capacity – they are highly rated on the world stage. They can bring a large number of medals.

This is an opportunity to declare Kazakhstan at the highest level, to make our country more recognisable, including through victories. A striking example is the 17th Summer Asian Games recently held in South Korea, in which athletes of our confederation won a total of 32 medals.

Our mission is to create conditions for the athletes that they regularly show the results in the biggest competitions and thereby contribute to the strengthening of the authority in the world community.

If success in boxing can be called quite natural – we all remember the triumphant performances of boxers at the Asian Championship, the World Cup 2013 and the recent Summer Games in Incheon – how are things in other sports that are now included in the confederation?

The success of boxers, of course, makes us proud. Six gold, two silver and two bronze medals were the best results in the history of our Asian Games. This was made possible thanks to the work of the coaches and the technical and tactical skills of our young men and women, who defended the honour of Kazakhstan.

Continued on Page B7



THINGS TO WATCH
NOVEMBER –
DECEMBER

ASTANA OPERA	
November 19, 21, 22 at 19:00	Aida opera by Giuseppe Verdi
KAZAKHSTAN CENTRAL CONCERT HALL	
November 20 at 19:00	“Otanym desem,” a concert by Dossymzhan Tanatarov
November 25 at 19:00	A gala concert of Kurmangazy National Conservatory
CONGRESS HALL	
November 21 at 18:00	Rapsody #Zhivipochelovechii, experiment of symphonic orchestra
KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ARTS	
November 28 at 19:00	Chamber music evening
November 29 at 17:00	Symphonic music evening
KORME EXHIBITION CENTRE	
November 19-20 at 11:00	KazAvtoDor 2014 auto Exhibition
November 19-20 at 11:00	KazTraffic 2014 Exhibition
MAXIM GORKY STATE THEATRE	
November 21 at 19:00	Mixed Emotions
November 22 at 18:00	Romeo and Juliet, not a tragedy

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Azhar Kenbeil: Athletes Help Craft Positive Image for Kazakhstan

By Bakhytбек Aduov

ASTANA – Nineteen-year-old Kazakh athlete Azhar Kenbeil has demonstrated excellent results in sambo, the Russian martial arts and combat sport that is very popular in various parts of the world. Kazakhstan is trying to make it popular among the nation's youth and the sport's federation can be proud of its efforts and the teens who participate.

Kenbeil became the world champion among juniors in the weight category up to 60 kilogrammes in Greece in 2013 and South Korea in 2014. She also won the bronze medal at Universiade 2013 in Kazan, Russia while participating as a first-year student at Lev Gumilev Eurasian National University.

Kenbeil recently gave an interview to The Astana Times.

Why did you choose this sport?

My father was the Sambo prize winner of the USSR, so probably that's why I preferred it. All my brothers and sisters are used to leading healthy lifestyles and all of us do sports. I am the second oldest of seven children in the family and am trying to be a good example for my younger brothers and sisters.

You have a big roster of honors. Could you please share your secret at such a young age?

Endurance, physical strength, tricks, speed, temper and a good mentor, I cannot point to exactly one. Here temper and tricks are important, then speed, endurance and a clear head are meaningful against a strong rival. Physical strength is important, but you have to understand when the two athletes meet, no mat-



ter how old they are, no matter their experience, tenacity and speed play the main role.

Most of my competitors were European women and it was easier for me to fight against them because I am not very tall, so I can grab another athlete without much effort. It was a problem for them to grab me.

What has been the most difficult fight in your life?

It was the local sambo championship in St. Petersburg, where I fought as an adult. I was stopped by a 40-year-old Belarussian athlete in the first battle. She was much stronger and more experienced than I was. She won by the lock on the knee, which is still aching. She took second place in that championship. It should be noted there are no easy victories. All athletes are well trained. Each fight was like the latest for me.

Which medal is the most important to you?

The most valuable award is the bronze at the Universiade in Kazan which I won in 2013, for at that time I was a dark horse. I was the youngest among the athletes; in 2013 I was barely 17 years old. No one expected the victory from me, even the coach. I was chosen for the team solely to get some experience. This award

showed me that I have the temper and strength.

Who motivates you to win?

My family. My mom is my biggest fan. She goes with me to all the competitions at her own expense to support me. I have noticed that I struggle more when my mother isn't with me at the competition.

What has the sport given you in addition to wins?

It has given me a lot of good qualities: independence, confidence in my strength, intransigence. Sport is a life style that will always remain with me. Furthermore, sport has given me a lot of good friends and mentors. I am grateful to my coaches such as Saul Gabdulina, Ayman Kaliyeva and Samat Apakov. Nowadays, I have many friends in other countries where I competed and trained.

Tell me something about your training.

I injured my left shoulder and am now on a train-sparing regime, but before I worked very hard. Every day I spent two hours in the gym. I did 10 pull-ups and 250 abdominal exercises without stopping. At the training camp in Almaty I hold the record for running up the mountains, 50 metres in 12 seconds.

Is Kazakhstan recognised by people abroad?

I was in Japan, Korea, Greece and Turkey and I can say that Kazakhstan is recognised. People in the sports society abroad know boxer Gennady Golovkin, cyclist Alexander Vinokourov and the Astana boxing team. I realised that sportsmen help to form a positive image of Kazakhstan. We are always trying to be dignified and to represent our country.

Group Works to Preserve Polish Heritage in Kazakhstan

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Kazakhstan is a multi-cultural country with more than 130 nationalities living within its borders. The Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK) helps these ethnic groups to unite, pursue their cultural values and traditions and preserve their language. The Astana Times interviewed Yelena Rogovskaya, chairwoman of Polacy, a Polish ethnic group and public association in Kazakhstan.

"The Polish history in Kazakhstan started from the 1830s," Rogovskaya said. "The opponents of autocracy were exiled on the territory of the modern republic (of Kazakhstan). They decided to settle on these lands for another reason and have left a considerable contribution to the history of Kazakhstan. During World War I, many Poles moved to Kazakhstan even from tsarist Poland; as a result, in some of the regions there were large numbers of Poles. By 1926, there were 1,807 citizens of Polish background, 1,112 in cities and the rest in the regions. Here are the territories where the tsar exiled opponents of his regime and as did the Bolsheviks. A mass deportation followed of different nationalities during Stalin's repression. The communist integration was demonstrated by repressing hundreds of thousands of Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Germans, Tartars, Chechens, etc. The Polish community was perfectly fit for the role of the inside enemy, as among them were the so-called 'special settlers' from Ukraine who were deported from 1937 to 1941 to the villages of the northern regions like the Kokshetau, Karaganda and Akmola region."

According to Rogovskaya, Poles were mostly occupied with agriculture throughout their history in Kazakhstan.



"Today, there are still about 48,000-50,000 Poles living in Kazakhstan, mostly in the northern part of the country; the number decreased from about 55,500," she said.

The Polacy Centre has been operating since Sept. 25, 1999, with the main goal to preserve the native language, culture, traditions and history, according to the leader of the Polish community. Two artistic troupes were also created under the auspices of the association: the vocal ensemble Stokrotka and dancing troupe Kuyavyachek.

"Today we have 13 Polish centres in Kazakhstan. We participate in round tables, friendship festivals, conferences and other venues that are held by the APK; I myself am a member of the APK and take part in the assembly's congresses," Rogovskaya said.

The Polish association is supported by the APK, Rogovskaya explained. "We have a Sunday school at local school No.5 where children, no matter the nationality, can learn Polish, our history and culture. Poland also supports this initiative; on their side they send Polish philologists to teach here and Polish national high school graduates have an opportunity to enroll in universities in Poland. Annu-

ally, a specially-created commission arrives here to hold exams. The Polish side also pays them in stipends and adults also can visit Poland on a monthly basis at the Polish government's expense."

"I myself often visit Poland with my children, where we learn Polish culture, traditions and history. We learn about Polish cuisine and we feel proud that we can visit our historical motherland. We also feel proud to be Polish and thanks to the policy of our President we kept our identity, faith and language," she said.

"I am happy to live in Kazakhstan where people of different nationalities get along and live in harmony," Rogovskaya continued. "Kazakhstan has become my motherland, I am glad to have another historical motherland. I am often asked if I would like to move to Poland and the answer is – no, but to visit Poland – yes!"

"I have been living here all my life, I am doing for a living what I love doing and I am appreciated here; I am socially active in different events, no time to waste. We have all the means of communication with the friends and relatives that live in Poland and we do have quite a few relatives there," Rogovskaya concluded.

THE ATOM PROJECT

NUCLEAR TERRORISM. THE THREAT IS REAL.

DENY THEIR CHANCE TO DESTROY OUR LIVES. SIGN ON FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE WORLD.

TheATOMProject.org

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

New TV Series to Commemorate 550th Anniversary of Kazakh Statehood



Monument of Kerey and Janibek Khans, the founders of the Kazakh Khanate

By Julia Rutz

The Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports has developed a programme, including a 20-episode television series, to celebrate in 2015 the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, the anniversary of the adoption of the country's constitution and the 550th anniversary of the formation of the Kazakh Khanate, according to Minister of Culture and Sports Arystanbek Mukhamediuly.

"Shooting will begin in January of next year. We are also de-

veloping two different scenarios for coming performances: 'Kerey and Janibek' and 'Mangilik El.' Apart from that, we will organise several international scientific conferences and expeditions as part of the celebration programme. In general, about 100 different events are scheduled for the next year. Activities will cover the whole country," Muhamediuly said.

The new TV series is part of a larger programme that includes patriotic, educational and scientific elements. The minister also noted that the programme's events are not very expensive, ex-

cept for the very last public performance, which will be held in September, in the valley between the Chu and Talas rivers, in the place where the Kazakh Khanate was first established.

"As for shooting the TV series the 'Kazakh Khanate,' we are in the process of developing the budget. The final price will be announced after the approval of the final script," said the minister.

The offspring of Ghenghis Khan, two Kazakh sultans Janibek and Kerey, together with much of Mogulistan, left the state of nomadic Uzbeks ruled by Abulhair Khan in the second half 1450's to

establish a new state in the valley between the Chu and Talas rivers. This event marks the beginning of Kazakh statehood. It is believed that during that time, the term "Kazakh" appeared for the first time; it later acquired an ethnic sense. After the death of Abulhair Khan in late 1468, his other offspring began fighting for the Kerey and Zhanibek regions. As a result of this struggle, the western part of the Seven Rivers Valley, which is currently in Central Kazakhstan, fell under the control of two brothers. This territory was called the Kazakh Khanate.

Alpiyev Becomes New Director of Astana Opera



Toleubek Alpiyev (r) and Vladimir Spivakov, the famous maestro from Russia
By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – President Nursultan Nazarbayev appointed well-known and respected Toleubek Alpiyev as new director of The Astana Opera State Theatre of Opera and Ballet on Nov. 14.

Alpiyev is a graduate of the Almaty and Moscow conservatories and was a violinist in a number of orchestras in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. He has also worked as managing director of the tour and concert association Kazakhconcert, director of the Zhambyl State Philharmonic, deputy chairman of Kazakhstan's State Committee on Culture, and the nation's Deputy Minister of Culture.

Since 2000, Alpiyev served as director of newly opened National Theatre of Opera and Ballet named after Kulyash Baiseitova in Astana, where he quickly established the theatre's creative groups and conducted significant organisational work in the first season. Awarded by the Kurmet and Parasat orders, since 2013 Alpiyev served as deputy director of Astana Opera.

Minister of Culture and Sports Arystan Mukhamediuly introduced the new director to the theatre company on Nov. 14. The minister thanked the opera's first director Tolegen Mukhamedzhanov for his excellent work in launching what is meant to be a world-class artistic company based in the Kazakh capital. Mukhamedzhanov said he was proud of being part of the opera's early history and thankful to President Nazarbayev for trusting him with the mission as well as respecting his desire to take a

break to pursue his own creative projects.

For his part, Alpiyev noted the President's sentiment that Kazakhstan needs to shape a culture that will keep pace with global trends and values and invited the theatre's artists to jointly pursue that goal.

"We have enormous challenges ahead of us – a highly complex opera of 'Aida' and the premier performances of 'Karagoz' and 'The Nutcracker' ballets. The next year is going to be busy," the new director said.

Astana Opera was founded in 2013 with the backing of President Nazarbayev. At the opening of the theatre, the President said: "A country that is building factories and roads creates a solid footing for years to come. A country that builds schools and hospitals takes care of the future of the nation for decades. The country that is building theatres looks forward through the centuries..."

Professor Tolegen Mukhamedzhanov was the first director of the Astana Opera. Long known throughout Kazakhstan as a renowned composer, he is a winner of the State Award of the Republic of Kazakhstan and President of the International Association of Peace through Culture.

In less than two years, the Astana Opera has earned popularity and respect among local art-lovers and foreign guests for its splendid performances, having recently returned from a global tour that featured well-received performances in the United States, Canada, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, including at the Carnegie Hall and L'Opera Bastille.

French Artist Finds His Muse in Kazakhstan

By Bakhytbek Aduov

ASTANA – French artist, animator and designer Nicolas Journoud was born in 1978 in Lyon, France. He received his first education in Canada, choosing biological studies, but later understood that art was much closer to him. Journoud subsequently entered the Fine Arts Academy of St. Etienne in France.

Since 2006, Journoud has been working in Kazakhstan. He began as a teacher at the Zhurgenov Academy of Arts and later was the art director of the Voxpopuli.kz project. He is now working as an animator for the production of short promotional cartoons. In an interview with this newspaper, he spoke about the way he sees the fledgling art of comics and cartoons in Kazakhstan.

How did you get to Kazakhstan after studying in France and Canada?

I graduated from university in Canada to become a biologist, but when I returned to France, I realised that it was not me. Then my purpose was to become a comics author. So I entered the Academy of Arts in Saint Etienne. I quickly left the Academy because comics were not very popular there so I began to draw on my own and my first works received some awards. One of the projects I drew in the Japanese mountains took the first place in a festival and the prize was a trip to Canada, where I got by chance my first comics order. In 2006, I was lucky enough to visit Almaty, planning to stay only for one year. Here I've been offered by the French Embassy to give a small master class for the Almaty Fine Arts Academy. After initial success, I decided to stay a while and it has been prolonged for the last eight years. In addition, I worked in Almaty and Astana, but I drew few comics.



Self portrait of Nicolas Journoud

Is it difficult to earn money on comics?

The comics market in France is already full. New comics are published every day, but they don't appear to new customers. I think this problem is similar all over Europe.

Kazakhstan is a new market. There is a lot of space for new projects and magazines. In my opinion the comics market in Kazakhstan will grow in the next decade. Nowadays comics can be here as a hobby. In Kazakhstan, I published comics as social projects. In France and Canada, I have been able to draw comics for several publishers.

You started working in Kazakhstan as a commercial artist, then you changed jobs several times. Why did you start working with animated cartoons?

I am always looking for new ways to develop. Once I wanted to draw just comics. I began to study animation itself through the Internet. It turned out that there is also need for pictures and this craft gripped me with great opportunities. This new innovation gave inspiration to my

life. It has also increased the number of orders not only from Kazakhstan, but also from France.

At the moment, I have drawn seven cartoons this year. The last order was from the United Nations Development Programme of Almaty and the Almaty Mayor's office about driving safely and bike riding. Now I am working on three new cartoons.

How much more difficult is animation than work as an artist?

Animation is more difficult than drawing paintings, but more interesting, too. You don't work by yourself. You work with a team, specialists in music, voices and scripts.

Usually I spend one day of work for one second of cartoon. But it depends on the script. If it is an action moment, surely I would spend more time.

You worked one year in the Art National Academy in Almaty, although you studied in the Fine Arts Academy of St. Etienne. What is the difference between Kazakh and French students?

First, I think the biggest difference is based on the manner of education. In Kazakhstan, artists pay much more attention to technique. You have a strong technique. Students can draw anything they like, but if they have received the script, they do not think much. In Europe, students have to learn more about how they feel the arts. In Europe, students are asked to think wider, students can argue with their mentors. In Kazakhstan, students are not very used to draw by their initiatives.

When I was a teacher, I checked the reaction from Kazakh students.

One day I asked them just to draw stories about themselves, how they saw their nature. They were surprised. It was difficult for them.

Does Kazakhstan have good studios which make animated cartoons?

I can see how Kazakhstan is developing. I have many artist friends in your country. I know that Kazakhfilm has a great history in the cartoon industry. Kazakhstan has many other studios and enough specialists. I can acknowledge my friends Murat Alimov, who ran his comics in Kazakhstan, and very strong artist from Karaganda Evgeniy Yakovlev.

What are your plans for the future?

You always have what you want to do and what you suggest to do. I am now passionate about animation and try to take such orders. I also try to look for orders that can teach me something new.

What is your wish for Kazakh artists?

It is very difficult ... but I think young Kazakh artists take pretty much from foreign art. I wish for the new Kazakh art generation to create a new Kazakh-style artist school with common West and East contributions but based on traditional Kazakh life and art tradition. French comics style was formatted in 120 years, so it will take time too here, but the result could be amazing.



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Expert-200-Kazakhstan Forum Takes Economic Issues, Public Administration Reform

By Alina Usmanova

ASTANA – The Sixth Economic Forum of National Business Expert-200-Kazakhstan organised by the rating agency Expert RA Kazakhstan (RAEX) and the Expert Kazakhstan magazine was held on Nov. 14 in Astana. Its main topic was, “The reform of public administration: Centre – Regions – Business.”

Speaking at the forum, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov emphasised the importance of implementing tasks set by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in his state-of-the-nation address, “Nurly Zhol.”

“In periods of turbulence, when the global economy begins to totter and commodity prices hit historic lows, counter-cyclical fiscal policy should be carried out. In this regard, the head of state decided to allocate additional funds to stimulate the economy of Kazakhstan and to ensure its financial stability,” Massimov said.

Creating an effective system of governance with a professional and compact staff is a goal the President has identified as one of the strategic objectives of Kazakhstan’s development to 2050, calling it necessary for enhancing competitiveness and helping the country reach its goal of joining the top 30 most developed countries in the world.

Yerbolat Dossayev, Minister of



National Economy, discussed the implementation of administrative reform in Kazakhstan. The purpose of the changes is to increase the efficiency of public administration and reduce the level of government interference in business activities, as well as create favourable conditions for business overall, he said.

An awards ceremony naming the companies ranked most highly by Expert RA Kazakhstan was also held within the forum, with Expert RA Kazakhstan CEO Adil Mamazhanov presenting the awards.

“We have highlighted the compa-

nies that are leaders in their industries and make a significant contribution to the quality development of the economy and its growth,” Mamazhanov said. Tengizshevroil, Samruk Energo, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy and Sberbank were among the companies that received awards.

More than 300 representatives of Kazakhstan’s business community participated in the event. Participants discussed ways to address the interaction of central and local government agencies and businesses in the implementation of Kazakhstan’s economic development policy.

Kazakhstan, China to Jointly Operate Dostyk Hydraulic Power System



By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – At a Nov. 6 meeting of the Senate (the upper chamber of parliament) chaired by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the chamber ratified an agreement between Kazakhstan and China on the management and operation of the joint combined Dostyk Water Systems on the Khorgos River.

Kazakhstan and China will create a joint service responsible for operating the hydraulic power system on the Khorgos, a provision of the agreement ratified by the parliament.

“The main purpose of the agreement is to regulate joint management and operation of the [Dostyk] hydraulic power system on the Khorgos River and assure the equitable distribution of the river’s wa-

ter,” Kazakh Minister of Agriculture Assylzhan Mamytbekov said.

The hydraulic power system is considered common property of the two countries, in which both hold equal shares. The border is the line of joint control extending along the axis of construction; it includes a dam with inlet and outlet channels.

The responsible authorities of the participating states have developed and approved operation and management rules for the shared Dostyk system, which establishes procedures for joint management and regulates the activities of personnel.

“Management of the water regime and intake from the river is carried out via a single-line mode by an automated programme, i.e. accounting of water intake and activity by Chinese personnel is controlled by visual and telemetry con-

trollers on Kazakhstan’s side, and vice versa. According to the agreement, Kazakhstan will contribute 15 staff members to plant operations,” Mamytbekov added.

According to the minister and in accordance with the agreement on Dostyk, the system is the joint property of the two countries, with both hold equal share in the facility.

The main purpose of the hydraulic power system is a guaranteed water intake and the equal division of the water resources of the Khorgos at a ratio of 50 to 50, accurate accounting of water withdrawal and a water supply for more than 16,000 hectares of irrigated land.

In 2014, 50 million tenge (US\$276,365) from the national budget was allocated for Kazakhstan’s responsibilities regarding the water system.

KAZAKHSTAN
UNITED FOR GLOBAL SECURITY

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

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

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

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

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

Effort Begins to Revive Endangered Przewalski Horse Population in Kazakhstan

By Julia Rutz

Przewalski horses are expected to be delivered from Germany’s Nurnberg Zoo in an effort to revive the breed in Kazakhstan, according to a recent announcement by the press service of the Kazakh Ministry of Agriculture.

“Since 2005, the Kazakhstan Association for Conservation of Biological Diversity together with the Forestry and Wildlife Committee and the Frankfurt Zoological Society have been working on the restoration of the wild steppes of central Kazakhstan. This partnership provides a unique opportunity for environmental work on

an unprecedented scale. Herewith we are jointly introducing proven habitat management techniques, ecosystem restoration and sustainable use of natural resources,” said the Manager of the Central Asia Programme of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK) Stephanie Ward.

Wild Przewalski horses are an endangered species. Formely, these animals inhabited the forest-steppes, steppes and semi-deserts of Europe, as well as the steppes and forest-steppes of Kazakhstan and part of the south of Western Siberia. Now, there are about 2,000 of these wild horses left in the world, and in Kazakhstan they

disappeared from the wild more than 100 years ago.

The programme for the reintroduction of Przewalski horses was launched in Mongolia and China in 1992. In the early 1990s, several horses were released in the Ukrainian Chernobyl exclusion zone as part of the experiment, where they were actively breeding. Now, the Przewalski population there totals 100 animals. As for Kazakhstan, special arrangements are being made for the delivery of the new horses. Currently, seven Przewalski horses, including two females, roam Altyon Emel Park in the Almaty region.

National Culture, Traditions on Display During Days of Astana in Paris

Continued from Page B1

Balayeva thanked her French colleagues for assistance in organising the event. She also mentioned a joint health project aimed at a cancer treatment that is being implemented with Institut Gustav Rossy. The deputy mayor spoke about the great opportunities and potential of the Kazakh capital, which welcomes cooperation with Paris in all spheres, including economy, investment issues, culture and health.

Balayeva also talked about

Astana’s rapid development as a smart city and tourist centre during a meeting with the Mayor of the First District of Paris Jean-Francois Legare. She also spoke about preparations for EXPO 2017, one of the most important projects of international scope to be hosted by the Kazakh capital. The deputy mayor expressed hope for active participation by the French during the event, as Paris was the place where the decision was made to hold the world exposition in Kazakhstan. She invited the mayor of the district to cooperate, stressing

that all of their suggestions will be carefully considered.

Legare, in his turn, respectfully noted the rapid economic advancement of Kazakhstan and expressed admiration about Astana’s growth and its modern style and particular flavour. He also expressed interest in cooperation, noting that he is ready to meet again in Paris or Astana.

A special concert programme presented by Astana Opera artists in the legendary Opera Bastille closed the cultural Days of Astana in Paris.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Shabyt International Festival Awards Creative Youth



By Ruziyeva Ospanova

ASTANA – At a Nov. 8 press conference and Shabyt gala concert for the 17th International Festival of Creative Youth held in the Palace of Peace and Accord, the names of the winners of the international festival were announced.

During the competition's five days, 495 participants showed their skills and competed for the title of winner in six categories. Kazakhstan was represented by 364 participants from all regions of the country; 131 competitors came from China, Uzbekistan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

Bolat Mazhagulov, head of the Department of Culture of Astana and international jury members noted the competition's high level of organisation.

"This festival is certainly among the best and most prestigious creative competitions," Mazhagulov said.

"This competition is unique; across our country, opportunities

for young people to express themselves, unleash their creativity and become known to a wide audience are made available," Zhaniya Aubakirova, People's Artist of Kazakhstan and rector of the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory said.

At the evening gala concert, Mazhagulov presented the President's Cup to Rakhat-bi Abdisagyn, a third year student of the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory and a 15-year-old composer from Almaty.

"For me, this is an invaluable and honourable award. We, the youth of Kazakhstan, are happy to live in a country where ... the economy is developing and close attention is paid to culture and creativity," Abdisagyn, the grand prize winner of the Shabyt International Festival, said.

He also thanked the members of the jury, his teachers and mentors.

Eight lucky holders of grand prizes in six categories were

named: ZEBO, a chamber ensemble quartet from Tashkent, Uzbekistan, headed by Professor Ulykbek Imanov; the classical music nomination in the composer's contest was awarded to Abdisagyn from Almaty; in the Art category Lolita Hugayeva from Kokshetau won; the folk music (folk wind instruments) award went to Raikhan Omar from Almaty; the folk music award (plucked folk instruments) was won by Assylai Apenova from Almaty; the chamber choir nomination was awarded to the chamber choir of the State Philharmonic of the Akimat (Mayor's office) of Astana; "Best literary work (poetry) was won by Batyrkhan Sarsenkhan, Turkestan; in the category Choreography, Yerkin Rakhmetullayev from Astana took home the prize.

The organisers of the main cultural event were the Akimat of Astana, the Department of Culture of Astana and the Kazakh National University of Arts.

Petropavlovsk Police, Students Dance to Promote Law and Order

By Dmitry Lee

The local Petropavlovsk police department recently organised a flash mob of 100 schoolchildren to help promote law and order.

"For half an hour, more than 100 students from different schools in the same rhythm were dancing to popular hits of domestic and foreign musicians.

We are happy that this time the children responded to our invitation and participated in the action. Through this dialogue, we have been able to convey to the young members of the society the principle that in any situation it is necessary to behave honorably, fairly and to respect the law," said Deputy Chief of Internal Affairs of Petropavlovsk Asan Smagulov.

The event was called STOP-Kylmys (STOPCrime), during which police taught the children the principles of "zero tolerance" and quizzed them on their knowledge of the law. Students answered questions on traffic rules, administrative and criminal liability, and the students with the best answers were awarded notebooks, pens and other school supplies.



100 schoolchildren at the STOPKylmys campaign.

Winners Announced at Open Central Asia Literature Festival in Almaty

By Michelle Witte

ALMATY – The third Open Central Asia Book Forum and Literary Festival was held in Almaty from Nov. 14 to 17, featuring contests, film screenings, book launches, panel discussions and presentations by authors from the region and around the world.

A \$17,000 prize goes toward the publication of the winning work in the literature category. There are also illustration, translation and filmmaking contests.

The event aims to popularise literature within Central Asia and promote local authors abroad, a Nov. 12 press release by the organisers noted.

This year's first prize winner for literary work was Davlat Tolibsohi of Tajikistan, with Bubajša Arstanbekova of Kyrgyzstan and Lilya Kalaus and Zira Naurzbaeva of Kazakhstan coming in second and third place. Tolibsohi's book will be published by Hertfordshire Press in 2016 and presented at the 2016 London Book Fair.

Alexey Ulko of Uzbekistan, Kateryna Myasnikova of Russia and Dilya of Kazakhstan won in the translation category, Vitaly Bondar of Belarus, Tatyana Davydova of Germany and Lolly of Ukraine won for illustration and Jasur Turaev and Euphrates Sharipov of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, Ashot Danielyan of Kazakhstan and Eldar Nasyrov of Kazakhstan won in the new experimental film category, with Turaev and Sharipov taking home the new \$10,000 Nemat Kelimbetov Award for film.

Lenifer Mambetova from Crimea took home the new Mar-

zieh Zakirānovoj prize of \$5,000 for the best work by a woman.

More than 450 authors from 20 countries took part in this year's competition.

Asked about the event's mission at a reception in Almaty on Nov. 14, participant Alexey Ulko of Uzbekistan, winner in the translation category, said, "I think it's a great effort because I think all writers and all artists from Central Asia suffer from an inferiority complex. I would put it like this – that other, non-European, non-American, non-white cultures, including China and sub-Saharan Africa and everything else, have already successfully positioned themselves to the outside world as 'the other.' And we are the 'other-other,' the ultimate other, which is still unknown. And we are hoping, we've been hoping for the last 25 years, that the time will come when our uniqueness will be recognised by the world, but so far it comes only in, like, 'Borat,' or 'Ambassadors,' [a 2013 British TV series]."

Those depictions are oversimplifications and grotesques, Ulko said, but they're not worth worrying about. "I think we need to stop worrying about it ... we sometimes try to sell our identity as the other, but we don't know what kind of identity we want to sell – do we want to be modern, do we want to be traditional? Post-Soviet, post-colonial? ... before developing a content, we are ready to sell it. ... I think we should stop worrying about how we're perceived by the West and just do something. And I'm sure if that amount of interesting stuff grows, then recognition will come. Because nobody's going

to pay attention to Central Asia if we're just offering something that's obviously meant to interest the 'ignorant West.'"

Poet David Parry of the U.K. and other Western writers commented that Central Asia is, in fact, much more central to world culture than is now recognised. "Central Asia is the world in some ways, isn't it? Everything seems to either come from here or pass through here. ... I thought the whole notion of celebrating Central Asian writing in all its immensely sophisticated forms – I don't find it lacking in any respect – was a thoroughly good idea. And yes, maybe Britain, maybe Western Europe needs a bit of a memory jog about where most of its heritage comes from, or at least has passed through at some point."

Paul Wilson, author of guidebooks to Central Asia and the new novel, "The Alphabet Game," set in Central Asia, said, "The great oral narrative tradition – the Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz – they are the classic storytellers ... I really enjoy a good story. And I think some of the best stories have either come from here or come through here. And storytelling, the oral tradition of the bard, very much comes from this area."

The Open Central Asia festival is organised by the National State Book Chamber of Kazakhstan, the Association of Publishers and Booksellers of Kazakhstan and the Elena Bezrukova Centre of Training and Consulting, and in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and Sport of Kazakhstan, the Akimat (city administration) of Almaty city and the Kazakh Academy of Sport and Tourism.

CHOOSE FUTURE ENERGY!

EXPO 2017
Future Energy
Astana Kazakhstan

t f B i+ y+

expo2017astana
expo2017astana.com

NATION&CAPITAL
TOURISM

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Expert Falconers to Gather in Kokshetau to Honour Legendary Falconer Masip Batyrkhanuly



By Chingiz Tashenov

KOKSHETAU – Kansonar, the championship dedicated to the memory of legendary falconer Masip Batyrkhanuly, will soon celebrate its 12th year. The open championship for masters of falconry is regularly staged in honour of the Independence Day of Kazakhstan on Dec. 16.

Falconers come to the city from almost all parts of the republic. The championship is held in three qualifying stages; the masters compete in the ability of their winged hunters to find prey from the bird's-eye view and immediately intercept it – first bait, then fast hares and cunning foxes. The competitions allow for the selection of the best birds in catching a big predator like a wolf.

Despite the fierce December frost, the competition gathers a lot of fans of the national sport. According to the organisers of these spectacular events, the main objectives of Kansonar are popularising of national sports, patriotic educa-

tion of youth in the spirit of Kazakh national traditions and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

“My grandfather, Masip, in the 1930s was one of the best hunters of our land, supplying Russia with fur and saving his countrymen from hunger,” said Shynarbek Batyrkhan, head of the Akmola Regional Tourism Department. “Up to 70 years old, he went hunting with eagles. When he had bad eyesight, he went to the mountains and let the bird free. His feathered friend returned to him thrice, not knowing and not perceiving parting with his master. In honour of my grandfather and his love for eagles, I established the Masip Batyrkhanuly prize and annually present it to the best juniors in Kansonar.”

A permanent Kansonar participant, Makpal Abdrzakova with her eagle named Ak Zhelke (White Withers), is from the Karaganda region. Today, she is the only girl hunter in the country. The eagle sat on Abdrzakova's arm for the first time 13 years ago and since then

she and her bird of prey have been the best of friends.

Falconers, known all over the country during their participation in Kansonar, include Faizulla Burkutbai from the Almaty region, Umutkhan Tastambek and Ablaihan Zbasov of the Akmola region, Serik Abdrzakov from the Kazakganda region, Imanzaip Tassybayev from the Pavlodar region and many others. All of them can be considered the heirs of the glory of Batyrkhanuly.

Thanks to his hunting, Batyrkhanuly saved his aul (village) from starvation in the 1930s and in 1941, having sent his son Burkutbai to the front during World War II and continued to produce valuable furs despite his advanced age. The pelts were sent abroad from Moscow and the income helped with ammunition for the front.

For his contribution to the victory Batyrkhanuly was awarded the medal “For selfless work during the Great Patriotic War.” He is



Makpal Abdrzakova with her eagle named Ak Zhelke (White Withers) is the only girl hunter in the country.

also the only owner in Kazakhstan of the high award “Excellence in Hunting of the USSR.”

Kazakhs were anciently engaged in hunting with eagles. In the famine years, one eagle could feed a whole village, which is why in the old days a few camels were given as a price for a well-trained bird and these days such an eagle can cost as much as a prestigious car. Today in Kazakhstan, there are quite a few such professionals with skill in falconry. They still organise tourna-

ments and identify the best hunters.

Batyrkhanuly was born in 1885 in Botai aul of the Aiyrtau district. His brother, Kami, died in the fighting on the Leningrad front and his son returned from the war with combat awards – the Order of the Great Patriotic War of the first degree and medals for courage and military merit. Today, the grandsons Munarbek, Shynarbek and Temirbek and great-grandchildren of the legendary hunter continue his activity by maintaining the fal-

coners movement in Kazakhstan. Shynarbek was elected president of the Falconers Federation of the Akmola region.

In honour of the 125th anniversary of his birth, Batyrkhanuly was awarded a special cup from the Falconers Federation of Kazakhstan in 2010 for his great contribution to the development of the falconry movement. Fourteen masters of falconry from different regions of the country are the holders of honorary Masip Batyrkhanuly diplomas.

Geoparks Can Tell the History of Kazakhstan, Attract Tourism Dollars, Says Geologist

Continued from Page B1

How did the concept of geoparks occur?

In the mid-1990s the leaders of a number of European National Parks in France, Spain, Germany and Greece, recognising the negligible attention paid to geological heritage, came up with the concept of the geopark in order to further its promotion. This idea was supported by UNESCO and today the number of geoparks is increasing throughout the world. The basis of a geopark is an inanimate nature; in other words, geological heritage in the form of scenic rocks, in which events of a distant geological past are clearly presented. Many geoparks can be opened in the so-called SPNT (specially protected natural territories), wherein the first does not tear away from the second, but helps to reveal the essence of the geological history, thus attracting additional tourists. There are countries whose income from tourism is equal to the income from all the mineral complexes of our republic. Moreover, the significant portion of visited sites accounted for ecotourism. Some time ago, I drew up an object map of the ecotourism surroundings of Almaty. These were forests, cades, waterfalls, peaks, passes, climbing walls, points for hang gliding and so on. Each of these objects is a national treasure. In order to make rules for its use, I proposed introducing the concept of “the object of tourism” into the law on tourism. Alas, it remained as a proposal.

Nowadays, information about the establishment of geoparks is available, though dissemination



Ilya Fishman

of the idea in Kazakhstan needs support. In 2012 prior to the 34th session of the international geological congress in Australia, in which Kazakhstan participated, my daughter Julia Kazakova and I published an album, “Geoparks in Kazakhstan – Millions of Years before the Silk Road,” which attracted great attention from the participants of the congress. The same year, Kazakhstan held an international meeting “Potential of the Earth and People,” which focused heavily on geoparks. In the 1990s we created the first database of Kazakhstan's geological heritage. With the assistance of the database, the government approved a list of valuable geological objects in 2005.

How can the acknowledgment of geological parks as an integral part of ecotourism benefit Kazakhstan?

It will promote solving several issues at the same time – preserve nature, advance living standards of locals through creating new jobs and advocate studying natural science. International experience shows that with successful advertisement, geoparks quickly become profitable. However, the first steps should receive economic and management support from the government. Geoparks can be opened in all regions of Kazakhstan, event in the depressed ones.

And one more thing – referring to tourism, an issue of allocating funds for infrastructural development (building roads, etc.) emerges. Interestingly, UNESCO polls found that 70 percent of tourists did not need commodity. With their security ensured and access to healthy food provided, they agreed to travel on bad roads and live in tents (or yurtas). Development of geoparks all over the world starts by attracting tourists with low demands. They bring money for establishing luxurious hotels and roads in the future. The main thing is to disseminate information. Tourism has a law – to earn a million, spend a million on information.

You mentioned that every monument of nature is a chronicle of the earth's history. What do scientists manage to read in it?

It says that if we want to know our future, we must look at our past. All the disasters, which occurred in the course of 4.5 billion years of the earth's existence, are written down in this record. They do not happen very often, about once every 100-200 million years.

As a result, there have been mass extinctions of kinds and classes, but life never ceases completely. The most famous example is the extinction of dinosaurs, which occurred 70 million years ago. The reason was a huge asteroid. Its blast raised a huge amount of dust in the air. The sun was darkened; darkness embraced the planet. When it dissipated, the dinosaurs were gone. These cold-blooded creatures were warmed only by the heat of the sun.

Danger to life can come from the depths of the earth as well. Thus, between the Permian and Triassic periods (about 250 million years ago), a big quantity of magma and gas rose to the earth's surface and even caused a change in the atmosphere. It was an environmental disaster, but even after that life on earth continued.

Now people are talking about the threat of global climate change. A well-known public figure, for example, called for the whitening of the rocks near Almaty in order to prevent it.

There is no global warming; in fact there are only short-term temperature fluctuations, the contribution of man to which, fortunately, is negligible. But we are, as always, exaggerating our own role; humanity has not yet become a super-civilisation able to split or seriously affect the life that planet earth has been living for 4.5 billion years already. It develops under its own laws; a human being appeared just a second ago, compared with its age. A human can be called the king of nature only in one sense; only a person is able

to explore the history of the earth and make it into the incorrect conclusions.

Former U.S. presidential candidate and Nobel laureate Al Gore, who published a famous book on this topic, “An Inconvenient Truth”, have played a large role in stocking the concerns over global warming. As for the rocks near Almaty, why shouldn't they be whitened if somebody is willing to pay for it?

What do you think of the opinion that the uncontrolled use of the subsurface is fraught with tectonic consequences?

I think that in 99.9 percent of cases, the cause of earthquakes is the normal development of the earth, and only 0.1 percent, just in case, I leave to anthropogenic influence. I work on the tectonics of the Aral-Caspian region. It turns out that these two seas – the Aral and Caspian – are tectonically linked through great depths of the earth. But it would be primitive to say that the water is poured from one sea to another. In this system, dozens of complex geological processes, which still have not been fully explored, are involved. One thing is clear – fluctuations in the levels of these seas existed in prehistoric times, before the appearance of a human being. The fault of the latter in these processes, as well as in climate change, is negligible. It's like sitting in a tiny little fragile boat, trying to go astray of a powerful battleship.

Many people who live in Almaty are waiting for an earthquake. Linking the two events – in 1911

and May 2011 – some scholars argue that there is some mystical predetermination in the figure 100.

When was the last earthquake before 1911? Right, in 1887. I agree that the development of the earth is cyclical, but it is measured in tens of millions of years. Those minor earthquakes that occurred in Almaty and in the vicinity of the city on May 1, 2011 are a normal result of the Ili depression, which is well traced deep into the geological history of about 30 million years. If to correlate this with the age of our planet, on the earth dial plate one million is just a second. Generally, with regard to the prediction of earthquakes, the science is still in the way; the system able to accurately predict the time of the seismic event has not been created yet. There was some good luck, but they were immediately replaced by failures; in other words, this is more about the theory of probability.

Now a number of serious scientists talk about some activation of the subsurface; it is more likely that a global catastrophe in the next 5-10 million years will not happen. In any case, the answer to the question about the future of the planet should be found in its past, i.e. to invest more in the science of geology.

Indeed this phenomenon occurs, but it is still poorly understood. The answer to it can give only science. But everyone eventually asks money for his or her own business. I am no exception. However, in any case, the decision must be made, comparing risks with cost. To be warned is to be saved.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Kazakhstan Ranked Last in Euro 2016 Qualifiers Group

By Yelden Sarybay

Turkey defeated the Kazakhstan national football team in the last qualifying match of the calendar year for the Euro 2016 championship with a score of 3:1.

The next match for the national team in Euro 2016 qualifiers will be held on March 28, 2015 at home against Iceland, one of the leaders of Group A.

The match at the "Ali Sami Yen" stadium in Istanbul was the fourth game for the Kazakhstan team, and the footballers have yet to win. After 26 minutes, Burak Yilmaz scored a penalty goal against Kazakhstan and after three minutes scored his second goal. At 83 minutes, Aziz Serdar scored the final goal for the Turkish team. The last goal, however, was left for Kazakhstan to score.



Kazakh and Turkish players fight for the ball during the last qualifying match of the calendar year for the Euro 2016 championship in Istanbul on Nov. 16.

At 85 minutes, Bauyrzhan Islamkhan executed an accurate pass to Ulan Konybaev in the penalty area, where Turkey violated the rules. Samat Smakov, captain of

the Kazakhstan football team, took the penalty.

While Kazakhstan had a chance to minimise the difference during the extension time, the score re-

mained the same. The next match for the national team in Euro 2016 qualifiers will be held on March 28, 2015 at home against Iceland, one of the leaders of Group A.

Ilyin Breaks Record to Become Four-Time Weightlifting World Champion



Continued from Page A1

"A lot depends on your state of mind, a month and a half prior to the championship, I didn't know what weights to pull and eureka, we decided 190 and 242 would bring us victory! And today we pulled it right on, it's a miracle!" he said.

Later, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev phoned the new champion to congratulate him.

"The President congratulated me over the phone and I was really glad. He asked me about

the record that I broke. His congratulations were coming from his heart. He also mentioned that we will meet and discuss this in person. I consider him a person that is close to me. It is thanks to him that I live and achieve these results. I am grateful to him for his support," said Ilyin.

Kazakhstan finished third overall in the championship with North Korea second and China taking first.

China	G-4, S-2, B-5	Total: 11
N. Korea	4, 1, 3	Total: 8
Kazakhstan	3, 2, 0	Total: 5

Confederation of Combat and Power Sports Enjoys Early Success, Prepares Athletes for Rio

Continued from Page B1

We are also happy with the success of our athletes in other types of sports. Our compatriots won the first gold in judo in the major continental European Games. They also won two silver and three bronze medals.

A Kazakhstan team in classic wrestling (Greco-Roman, freestyle and women's wrestling) got 10 medals, the weightlifters got four medals and the representatives of taekwondo won four medals.

Stable success is impossible without good conditions, so we first had to make certain that our national teams were provided with medical support, the required licensed athletic equipment and uniform outfits, were trained and conducted training camps in Kazakhstan and beyond where the best conditions were created.

Skilled management is needed for the development of high performance sports. The confederation was created with the intention to focus on the successful practice for the development of other federations.

The confederation pays great attention to the material and technical base of the sport. Along with this great event was the opening of the World Academy of Boxing in Kazakhstan. Is it a credible example of international institutions?



Timur Kulibayev

Of course! The AIBA World Academy of Boxing, which already operates in the Almaty region, is the first scientific training complex of its kind. This is a unique structure, which has excellent conditions for mastering skills not only for athletes, but also coaches, referees and technical staff. Athletes from different parts of the world can train here.

I would especially like to emphasise that the pledge of future victories lies in the mass nature of sports; this explains our attention to the regions. This year alone, the universal sports and recreation complexes of the sport confederation were built and now operate in Turkestan and Semey.

We also signed memoranda of cooperation and development of mass sports and high performance

sports with akimats (government administrations) of many regions.

In addition to domestic championships under the auspices of the confederation, many high-status world events are being held. How did you achieve this?

Holding international-scale competitions in Kazakhstan is another overriding direction for us. We think that the confederation's activity is not only for the benefit of strength sports, but also contributes to the implementation of the state policy in the sphere of physical culture and sports.

The confederation operates in close cooperation with the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports. In 2013, Kazakhstan had the honour and great responsibility to host the first world boxing championship.

A new record was set for the number of participants – 576 athletes from 116 countries. In addition to a high level of organisation, the results of local boxers were brilliant.

The first major start this year was the Asian Wrestling Championship. Astana gathered the strongest fighters of the continent and our guys did not disappoint. They won 14 medals.

Next year, we are preparing to hold a licensed world championship in judo. It was decided to hold the World Grand Prix this year in Astana, which was a kind of test before the world championship.

Our country will host the world championship in weightlifting on Nov. 8-16, where the best athletes of the world will meet. This world championship will be licensed, that means they will compete for bids to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

The competition will be shown on the KAZsport Channel; which other countries will broadcast the event?

The upcoming event will be broadcast in such countries as China, Brazil, Iran, Latvia, Poland and [heavily broadcast] on Eurosport.

What are the objectives of the confederation for the near future?

Development of training, coaching and teaching staff, including the Bolashak programme, which is another ambitious task. Last year, a tripartite memorandum of cooperation with the Kazakhstan Agency of Sport and Physical Culture [now the Ministry of Culture and Sports] and Centre for International Programmes was signed.

Thus, local young professionals had the opportunity to study abroad. A striking example is Serik Sapiyev, who is undergoing training in sports management at Brunel University in London under a Bolashak international scholarship.

2014 was declared the "Year of the Coach" in the confederation. Since the beginning of the year, regular seminars and training

AIBA Congress Discusses Important Changes for Upcoming Year in S. Korea



By Anuar Abdrakhmanov and Dmitry Lee

At the recent Association Internationale de Boxe Amateur (Amateur International Boxing Association, AIBA) Congress in Cheju, South Korea, important changes were made, questions were asked and members caught up with one another. The congress was held from Nov. 13 to 14, Kazakhstan web portal www.sports.kz reported.

The meeting saw the introduction of new regulations to the semi-professional team tournament World Series of Boxing (WSB) and AIBA Pro Boxing (APB) for next year. Association President Dr. Ching-Kuo Woo called development too rapid and said the association needs to keep up with the times.

In the upcoming season, matches won't have the home-away format, rather a one-team encounter that will determine the winner in a two-day competition.

The new APB project will gather the best 80 boxers in the world, according to the AIBA president. The APB will also decide the Olympic vacant slots by 2020.

Among other issues on the agenda was the question of whether to continue the use of helmets in matches. Boxing experts and medical professionals have noted that boxers who don't use helmets have

a lower chance of getting head injuries by 33 percent.

The congress also held elections for managing staff. Kazakhstan legend Serik Konakbayev was appointed the vice president of the Kazakh Boxing Federation, while Timur Kulibayev kept his post as president.

"First of all, I am honoured. I realise that this is a big responsibility. It is widely known that Kazakhstan is a boxing powerhouse; the country is growing dynamically and developing economically while advancing unity and harmony. All of these factors validate Kazakhstan's hosting of EXPO 2017. Kazakhstan is developing in all spheres and global society now knows it. Therefore, our achievements give us the drive to continue forward. I would like to repeat that it is a big responsibility for me. Thanks to the achievements we have today, we need to promote boxing at a higher level," Konakbayev commented.

Woo also thanked the Kazakh Boxing Federation headed by Kulibayev for being the leading national federation.

"AIBA in Kazakhstan will give impetus to the development of boxing worldwide," he said. "We only need facilities and the improvement of our assets and technical base. It is important that children involved in the sport get a good education to augment their physical development."

The leaders of all the national federations discussed the future of modern boxing. The heads of all national federations gathered four years ago in Almaty where they made a number of important decisions that had a positive impact on the development of Olympic boxing.

Young Kazakh athletes follow their elders and also show excellent results. Speaking about participation of Kazakh youth in the sport, I want to note that we remember the strategic goals set by leader of the nation, our President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Is special attention now being paid to the upcoming games in Brazil?

Indeed, two years are left before the start of the event. During this time, the Confederation of Combat and Power Sports will make every effort to ensure that our athletes are prepared for the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro.

We have strong and fearless athletes, ready to fight and win for native Kazakhstan. It was so at the latest Asian Games, so it is safe to say that with such athletes we can achieve the highest goals at the Olympics in South America!

Champions and prize winners,

CAPITAL

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Second Astana Public School Joins German University Preparation Programme

Continued from Page B1

School No. 67 joined the programme one year ago, after receiving permission from Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education and Science and undergoing the application process, and since then has seen German proficiency among its students soar, Headmistress Gulnara Sadekova said in an interview at the school on Oct. 16.

"Our school is based on language, so it's a multilingual school. ... After the programme, our school improved. The level of German language is really developing. German is now at the same level as English," she said. Chinese, French and Russian are also taught at the school.

Blond, mohawked Tanja Unterberg is the coordinator of the DSD programme at Astana's public schools No. 67 and No. 46, where she stands out amid the sea of mostly Kazakh students and teachers. Unterberg, like four other teachers working at DSD schools in Kazakhstan through a cultural cooperation agreement between German and Kazakhstan, coordinates teacher trainings, helps set common goals between the school and the programme, organises students to take part in competitions in Germany and gives lessons to



Students of Astana's public school No. 67, the newest partner in the German language programme DSD.

the school's higher-level students.

Despite their different styles and features, Unterberg says German and Kazakh cultures have a natural fit and the integrated programme is very special. "Normally we have German schools – German directors, German colleagues, every-

thing is from Germany. But this cooperation is between two different countries, with two different cultures. The headmistress is Kazakh – there's no German. There are some people from abroad, like my German boss in Almaty, and this is interesting, because it's an

intercultural blend, because we're cooperating. There is a good blend between traditions."

Before coming to Kazakhstan, she hadn't realised the two cultures would have much in common, Unterberg said. "I would say we have much in common. We

both like working, lots. Our cultures are close – there are things we have in common. Our cultures can combine. We have something between us. ... I didn't know that [before]," she said.

As Germany recently scrapped tuition fees in its public universities, higher education in the country is free for any student, German or international, and the DSD programme represents a significant opportunity.

Unterberg extends the integration within the school by opening her seminars to all teachers. "We are now doing some bilingual method courses. ... We gather two times a month. The last course we made was about communicative confidence, how we build it from the little ones to the 11th class. Not officially – I'm officially here for the German, but it would be silly

to give a class for just two teachers." She is also passionate about finding internships and practical training for her students, hoping to bring some of Germany's hands-on, real world educational style to Kazakhstan.

Aigerym Nauryzbekova, 16, travels across town to attend school No. 67. She used to live in the school's district, and decided to stay on after her family moved elsewhere in Astana. "The first reason is that it is a multilingual school, and I always loved English, so I wanted to develop it," she said.

Nauryzbekova and other students gave a tour of their school on Oct. 16, translating between English, German, Russian and Kazakh. They hope to put their language skills to use after graduation. Aibol Gablakhat, 18, hopes to be an ambassador. "I like travelling – I want to travel the whole world," he said. Dana Baubekova, 15, wants to learn more languages and perhaps return to school No. 67 as a teacher, she said.

There are currently eight DSD schools in Kazakhstan, Woitsch said, and 821 across the world, in 65 countries. As the DSD consultant, Woitsch coordinates and advises participating schools on their programmes and administers the DSD test.

New City Sections to Be Built in Style of Different World Capitals

By Julia Rutz

ASTANA – A landmark real estate project where each quarter of the city will match the style of a particular world capital was unveiled Nov. 5 by BI Group Holding.

Known as BI City, the new design is expected to emerge around the Khan Shatyr shopping mall, located on the left side of the Yessil River, and provide powerful future development impetus to this area. The project envisions administrative, business and cultural centres, as well as residential areas with developed infrastructure, totaling more than 1.5 million square metres. Construction of the project is scheduled for the next eight years and will cost up to \$2.5 billion. BI City was successfully presented to Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in April 2014, according to Aidyn Rakhimbayev, head of BI Group Holding.

"We are developing this project together with the True Capital Company. We have already start-

ed to work on the site of our first district, which is called Seoul," he said.

Guests of the event were met by women dressed in Korean national attire, as the first city district would be dedicated to the South Korean capital. The quarter, to be constructed under the motto "Soul of Asia," will incorporate eight mid-rise residential complexes with façades reflecting construction typical of that nation's capital. The district will provide everything needed for a full-fledged urban living and dynamic work activity.

According to Assel Zhunusova, director of sales of BI Group Holding, high quality materials will be used in construction.

"BI City is going to be built in accordance with the latest technologies and on a base of high-quality materials, such as granite, limestone, travertine and fundermax. Permanent technical supervision will guarantee good quality construction put up in a short period of time," he explained.

The main objective of this project is to solve the housing problem, which is especially important in the realities of the present day, when about 50,000 new citizens are coming to the capital every year.

Another benefit of BI City is the developed sports infrastructure, which includes areas for cycling, jogging and working out, as well as children's playgrounds with special protective rubberised flooring, a kindergarten and school.

As part of the EXPO 2017 preparation plan, a green quarter will also be built on the territory of BI City, which represents a unique project of innovative construction using the latest developments in the field of energy efficiency to be implemented together with Samryk Kazyna Development.

"I like the fact that despite the unusual approach used in construction, apartment prices are pretty [reasonable] and many people can afford buying an apartment here," said one of the guests of the presentation Anvar Kentayev.



Plan of the BI City project designed by BI Group.

1,574 New Affordable Housing Apartments to Be Available in Astana by 2015

By Yelden Sarybay

ASTANA – Five new affordable residential housing complexes offering 1,574 apartments under the Affordable Housing 2020 Programme will be available by the end of the year, according to a Nov. 12 press release from the Astana Akimat (city administration).

The new apartments are among 2,671 apartments the programme will provide.

Housing the country's population remains a concern for the Kazakh government and was among the country's main objectives mentioned during President Nursultan Nazarbayev's recent state-of-the-nation address. The President has initiated the construction of rental

housing with the long-term leases and options to buy. He has also lowered administrative costs and made low-interest loans available in order to lower barriers to housing.

In addition to the five complexes, the city is constructing eight more complexes totaling 1,135 apartments which are expected to be available in 2015-2016.

Festive menu with show program / Новогоднее меню с шоу программой

22000 KZT per person / на персону

Smoked Fish Display (smoked salmon, beluga)
Ассорти рыбы (копченая лосось, белуга)Assorted horse meat (Kazi, Jaya, Jal, Shuzhuk)
Ассорти мяса конины (казы, жая, жал и шужык)

Assorted pickles / Ассорти солений

Greek salad / Греческий салат
Olivie salad / Салат Оливье
Mexican salad with chicken / Мексиканский салат с курицей

Bread assortment / Хлебная корзина

Manti / Манты

Crispy salmon with vegetable ratatui and potato puree
Лосось с овощным рататуем и картофельным пюреFruit cake / Фруктовый торт
Seasonal sliced fruits / Фруктовая нарезка2 bottles of wine, 1 bottle of vodka
2 бутылки вина, 1 бутылка водкиJuices in assortment, water, tea, coffee
Соки в ассортименте, вода, чай и кофе