



Kazakhstan, Turkey Discuss Regional, International Cooperation



President Nursultan Nazarbayev (l) with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (c) and other officials visited a business forum on April 16.

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – President Nursultan Nazarbayev met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the Akorda presidential residence on April 16.

The two presidents discussed strengthening cooperation in trade, the economy, investments, industry, transit and transport, culture and humanitarian affairs, as well as international issues. Nazarbayev noted that relations between the two countries are characterised by their brotherly and friendly nature.

“Turkey has made great progress over the past 12 years under your leadership. It ranks 16th in the world in terms of economic indicators, which is the result of the work of all the people of Turkey and your personal efforts. You arrived in Kazakhstan with a large delegation that will take part in a bilateral business forum. I am sure that your visit will contribute to improving our relations,” Nazarbayev said in welcoming Erdoğan for his first state visit to Kazakhstan as the Turkish head of state.

Erdoğan expressed his gratitude

to the Kazakh President for his visit last year to Turkey and for participating in his inauguration ceremony.

Erdoğan noted that despite the difficult global economic situation, Kazakhstan is developing dynamically and achieving significant success. In addition, he wished Nazarbayev victory in the upcoming presidential election on April 26.

After the bilateral meeting, the presidents attended a meeting of the Kazakhstan-Turkey

High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council.

During the roundtable, the parties discussed issues of strengthening cooperation in various fields, as well as the joint economic programme, the New Synergy. The programme, developed under the patronage of the presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkey, is a fundamentally new concept regarding trade and economic cooperation and is aimed at increasing mutual trade turnover to \$10 billion by 2015.

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Floods in Karaganda Draw Unprecedented Public Support, Civil Activism

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Man is often powerless in combating natural disasters. These events often occur without warning, which sometimes means major losses, endangered lives and property destruction.

Last week’s floods in the Karaganda and Akmola regions were triggered by abundant rainfall and melting snow. They affected highways of national significance and wide areas of central and northern Kazakhstan. The weather has destroyed bridges and left a number of villages without electricity. In addition to the government response, civil society’s sympathetic reaction to the disaster has been unprecedented and provided encouragement to many who have looked for the emergence of a more active civil society.

On April 14, the Committee for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that nearly 10,000 residents were evacuated, more than 1,700 houses in 35 villages were flooded and more than 300 head of cattle had died.

A state of emergency was declared in nine districts and two cities of the Karaganda region. “The stream was so strong that it [easily] knocked people down,” witnesses commented with horror.

Unfortunately, an elderly couple, Yuri (78) and Vasilina (76) Vakulko, were found dead on April 13 in their home in the Karaganda oblast’s Gabiden Mustafin village

after having twice refused evacuation services in writing.

Affected areas can also be found in the Akmola, North Kazakhstan and Pavlodar Oblasts.

Commenting on relief efforts, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said he had instructed all government agencies and local executive authorities to take all steps necessary to help the affected population and minimise the damage done to public and private property.

“The Karaganda region has been allocated 1 billion tenge (US\$5.38 million) [in relief money]. The water is subsiding. I think we will solve this problem, everything is under control, do not worry; help is on the scene and all possible efforts are being made,” he said on April 16.

“We will support everybody. The main thing is assuring that there are no further victims. All [property-related] issues will be resolved soon. Temporary dams are being created in the area. Roads and electricity in some flooded villages are being restored,” Akim (Governor) of Karaganda Oblast Nurmukhambet Abdibekov said as he promised those left homeless that they would have the option to allow authorities to help them build new homes.

Rebuilding housing and acquiring things such as clothing, food products and toiletries, cannot be done quickly.

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New Research Finds Most Kazakhs Think Country Is Improving, Ready for Election



By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – New research conducted by U.K. market research agency Ipsos MORI with Kazakh adults shows that a large majority of citizens of the country believe the country is moving in the right direction and that most also agree that the country is ready to hold the presidential election scheduled for April 26.

The research, made public April 20 by Ipsos MORI and the Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs (ECFA) that commissioned it, was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults aged 18 and over from March 16 to April 3.

It found that nearly nine in ten (89 percent) of adults interviewed thought that life in general and on balance was moving in the right direction in the country, while 79 percent thought the country was ready for the election, which was originally scheduled for 2016 but was moved up after calls from

country’s ethnic assembly, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK).

Ipsos MORI has done similar surveys in Kazakhstan with similar samples in 2013 and 2014.

When thinking about their country in general, this survey found that 93 percent of Kazakh adults feel “fairly positive” or “very positive,” an increase of 3 and 7 percentage points on the similar polls from 2014 and 2013. Seventy-eight percent felt “fairly” or “very” positive about the country’s economy, and 85 percent said they thought life had gotten better over the past 10 years.

Respondents were asked to consider specific aspects of life from 10 years ago and today, including infrastructure, prices of everyday goods, education, policing, corruption, the courts and justice system and other issues. On infrastructure, education, overall quality of life, healthcare, their own standards of living, eliminating corruption, finding opportunities to advance in society and job opportunities, the larger

segments of respondents reported being maximally satisfied. On the courts and justice system and prices, the majority reported being satisfied, but were less glowing.

The vast majority of respondents, 93 percent, said they were “certain to vote”, “very likely to vote” and “quite likely to vote” in the upcoming election. Voter turnouts in Kazakhstan are generally higher than the averages in countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and turnout for the three presidential elections since independence has averaged 84 percent, according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, an intergovernmental organisation with the mission of supporting democracy and proving comparative knowledge on democratic processes.

The data was collected during in-home, face-to-face interviews.

Three candidates are standing in the April 26 election: Turgun Syzdykov of the Communist People’s Party of Kazakhstan, who is running on a platform of combating “decadent Western values”; self-nominated Abalgazy Kusaenov, who is using his campaign to draw attention to environmental issues; and incumbent President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The Eurasian Council on Foreign Affairs is a recently established think tank with the stated mission of providing a platform for engagement between Central Asia and the European Union. The Brussels-based council publishes papers and provides research on a variety of issues in Central Asia.

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NATION

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

President Explains Kazakhstan's Specific Economic Challenges at Youth Forum

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev addressed a youth forum on April 10, drawing attention to Kazakhstan's achievements during its years of independence and the importance of strengthening the country to ensure further development, unity and well-being among its citizens.

In his speech at the youth forum, Nazarbayev also explained why Kazakhs do not live like citizens of Western Europe or the United Arab Emirates.

The President highlighted a number of specific factors dramatically affecting the domestic economy.

"You are the first generation living in conditions of the global world; therefore you need to clearly understand the circumstances of our growth and development. Some ask why we do not live like [they do] in Western Europe or in the United Arab Emirates or, for example, in America. Not everything is obvious. There are simple specific factors that fundamentally affect our economy and life. First of all, these are climate, long dis-



President Nursultan Nazarbayev with participants of the April 10 youth forum.

tances, landlockedness [and] historical and cultural heritage. In fact, all these years we are moving forward in spite of many objective challenges," Nazarbayev said.

The President noted how important it is for the younger generation to know the history of the country and its traditions and values. He stressed that today, all Kazakhs are united by common values, such as creative labour, peace and harmony, unity of the

people and pride in their homeland.

"The richest top 30 countries of the world that we aspire to join, or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, are situated in more favourable climates than Kazakhstan. Those are the countries of Western Europe, Australia, the U.S., Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates and others," he said.

"These places do not have re-

ally frosty winters like we do. These countries have access to the sea and ocean everywhere. Economic prosperity does not like the cold, preferring warm, temperate climates. These countries save many times more energy than we do. For example, to build a two-storey house in Astana is 10 times more expensive than to build it in Malaysia," Nazarbayev noted.

The President said that the average annual temperature in Germany is 20

degrees Celsius, in Japan 16 C, in the U.S. 15 C, in Singapore 27 C and in Malaysia 28 C, whereas the average annual temperature in the most important cities of Kazakhstan, such as Astana in the Akmola region and cities like Pavlodar and others in northern Kazakhstan, is 2.5 C.

"We have an energy-intensive economy, because of the energy-intensive nature around us. Our entire industry, all of our cities, villages and districts, need to be heated for seven months of the year. In addition, people need to be paid corresponding salaries, so they can buy warm clothes, heat their houses and eat food rich in calories," Nazarbayev said.

As an example, Nazarbayev noted that in Canada, people from the southern regions who go to work in the less-populated north are considered heroes. If this comparison was transferred to Kazakhstan, he quipped, there would be 17 million heroes living in the country. "We have to work harder, overcome more difficulties than others – for this reason, our lives are more interesting," he concluded, drawing laughter from the assembled crowd.

More than 2,000 people from all regions of Kazakhstan attended the forum, including activists from Zhas Otan, the youth wing of the Nur Otan People's Democratic Party, young deputies of maslikhats (local assemblies), entrepreneurs, scientists, famous athletes and leaders of the largest youth organisations.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

All necessary measures are being taken in Kazakhstan to develop the languages of various ethnic groups living in the nation, said Deputy Prime Minister Berdibek Saparbayev at a recent national seminar on language as the basis of consent. "The policy pursued by our state is aimed at creating conditions for the development of languages of the peoples who live in our country," said Saparbayev. The deputy prime minister noted that Kazakhstan has 15 theatres performing in Russian, as well as four theatres in Korean, German, Uzbek and Uighur languages. "In Kazakhstan, newspapers are published in five languages of different ethnic groups, as well as the programmes on radio and television. In many cities and regional centres there are Sunday schools which aim to ensure that the people do not forget their languages, cultures and traditions," said Saparbayev. According to official figures, among the 7,563 schools in Kazakhstan 1,291 are taught in Russian, 20 in Uzbek, 13 in Uighur, four in Tajik language and 2,100 schools are mixed. Among 8,467 preschools, 1,840 are Russian, three in other languages and 1,098 are bilingual. In 190 Sunday schools of ethno-cultural associations, native languages of 30 ethnic groups are studied.

Post office employees in Kazakhstan will be provided with smartphones and printers to receive orders and payments, according to a recent announcement by the chairman of the board of Kazpost Bagdat Mussin. "We will reconsider the image of postmen in order to modernise and improve it. This year, all postmen in each city and region will be provided with smartphones. The smartphone will receive orders, which allows postmen to avoid unnecessary walking from office to addressee. Secondly, it will mark the status of delivery. Thirdly, it will receive payments for communal services," Mussin clarified. Salaries of Kazpost employees will be increased due to the company's profit. According to him, at the moment 22,000 people work at Kazpost, 50 percent in rural areas.

The Kazakh Yeli – Mangilik Yel auto caravan, dedicated to the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate, left April 14 from Kokshetau, reported the Department of Internal Policy of Kazakhstan's Akmola region. The organisers of the event noted the importance of forming Kazakh Yeli – Mangilik Yel, as it fosters respect for the history of the country and the spirit of Kazakhstan patriotism. The caravan, which will end Aug. 30, is expected to cover all areas and cities of the country and began with the ceremonial laying of flowers at the Abylai Khan monument. Regional Deputy Akim (Governor) Nurlan Nurkenov noted that this event is of great importance in consolidating society around core values – Kazakhstan's independence, statehood, stability, peace and harmony. According to the organisers, scientists, historians, young people and intellectuals joined the caravan. They added that the tour is supposed to raise large-scale awareness and cultural and recreational activities among all categories of citizens and residents of the most remote stations and sidings. The final point will be the visit to the Burabai district – the famous headquarters of Abylai Khan as part of the history of the Kazakh Khanate.

Kazakh deputy head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Vladimir Bozhko reported April 14 that the water committee has allocated more than 8 billion tenge (US\$43.2 million) for dam repairs, which is very pertinent given the flooding in various regions of the country. Bozhko also said that all the hydraulic works were brought under control and examined and they opened the passport of the facilities. "However, some dams have been in private hands; they also receive regulations because we have tightened responsibility," he added. Since Jan. 1, the inspection engaged in the operation and control of dam safety has been established in the Ministry of Agriculture.

UN Development Programme Allows Oralmen to Teach Fellow Oralmen

By Yerbolat Uatphanov

ASTANA – Individuals who were once students are now serving as teachers.

Classes in Russian and computer literacy, provided under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are being taught in East Kazakhstan by oralmen, ethnic Kazakhs who have immigrated to the country from neighbouring lands since its independence in 1991. The courses are unique, as the instructors themselves were once oralmen, according to UNDP report.

Hanan Bakhytgul, who formerly lived in Mongolia, teaches Russian. She noted her fellow oralmen did not understand simple words and often had difficulty with tasks such as completing bank forms. As teaching is her occupation, she felt she could provide assistance and her intention became personal and professional.

"I had a mind to help them. I can say that knowing languages makes

you a real citizen," said Bakhytgul in an April 14 interview. "A great number of claimants sought this position, but I was appointed."

Oralmen, which is translated as returnees, are the descendants of those who left Kazakhstan during the 1930s during the Stalinist purges and the collectivisation drive that led to the great famine of 1932–33. It is estimated that more than one million Kazakhs, who were forced to abandon their traditional nomadic lifestyle and give up their livestock, died during these tumultuous years, while hundreds of thousands of others emigrated to neighbouring countries such as Mongolia, China or Iran.

The classes, which started in March, were attended by 42 oralmen who moved from China, Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Russia. The course was organised by the Kazakh Law Academy Institute of Advanced Training in Semey. The programme was designed by the candidates in science based on the specifics of the trained audi-

ence, with the teachers selected on a competitive basis. Computer science was taught by Manap Kerey, who like Bakhytgul immigrated from Mongolia.

East Kazakhstan is home to both Kazakh and Russian-speaking populations and the repatriates deal with the language and low computer literacy barrier. Despite the fact that all the students work during the day, they have found time to attend the three-month courses scheduled in the evenings, as quoted by the UNDP report.

Since its 2011 beginning, the UN Joint Programme in the region has actively worked to promote the adjustment of repatriates. UNDP opened the centre of integration and adaptation of oralmen in 2009. In the first three years, UNDP joint programme staff organised a series of educational systems on training and employment of repatriates and attracting teachers from universities and high vocational schools.

The first classes were quite basic, as oralmen from China and Mon-

golia were unable to read, write or speak Russian, said Bakhytgul. Lessons often began by teaching letters, as oralmen use the Roman alphabet and were unfamiliar with the Cyrillic one.

"The peculiarity of the lessons for oralmen was in a very low level of Russian. It would be better to say that the level was equal to zero," she added. "Sometimes they came to the city and asked me the meaning of some words. Pronunciation and stress were very complicated for them, too, but by finishing the courses they understand each other in Russian."

The language is as critical as it is complicated for oralmen, as Russian is very popular in East Kazakhstan. Learning computer skills is equally important and similar to the linguistics classes, the students had "a low level or zero level of computer literacy," said Bakhytgul. They are taught how to use Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and the Internet.

"They learn it like little chil-

dren," she added. "Our teacher had to teach them from the ground up."

The students are typically 20–45 years old, although Bakhytgul had one pupil who was a 55-year-old man, a seller who needed to know Russian. A large number of students initially enrolled in the courses, but many were forced to stop because of work and other reasons. The teacher is satisfied with the results, however, noting the education will continue as there are many people who want to study.

"I think that three months is a sufficient period of time necessary for education. My students learned to make conversation," she said. "One of my students, a woman, came to me and said that she spoke to a passerby and asked him about the street they were on."

At the closing ceremony, the oralmen students said that there is a need to learn English and expressed gratitude for the courses which are essential to improve their lives in their historic homeland. One of the participants, Muratkhan Meseyanuly, wrote a poem where he shared his challenges in communicating with the local people and thanked UNDP for the opportunity to speak Russian and use the computer in his work, according to the UNDP report.

Three Presidential Candidates Continue Campaigns across Kazakhstan



Self-nominated candidate Abelgazy Kussainov

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Presidential candidates Abelgazy Kussainov, incumbent Nursultan Nazarbayev and Turgun Syzdykov and their campaigns are continuing election canvassing across Kazakhstan.

This week, self-nominated candidate Abelgazy Kussainov visited a number of cities in West Kazakhstan Oblast to promote his candidacy.

During the meeting with public officials in Aktobe on April 13, Kussainov spoke on the key aspects of his election platform, which is based on defining and solving ecological issues. Kussainov met with students and teachers at the Aktobe College

of Transport, Communications and Technology on April 14. He held a similar meeting at Atyrau College for the Humanities on April 16.

"Our primary objectives should be starting to use our natural resources in a rational and planned manner, protecting the environment, introducing a planned system of state control, organising international and public events aimed at the rational use, protection and restoration of natural resources and securing Kazakhstan's material and cultural needs for future generations," Kussainov said while addressing the public.

"We need to develop civic participation on environmental issues and conservation activities. People must

understand the need to preserve our ecological balance," he summed up.

Representatives of the National Election Campaign of Nursultan Nazarbayev, who does not officially campaign, also visited the West Kazakhstan region. In Uralsk, they held meetings with students of the Zhanqir Khan West Kazakhstan Agrarian Technical University, employees of the West Kazakhstan Engineering Company and Agrofirma Akas, a dairy farm, as well as with representatives of ethnic and cultural associations on April 13.

The next day, April 14, the staff visited the Atyrau oblast, where they presented their candidate's platform to employees of the Atyrau Oil Re-

finery and Chevron MunaiGas. Also, campaign members took part at a gathering in the Zhaik Sports Palace where thousands of people came together to support the nation's leader.

Later on, a meeting with labour veterans from the Atyrau oblast was held.

Members of the Nazarbayev campaign then moved to Mangistau Oblast on April 15 to meet the staff of the Aktau International Sea Trade Port, the Aktau Foundry and doctors from the Regional Blood Centre.

Election campaign representatives moved to the Aktobe Oblast on April 16 to meet state workers, entrepreneurs and employees



Candidate of the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan Turgun Syzdykov

of the Aktyubrentgen Ferroalloy Plant, as well as representatives of veteran groups and patriotic organisations.

Meanwhile, the campaign of Turgun Syzdykov in Karaganda and East Kazakhstan oblasts informed the public of the advantages of his platform. The press service of the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK) stated that the public fully agrees with the notion that "Western culture is negatively impacting Kazakhstan's young generation."

"Our campaign events are being held by standard guidelines and without any excess, we actively hold meetings with the public and explain our electoral programme," members of the CPPK regional campaign stated.

Syzdykov paid a personal visit to the West Kazakhstan Agrarian Technical University on April 14. The candidate travelled to Astana to address employees of the AstanaGas Service that same day.

CPPK members from the Atyrau and Aktobe headquarters reported on the progress made. According to a statement, presidential candidate Syzdykov lives and eats modestly.

"Faithful to the ideals of the party, the communist does not allow himself anything extra and does not succumb to the temptation of Western advertising. He eats simple modest food, does not accept any luxury, or the cult of material wealth; he is engaged in self-development and cares about people," the head of the Aktobe election campaign said.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Over the past 10 years, Kazakhstan has invested \$900 million in Singapore's economy, while the inflow of direct investment from Singapore into Kazakhstan's economy amounted to more than \$60 million, Chairman of the Investment Committee of the Ministry of Investment and Development of Kazakhstan Yerlan Khairov announced at an April 15 Kazakhstan-Singapore Business Forum meeting. "Kazakhstan has invested \$900 million in Singapore. From 2005 to 2014, the inflow of direct investment from Singapore to Kazakhstan amounted to more than \$60.25 million," Khairov said. He noted that Kazakhstan has created a favourable investment climate, having undertaken reforms based off of those implemented by Singapore. Thus, Kazakh businesses that are actively cooperating with Singaporean companies in communication management consulting have taken on a new economic model. "Because of Singapore's economic and social development, the approaches chosen by Lee Kuan Yew have gained respect and a foothold in Kazakhstan, as we view them as proven methods for stimulating growth and safeguarding the population's welfare. Kazakhstan is actively cooperating with Singaporean companies in economic zone management consulting. Kazakh companies, together with JURONG International, have developed recommendations for a new model of economic zone management," Khairov said.

"Kazgeology has successfully attracted foreign investment in mineral exploration in Kazakhstan," Chairman of the Board of Kazgeology, Kazakhstan's state-owned geological exploration and mining company, Galym Nurzhanov said at an April 15 media briefing. Over the past two years, four major foreign investors, including the Anglo-Australian Rio Tinto, South Korean KORES, Australian Iluka Resources and the German investment fund Ulmus Fund have taken part in exploration operations in Kazakhstan. These companies are ready to invest 5.5 billion tenge (US\$296 million) in mineral exploration. Rio Tinto completed all of the necessary procedures for setting up joint ventures in the Karaganda region. Iluka Resources, the world's largest producer of zircon and a global manufacturer of titanium products, is now a name in Kazakhstan's markets. Nurzhanov said that this year's exploration operations in Dyussembai and Besshoky will include KORES and the Ulmus Fund. "The companies are satisfied with their progress and are interested in implementing new joint exploration projects with Kazgeology," he said. Kazgeology is constantly engaged in exploration and introducing new equipment and advanced technologies. Together with the Canadian company Geotech, they founded an airborne geophysical company. Kazakhstan has already used unique VTEM and ZTEM technology, which allows geologists to survey solid minerals to a depth of 2.5 kilometres.

A legal code on subsurface resources in Kazakhstan will be developed based on an Australian model, Executive Director of the National Association of Mining and Metallurgical Enterprises Nikolai Radostovets recently announced. "The code demonstrates new relations with investors. The relations should be based on the best international experience. Thus, Australia's experience will be applied," he said. According to him, the Australian code interprets the size of taxation. He also noted that within the second phase of the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development, ferrous metallurgy projects worth 390 billion tenge (US\$2.09 billion) will be implemented and over 1 trillion tenge (US\$5.4 billion) in nonferrous metallurgy. "Despite the difficult conditions, we expect investments to be made in this sector. According to expert predictions and Bloomberg, Kazakhstan ranked ninth among the fastest developing economies after the United Arab Emirates," he highlighted.

Iran's Zarif Says No Imposed Solution Can Be Sustainable

By Malika Rustem

ASTANA – On April 13, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif started his official two-day visit to Astana, beginning with a lecture in English at the Kazakh State University of Humanities and Law, where he dwelt extensively on the recent results of the multilateral talks on Iran's nuclear programme in Lausanne.

In fact, students and representatives of the mass media were able to ask him questions ranging from the Kazakh-Iranian relationship to the recent Lausanne negotiations.

Zarif started his speech with warm gratitude to Kazakhstan for the invitation to visit and their hospitality.

"We share historical ties that go beyond political considerations. We are bound by similarities in culture, traditions, geography and history," the Iranian foreign minister said.

While talking about the bilateral relationship, Zarif emphasised the importance of Kazakhstan's role in the region, particularly the importance of the Conference on In-



Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif speaks at the Kazakh State University of Humanities and Law in Astana on April 13 and university rector Maksut Narikbayev looks on.

teraction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) as one of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's initiatives for enhancing cooperation in the interest of peace, security and stability in Asia.

"For us, Central Asia is our immediate neighbourhood, where we enjoy extremely important and deep-rooted ties of culture, history

and religion, in addition to ties of geography. We share many boundaries together: the boundary of the Caspian Sea that we share with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Russia and Azerbaijan. ... Our companies, our experts are active in Kazakhstan and the rest of Central Asia, helping in the promotion of industry, railroads, road construction and all other sectors," Zarif said.

Turning to the most timely issue of the day, Iran's nuclear programme and the recent talks held between Iran and the P5+1 (the U.S., Russia, China, France, the U.K. and Germany) in Lausanne, Zarif marked the importance of understanding between the consulting countries. "If we want to resolve the nuclear issue, everybody, including the Western countries and particularly the Western countries, must also realise that in today's world you cannot have security at the expense of the insecurity of others; you cannot impose. No imposed solution is a sustainable solution and I believe that there has been some realisation of that solution in the nuclear discussion, but not in full. Because they are still trying to maintain some pressure. Pressure and cooperation do not go together. You can choose either," he concluded.

This was the first public speech Zarif has given since the negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme in Switzerland. It generated some commentary by Central Asia watchers, including from Luca Anceschi, a lecturer in Central Asian Studies at the University of

Glasgow, who suggested on Twitter that a nuclear deal between the West and Iran could be a "game-changer for Central Asia," a land-locked region for which Iran would provide the most direct and the shortest path to the open seas. International sanctions on Iran, caused by concerns over the intent of its nuclear programme, have long been an impediment in the process of unlocking the region's huge resources, including its abundant oil and gas reserves.

Iran and the P5+1 countries will meet again to sign a final agreement in June. All sanctions on Iran remain in place until the agreement is signed.

The lecture was attended by representatives of the diplomatic corps and the media, students of law departments of the university and Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Askar Mussinov, who was there to welcome the Iranian foreign minister.

During his visit to Astana, Zarif also met with President Nazarbayev, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov. Key regional and international developments are on the agenda of these meetings.

President Hassan Rouhani paid an official visit to Kazakhstan last September, when he also participated in the Iran-Kazakhstan economic forum.

Kazakhstan, Iran Discuss Bilateral Cooperation, Regional Security

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – President Nursultan Nazarbayev received visiting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif in the Akorda presidential residence on April 13, emphasising that Kazakhstan sees Iran as a close political and economic partner.

"I have worked with all the Iranian heads of state with mutual trust. Last year, I met four times with President Rouhani. Our countries have great potential for cooperation. A lot of work is being done in the framework of the revival of the Great Silk Road. The railway from Kazakhstan, with access to the Persian Gulf, will greatly contribute to strengthening economic ties. Also, our countries established agreements concerning cooperation on the Caspian Sea, due to which the issue should find its solution," Nazarbayev said, according to the Akorda press service.

Nazarbayev went on to congratulate Zarif on the outcome of multilateral talks on Iran's nuclear programme in Lausanne.

Zarif noted that Kazakhstan and Iran are friends with a common history and culture and have close positions on many international and regional issues.

"We have a good basis for further interaction in the framework of the transit of raw materials and minerals, industry and road construction. Iran intends to further deepen cooperation with Kazakhstan in these and other spheres. We are confident that with the support of President Nazarbayev our relations with Kazakhstan will grow stronger," Zarif said as quoted by the Akorda.

While in Astana, Zarif was also received by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan, to discuss the potential for expanding ties at the parliamentary level.

Earlier in the day, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov also held talks with Mohammad Zarif.

The sides discussed bilateral relations in the political, trade, economic and investment spheres, as well as their interaction within multilateral institutions and significant regional and international issues, according to the two ministers' statements at a joint press conference following their talks.

The ministers highlighted the expansion of economic and regional cooperation between their countries and the importance of the visit of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Kazakhstan last

September in strengthening their cooperation and friendship.

"We are expecting the visit of President [Nursultan] Nazarbayev to Iran and hope that this visit will contribute to the further development of bilateral relations," Zarif noted.

The Iranian minister stressed the constructive role of Kazakhstan in the process of multilateral negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme and thanked the leadership of Kazakhstan for providing a platform for two rounds of negotiations in Almaty in 2013.

"I would like to thank Minister Idrissov for his very positive speech in regard to the Iranian nuclear programme talks. Also, I am grateful to Kazakhstan for the role it has played in the P5+1 talks [with Iran], as well as for their hospitality," he said.

As a state which has made a significant contribution to nuclear nonproliferation, Idrissov noted Kazakhstan's readiness to continue providing assistance in order to reach a final agreement between Iran and the group of international negotiators on the issue. The Kazakh minister also expressed hope that the political will of the countries participating in the negotiations will help push them to achieve a comprehensive agree-

ment on Iran's nuclear programme within the agreed timeframe, which is June 30.

The ministers noted that intensified contacts at the highest levels have positively affected trade turnover between the two countries: the volume of trade turnover in 2014 amounted to \$1 billion, 1.6 times more than in 2013. In this regard, the parties welcomed the opening of Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway and expressed hope that trade between Kazakhstan and Iran as well as regional trade would grow.

"I would like to note the significance of the opening of Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway. Kazakhstan gains access to the open seas. We have great potential in agriculture and other industries. The Iranian side is interested in various investment projects in Kazakhstan, including in minerals," Zarif said at the press conference.

"Kazakh companies are ready to open terminals in Iran at railway junctions and in the Persian Gulf. Iranian companies are ready to take part in the development of port infrastructure in Kazakhstan," Idrissov noted in his turn, adding that various issues, such as streamlining tariffs and determining technical modalities, still need

to be worked out for the railway to operate at its full capacity.

Following the meeting, the two ministers also mentioned that the next meetings of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation and the Business Council comprising the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan and the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, which should give an additional impetus to economic cooperation, are planned to be held this year.

According to the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Idrissov and Zarif reviewed the implementation of agreements reached at the Astrakhan Summit of Caspian States in September 2014, as well as preparations for the Astana Summit of 2016. They noted the importance of further constructive collaboration aimed at developing mutually acceptable principles on which a convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea can be based, the press service said.

"The Caspian Sea is a sea of peace and friendship... it is our common wealth," Zarif stressed at the press conference.

During the talks, the sides also discussed combating international terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, as well as Kazakh-Iranian cooperation in international and regional organisations including the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Kazakhstan, Turkey Review Regional, International Cooperation

Continued from Page A1

"Many Turkish companies have successful operations in Kazakhstan. A large amount of Turkish capital is dispersed amongst more than 1,600 enterprises operating in our country. It should be noted that Turkish businesses were a big part of building Astana, Kazakhstan's new capital. The total volume of contracted work carried out by Turkish businesses in Astana totals about \$20 billion. Currently, Turkish businessmen are involved in implementing 14 investment projects totalling \$1.5 billion. Trade turnover between the two countries has reached \$3.29 billion. This figure is less than it used to be, but we should take into account the negative impact of the global financial crisis," Nazarbayev said.

He noted that Kazakhstan adopted the Nuryly Zhol programme as a response to the global financial

crisis. This programme provides great opportunities for businessmen from both Kazakhstan and other countries.

It was mentioned that Turkish companies received an offer from Kazakhstan on the joint implementation of 25 projects that will strengthen trade and economic relations.

"Kazakhstan and Turkey play an active role in the issues of regional and international security. It is reflected in the interaction within the framework of organisations, such as the United Nations, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation, the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Turkic Council and TURKSOY. Turkey is planning to take part in the fifth Congress of the Leaders of World and

Traditional Religions, which will be held in Astana June 10-11," Nazarbayev said.

"Turkey supports Kazakhstan's candidacy in becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017 and 2018. Turkey is planning to participate in EXPO in Astana in 2017. We hope that in the near future, talks on Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) will be completed. We intend to continue supporting our brother Kazakhstan in its aspirations," Erdoğan said at a joint press briefing of the two leaders following the talks.

Following the talks, the heads of state signed a joint statement of the second meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Council, as well as a protocol on implementing a plan of action as part of the New Synergy.

During the Kazakh-Turkish business forum on the same day,

agreements on the implementation of 19 projects totalling \$800 million were signed between companies of the two countries, the press service of the Ministry for Investment and Development of Kazakhstan reported.

"The first list of projects in order to activate the work within of the New Synergy programme was created. It includes 23 business initiatives totalling more than \$2.8 billion. Today, the documents on implementation of 19 out of 23 projects, worth more than \$800 million, were signed during the business forum," the report stated.

Turkey was the first country to recognise Kazakh independence on Dec. 16, 1991. The Turkish Embassy in Almaty was opened in March 1992 and later moved to Astana.

Today, Turkey plays a leading role in the Kazakh construction industry.

Kazakhstan is one of Turkey's most important political and economic partners in Central Asia. The frequency of high-level bilateral visits reflects the level of relations between the nations and provides a platform upon which to exchange views on bilateral, regional and international issues. Erdoğan's visit to Kazakhstan in 2012, then as prime minister, helped expand cooperation between the two countries.

On April 17, Nazarbayev and Erdoğan jointly visited the spiritual centre of the Turkic world, Turkestan, a town in the south of Kazakhstan. There, the two leaders attended the opening of major cultural and educational facilities, including a mosque, the construction of which started about 15 years ago. They also visited the Khoja Akhmet Yassawi mausoleum and spoke to students at the International Kazakh-Turkish University.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

Cultural, Economic Cooperation with UNESCO, OECD Discussed During Top Level Visit to Paris

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Gulshara Abdykalikova, Kazakhstan's secretary of state, discussed potential avenues for expanding the country's economic and cultural cooperation with international organisations during her visit to Paris on April 15–16.

Abdykalikova, who is the highest ranked woman in modern Kazakhstan's history, visited the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), where she met with UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova.

The two officials noted the high level of cooperation between Kazakhstan and UNESCO, as well as Kazakhstan's commitment to UNESCO's goals and principles. As quoted by the press service of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bokova said she highly appreciates the support from Kazakhstan's leadership in funding numerous programmes, as well as the country's active participation in UNESCO activities.

Kazakhstan became a member of UNESCO in May 1992. The country attaches great importance to the implementation of programmes aimed at the promotion and protection of the national and world cultural and natural heritage and the promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence. The International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures 2013–2022 under the auspices of UNESCO, initiated by Kazakhstan, has been considered an important contribution to the promotion of harmony among cultures, civilisations and peoples.

The art of playing the dombra kui and the manufacturing techniques for making Kazakh and Kyrgyz yurts were included on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Herit-



Secretary of State Gulshara Abdykalikova delivers remarks at a UNESCO event dedicated to Korkyt Ata on April 15.

age of Humanity in November 2014. Earlier, the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassawi; the petroglyphs of the archaeological landscape of Tamgaly; the Silk Road and Sary-Arka, the steppes and lakes of Northern Kazakhstan; and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (Korgalzhyn, Alakol, Akzhayik and Katon Karagai) were also added to this list.

During the conversation with Bokova, Abdykalikova outlined measures taken by the government of Kazakhstan to develop education, science and culture, as well as to ensure gender equality. Abdykalikova, a former head of the National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy, was instrumental in developing and implementing a national strategy for gender equality for 2006–2016.

She also briefed Bokova on the activities of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan (APK), a constitutional body comprising representatives of ethnic associations which is empowered to nominate nine deputies into the national parliament's lower chamber. In April and throughout the year, Kazakhstan is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the APK, which was established in 1995.

In Paris, Abdykalikova also met with Director General of the Campus France educational agency Antoine Grassen, President of the Sorbonne Paris Cité Association of Universities Jean-Yves Mérimond and with Marek Halter, a public figure, who initiated the establishment of University Sorbonne-Kazakhstan in 2014. During these meetings, issues of the Sorbonne-Kazakh-

stan, the first French university in Central Asia, were discussed, and the parties agreed to organise this year the next Inter-University Forum in Paris or in Astana with the participation of the heads of leading universities of the two countries.

On April 15, the secretary of state also attended a ceremony to mark the 200th anniversary of the publication of the first book by Korkyt Ata and the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. As part of the event, the Symphony Orchestra of the Kazakh National University of Arts presented Korkyt's famous works. Abdykalikova noted that the image of Korkyt is considered a golden bridge for the cultural and spiritual traditions of the Turkic people throughout Eurasia. She also added that "the book of Korkyt Ata is not only the herit-

age of Turkic peoples, but also the wealth of all mankind."

The next day Abdykalikova met with Deputy Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Mari Kiviniemi and head of the Secretariat of Global Connections Marcos Bonturi. They discussed the dynamic development of cooperation in all areas, which includes, among others, the implementation of projects under the Country Programme Partnership between Kazakhstan and the OECD signed last January.

Abdykalikova emphasised the development of the social sphere in Kazakhstan, in particular, health, education, gender policy and the exchange of statistical data. She expressed an interest in the development by the Kazakh side of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy under the President and the OECD.

"The development strategy for gender equality for 2006–2016 provides for the economic participation of women in SMEs and large infrastructure projects. Now, I can say that 50 percent of the SME sector is made up of women," Abdykalikova said in the interview with EFE news agency. Abdykalikova also told the news agency that Kazakhstan has set a target of 30 percent for the representation of women in political decision-making posts, while 20 percent of its Parliament is already comprised of women.

While in Paris, the secretary of state also discussed the upcoming presidential election. "We expect more than 400 international observers to be present in these elections," she told EFE, referring to the number of observers from the OSCE expected for the April 26 poll.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Chairman of the Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy Alikhan Smailov spoke at an April 15 media briefing about the main indicators of Kazakh socio-economic development. The growth of the short-term economic indicator in January–March amounted to 2 percent compared to the same period last year. The calculation of this index is based on the change in the index of manufacturing's main sectors: agriculture, industry, construction, trade, transport and communications, which make up 67–68 percent of the country's gross domestic product. The volume of industrial production in January–March totalled 3.37 trillion tenge (US\$18.2 billion) in current prices, which is 0.6 percent more than last year. In mining and quarrying production it increased by 1.1 percent. The production in agriculture grew by 3 percent to 254.3 billion tenge (US\$1.4 billion). According to the transport industry volume index, the ratio of the actual level of production in January–March showed a 7 percent increase. In the first quarter of this year the volume of passenger traffic totalled 60.2 billion passenger-kilometres, which is 4 percent more than the same period last year. The communication and trade industries showed an increase in actual production levels of 7.3 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively. Thus, the volume of retail trade in January–March increased by 3.6 percent to 1.3 trillion tenge (US\$7 billion) in cash. The volume of wholesale trade in the same period amounted to 3.143 trillion tenge (US\$17 billion), an increase of 2.9 percent compared to the first quarter of 2014. The total number of registered legal entities as of April 1 amounted to 357,194 units, a growth of 4 percent, 348,259 of which have fewer than 100 employees. Smailov noted the positive trend of income growth. Per capita nominal income in February 2015 was 62,388 tenge (US\$337.26), which is 10.4 percent higher than in February last year, while real incomes for the period increased by 4.1 percent. The average monthly nominal wage per employee assessment in February this year amounted to 120,975 tenge (US\$653.98). Unemployment statistics remained unchanged and amounted to 460,300 people, or 5 percent of the economically-active population.

Kazakh Middle Class Should Become Active in Stock Investments, Say Experts

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Stocks aren't part of the culture in Kazakhstan as they are in the U.S. and many other Western countries. Experts and private investors, however, consider that the situation should be slowly changed and regular people should start to learn more about investments in Kazakh securities, because they are safe and very profitable.

Dmitry Smirnov, vice director of the Physical Bodies Department of Freedom Finance, a major investment company in Kazakhstan and Russia, discussed the situation.

"People in Kazakhstan invested their money in real estate, bank deposits and their own business for a long time. Even today, investment culture is low. There are many reasons for this: the absence of experience, nascence of financial instruments, bad experience of investment in economic 'bubbles.' We have learned to earn, but only a few people correctly invest their money. As of today, the situation is slowly changing. People discover new instruments and begin to use them," he said.

Smirnov also spoke about the reasons for the sluggishness in Kazakh securities investment.

"We need time for stock market development. There is a lack of people who have earned money in investment equities, who worked with stocks one way or another. First of all, we need good investment stories. People in Kazakhstan should know that their friends and relatives earned a lot of money investing in equities to buy shares for themselves. Also, the companies should know that it is very profitable to get money for their own projects in the paper market. Our company is going to present shares of BAST company



in the near future. It will be the first such story in our market."

Smirnov is sure that a middle-class Kazakh citizen without corresponding education and skills can invest money in stocks.

"Everybody should make investments. Your money must work for you. You should have passive income, which is more than paper money inflation and low to moderate risk. You should always have a safety cushion if you don't earn your basic income or for any other unforeseen circumstances. Travelling abroad or the purchase of an apartment for your children for money which was easily earned is real, if you invest a minimum 10 percent of your income using different financial instruments."

Smirnov is sure that there are no guarantees that you won't lose you money if you invest in equities, which is a risky kind of activity.

"But because of the risks, such investments enable [the person] to get high income. In fact, everything is easy. You don't need to have special knowledge and corresponding education to invest. Everything you need is to understand the situation in general and your own strategy; for example,

to buy different shares during 10–15 years for 10–15 percent of your annual income. Believe me, the aggregate result will gladden you."

Smirnov also advises preparing an investment strategy.

"First of all, you need to understand and decide what you need. After that, you should contact an investment company. The stock market has a lot of interesting instruments and everyone can find exactly what he needs. You can get fixed income buying bonds. You can invest in precious metals and so on and you can do this using one account."

Smirnov recommends investors be wary of passion and greed.

"Very often people want to get high yield, but this makes them crazy. They want to earn more and more, but it makes them risk too much. Don't seek big money, follow your investment strategy. It is very important to be disciplined and know how to make decisions."

Smirnov noted his company provides the opportunity to invest in foreign markets and takes advantage of all available information.

"We provide access to the stock markets of Kazakhstan, Russia,

the U.S. and other countries, give an advisory opinion and furnish trust management services. We produce investment ideas for our clients and suggest to them when and what they should buy or sell. We get access to unique IPOs (our company participated in Alibaba, Virgin America, Facebook and Hilton IPOs), where our clients earned well. I am referring to 30, 40, 50 percent and more in a few months."

Smirnov advises arming yourself with patience if you are a participant in Kazakhstan's IPOs. He feels that KEGOC shares show depreciation because most people who wanted to buy shares did so. As of today, there are no buyers in the market. KazTransOil shares were purchased by United Pension Savings Fund, but now the fund invests in other fields. That is why investors should wait for buyers, earnings per shares and good news.

Aubakir Arstanbekov is a graduate of KIMEP University, the leading independent North American-styled academic institution in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). He majored in finance and earned an MBA from Kazakh British Technical University. Arstanbekov worked in the auditing department of KPMG LLC, then for Samsung Electronics, and currently works as key channels manager at Sony Electronics, managing sales and marketing with major Kazakh electronic retailers.

"Since KIMEP, I've been interested in finance and economics. I have read lots of books and articles. I practiced securities trading with the STOCKTRACK trading simulator and won the prize for 'largest gain for six months.' I started to invest since KIMEP – I've played on FOREX and invested in the New York Stock

Exchange. Now, I also have several investments in international companies (mainly America and Asia). My decision to invest came with overall interest in this sphere together with my finance education," he said.

Arstanbekov strongly recommends investing.

"For ordinary people, investing in securities may give an additional source of huge profit, since securities are almost unlimited in terms of possible gain. The percentage of profit is much higher than deposits (approximately 10 percent). Investing in real estate requires a much bigger investment than securities and requires personal involvement in all issues, such as purchasing real estate, reconstruction, maintenance, renting, whereas investing in securities requires minimum personal involvement. At that, investing in securities could be very profitable, but risky at the same time. The market is volatile; different news and accidents could significantly affect stock price. Loss could be as big as initial profit. An investor should be in the swim to constantly monitor prices and news."

Arstanbekov outlined some suggestions for investors.

"I have successfully invested in Chinese companies. I would recommend investing in securities if a person has free capital. You need to plan all your expenses ahead; if you realise you have some capital to invest, you need to choose the best company and broker. After a decision is made, a person needs to carefully study all possibilities and consult with a financial manager. The manager could advise interesting stocks for investment and share some insights and analysis. As for me, I am planning to expand my investments into Chinese companies," he said.

The volume of investments in Kazakhstan increased by 2.9 percent from January–March compared to the same period last year, said Chairman of the Kazakh Committee on Statistics Alikhan Smailov at an April 15 media briefing. "The volume of investment in fixed assets in January–March amounted to 969 billion tenge (US\$5.2 billion), which is 2.9 percent more than in the first quarter of last year," he said. According to Smailov, the growth of the short-term economic indicator in January–March was 102 percent; the gross domestic product for the first quarter grew in real terms by 2.2 percent, and the volume of industrial production for the first quarter was 3.372 trillion tenge (US\$18.2 billion), including mining output growth which amounted to 1.1 percent and manufacturing, 0.5 percent. "The volume of gross output of agriculture amounted to 254 billion tenge (US\$1.4 billion) with growth of 3 percent, transport services in real terms grew by 7 percent, in the communications sector the services volume grew by 7.3 percent, in trade, 3.1 percent," he stressed. Smailov noted that Kazakh foreign trade turnover for the current two months was \$13.3 billion, of which exports were \$8.53 billion, imports \$4.8 billion.

The Kazakh Ministry of National Economy reported April 14 that in January–February trade turnover between Kazakhstan and the EAEU reached \$2.262 billion. The department made it clear that in the structure of Kazakhstan's exports, mineral products, metal products, chemical products, products of animal and vegetable origin and ready food products dominate the figure. Machinery and equipment, mineral products, metals and metal products, chemical products, products of animal and vegetable origin and ready food products are largely imported from the EAEU countries.

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Acting Deputy General Director of Gazprom Neft Kazakhstan Marat Malatayev reported April 15 that the company is currently considering the issues for Euro-4 domestic refineries gasoline quality in 2016. "If we compare the production technology, we should grow. For example, large investments were made in the Omsk plant for five years. They have modernised the manufacturing for the production of Euro-4 and Euro-5 fuel," he said. Today, Kazakhstan can produce Euro-2 standard fuel. The acting deputy general director said that investments in Kazakhstan are currently aimed at modernising the Atyrau oil refinery, which, as well as the Pavlodar refinery, will start producing Euro-4 fuel on Jan. 1, 2016. "Any production must strive to maximise their efficiency and produce fuel that will be demanded by the consumer," said Malatayev. He added the company plans to increase its market share at the Kazakhstan gas market from 7 percent to 12-14 percent. He found it difficult, however, to forecast fuel prices in Kazakhstan. "There are factors such as government regulation and the impact of the local and international market. Therefore, we cannot predict whether the price of gasoline will increase or decrease," noted the acting deputy general director.

The Council on Competitiveness of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs (NCE) announced the list of national champions among competitive companies in promising sectors of the Kazakh economy on April 15. Council Chairman Yeldar Abdrazakov noted that the selection of national champions was carried out by the members of the expert group on the basis of attributes of statistical and analytical data of the Expert Credit Rating Agency – Kazakhstan. "From the selection, state-owned companies and companies controlled by foreign legal entities were excluded," he said. Rating agency general director Adil Mamazhanov said that studies have focused more on medium-sized companies, which are rapidly developing in certain sectors of the economy rather than large multinational corporations. "This is due to the fact that the modern post-industrial society is based on the principle of meeting the needs of a variety of goods and services, which is dominated by small and medium businesses. The medium business is more mobile and sensitive to the needs of consumers and innovation and is less susceptible to global risks. The SMEs, by some estimates, are about 95 percent of the total number of enterprises in the world, thus providing most of the employment of the population of the planet," he said. The national champion companies were Concern Tsessna-Astyk, Rodina Agricultural Company, the Centras group, KazMicroFinance, Central Asian Electric Power Corporation, RG Brands, Alina Pro, KSP Steel, Tang Media Holding, Logician, Astana Group Holding, Magnum Cash & Carry, Technodom Group, Globalink and Altyn Kyran.

The share of small and medium-sized business in the Gross Regional Product (GRP) exceeded 65 percent, Astana Akim (Mayor) Adilbek Dzhaksybekov said at the recent annual conference of entrepreneurs in Astana. "Goods worth 2.3 trillion tenge (US\$12.4 billion) have been produced for nine months of 2014," he added. Dzhaksybekov said that Astana aims to develop dynamic small and medium-sized business with high innovation parts. According to the akim, the number of active SME subjects in the capital is about 60,000 units; 233,000 or half of working-age residents are employed in this sphere. According to Dzhaksybekov, the Astana-New City special economic zone (SEZ) provides a positive economic effect. "Fifty-four projects with investments worth 147 billion tenge (US\$794.7 million) are being realised on the industrial park territory. To date, 21 projects have been launched and construction work is going on at 17 facilities," he added.

Kashagan Field to Restart Production in 2017, Says Royal Dutch Shell Annual Report

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Production at Kazakhstan's giant Kashagan offshore oil field is expected to restart in 2017, Royal Dutch Shell stated in its 2014 annual report.

"After the start of production from the Kashagan field in September 2013, operations had to be stopped in October 2013 due to gas leaks from the sour gas pipeline. Following investigations, it has been decided that both the oil and the gas pipeline will be replaced. Replacement activities are ongoing, with production expected to restart in 2017," page 27 of the annual report, released on March 12, said.

After sour gas leaks forced production to halt soon after it began in late 2013 – already years behind the original schedule – predictions as to when the project would actually produce have been repeatedly made and then pushed back, and even in late January of this year, Energy Minister Vladimir Shkol-



nik was announcing that Kashagan would come online in late 2016.

Reuters reported in February

that Italian oil service company Saipem had won a \$1.8 billion contract to replace leaking pipelines at the giant field in Ka-

zakhstan. Saipem's statement on the contract to build two 95-kilometre pipelines said "The construction will be completed by

the end of 2016," the Feb. 6 article said.

Kashagan's oil is deep below the Caspian seabed at very high pressure, and its associated gas has extremely high levels of toxic and corrosive hydrogen sulphide, the cause of pipe leaks and subsequent delays. Saipem's new pipelines will be made of carbon steel and lined inside with a corrosion-resistant alloy layer, Reuters reported.

The Kashagan field is operated by the North Caspian Operating Company, and partners in the project include Shell, Italian energy company Eni, ExxonMobil, Total, the China National Petroleum Corporation, Japan's Inpex and KazMunayGas. Upon its discovery in 2000, Kashagan field was considered to be the biggest oil discovery in 30 years. Because of the low temperature, high pressure and sour gas associated with the project, it is also considered to be one of the world's most challenging.

Cheap Loans to be Available to Purchase Kazakh-Made Cars

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Cheap loans to purchase Kazakh-made cars, with a four percent nominal fee rate and five year maximum loan term, will be available beginning April 20.

"As of today, the project is developed, but we plan to sign all the documents on April 20 and begin to work on the project. Meanwhile, we don't have any failures and problems," said head of the Kazakhstan Automobile Business Association Andrey Lavrentyev, as quoted by Tengrinews.

Lavrentyev noted the programme is not a new one. Thirty percent of the loan is prepayment for leasing, while the balance is executed under normal acts and acting legislation, and the document package is the same as one for a usual car loan.

"The cheap car loans will be suitable only for cars made in Kazakhstan with a price not exceeding 5.6 million tenge, which is approximately equal to 30,000 U.S. dollars. This is an excellent programme destined for Kazakhstan middle class support," said Lavrentyev.

Chairman of the Board of the Kazakhstan Independent Automobile Business Union Pavel Kim agreed with Lavrentyev, but con-

siders that the cheap loans are, most importantly, destined for the support of Kazakhstan automobile producers. He noted a fee rate which should be used in second-tier banks is incommensurable with devaluation and the refinancing rate. Banks usually need to attract monetary funds from abroad and draw money from Kazakhstan citizens through deposits. In this case, however, banks will get money directly from the government without the need to pay dividends to the state.

Kim added the cheap car loan programme is not limited and will enable residents to purchase any number of vehicles.

"That is why there is no problem with the refinancing rate increase and if the programme works as it is planned to work, it will be a very profitable project which can motivate people to purchase cars made in Kazakhstan," said Kim, as reported by Tengrinews.

The programme is appealing to buyers like 33-year-old Altyнай Zhakupova, the head of an electric company purchasing department who purchased a Kia Soul produced by Azia Avto three years ago. She noted she likes her stylish car, which she drives every day, adding she "knows how to control the purse strings" and feels regular

residents, as well as Kazakh auto producers, will benefit from the loan programme.

"As the saying goes, 'a new car is a new car,' and a cheap auto loan is an undoubtedly-favourable offer considering the low fee rate. While people await tenge devaluation and inflation, using such a loan with a long term is advantageous, indeed. I am sure that if you get such a loan with a long term, you will return

it easily because of the devaluation and inflation," she said in an April 15 interview.

Zhakupova added, however, that not everyone will be able to take advantage of the programme.

"Unfortunately, the purchase of a new car, even using such a cheap loan, isn't available for a major part of Kazakhstan citizens," she said.

Despite the low rates, some

Kazakhs are choosing not to take advantage of the offer. Kuat Baigozhin, a 42-year-old businessman from Astana, is familiar with the programme, but added he would not use it. He and a friend took a pleasure trip to Russia last month and Baigozhin returned with a car which he said was "a bargain purchase."

"There is still a great difference in prices for new cars between Kazakhstan and Russia. I saved approximately \$8,000 and really don't want to pay more in a Kazakhstan car dealership. Even the absence of a warranty didn't stop me," he added in an April 14 interview.

Samruk Kazyna Plans to Open Subsidiary in Silicon Valley

By Talgat Issenov

The Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund plans to establish a subsidiary in Silicon Valley, California.

A working group consisting of the heads of a number of Samruk Kazyna companies, led by the chairman of the organisation, Umirzak Shukeyev, visited companies of Silicon Valley on April 9-10, where they were acquainted with the work of Stanford University, Berkeley, as well as such well-known innovative companies as Tesla Motors, SolarCity and other start-up companies.

"The sides discussed the possibility of cooperation in the development of clean energy, gas chemistry, transport, medicine, agriculture, education and IT. In particular, they considered the possibility of creating Samruk Innovation, a company

based in Silicon Valley," said a Samruk Kazyna press release.

In the course of the visit, Samruk Kazyna companies provided information about the upcoming Astana EXPO 2017 international specialised exhibition, the Green Quarter project in the capital of Kazakhstan and the Kaz PV project for the production of solar panels.

Representatives of Stanford, SolarCity and Tesla Motors were invited to Kazakhstan to participate in the Astana Economic Forum in May and discuss joint projects in preparation for EXPO 2017. The proposal was met with interest in the business and academic circles in Silicon Valley, according to the press release. At a meeting with a member of the Board of Directors of SolarCity and Chief Executive Officer of Tesla Motors Elon Musk, several options for cooperation beyond participation in the EXPO were developed.

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EDITORIALS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

Development Assistance Key to Eliminating Support for Extremists

As we look around the world, violent extremism and terrorism has never been a greater threat. In parts of the Middle East and Africa, for example, it has fuelled conflict that is tearing countries apart. But while some regions suffer far worse from this modern scourge, none of us, wherever we live, are safe.

Globalisation and modern communication has brought many benefits. But the speed and ease in which both ideas and people can now travel have also increased risks. There is no point hiding and hoping that instability elsewhere will not bring violence or bloodshed to our societies. In an open world, the tragic evidence exposes the failure of such an approach.

This evidence also underlines how long-term success cannot be achieved solely through military and security solutions. Winning a battle against extremism, let alone a war against an insurgency, cannot be delivered by conventional firepower or engaging an enemy in open-field battles. Defeating terrorism when it is not clear who is the enemy or potential enemy is even more complex.

Intelligence operations and international partnerships have never been more important. So, too, is the battle for the "hearts and minds" of populations who provide both the recruits for the violent extremists but also the passive support on which they depend.

We have to ask why so many young men – and increasingly women – fall prey to the appeal of Jihadist ideologists who convinced them to sacrifice their lives "for Islam." It is, in many cases, these preachers of hate who offer hope and answers when elsewhere their target audience see despair and confusion. We also have to examine why the general population in these areas, although not themselves recruited directly to the extremist cause, are prepared to give the extremists passive support.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq exploited the grievances and fears of the country's Sunni population to build their territorial power-base in the country. Many supported the terrorist group's rule in their part of the nation out of a belief that what they offered was more attractive than the chaos and hostility of the alternative. Only when they were offered the prospect of a better future, together with their disgust at the violent behaviour of the terrorists, were al-Qaeda defeated. Today, the so called Islamic State, or ISIS, is feeding on the same anxieties in a far more violent and sophisticated way.

Education is a vital weapon in the battle to keep young people out of the hands of the extremists. The moral education and spiritual formation of our children should be the fundamental concern of parents. But economics is also important. Young people will be more receptive to what they are being told by their parents – and mothers and fathers will put more effort into helping their children chart the right course – if they are confident about the future and see realistic opportunities to build safer and more prosperous lives.

Kazakhstan's own recent history shows the benefit of citizens having confidence and a stake in the future. Our stability and prosperity have reinforced each other over the last 23 years and forged a united people.

In contrast, it is those societies riven by division and where the economic prospects are seen to be poor for the vast majority of citizens where extremism too often takes hold. Unemployed young men are the primary recruiting pool for terrorist and insurgent groups. They feel they have nothing to lose and are persuaded by the easy answers peddled to them.

Social stability and economic strength depend on many factors. Countries that have ineffective government institutions, wide-spread corruption and weak rule of law have a significantly higher risk of civil unrest and extreme criminal violence than other developing countries. Economic strength requires sound macro-policies, investment in infrastructure and, last but not least, a healthy climate for investments and entrepreneurship.

Countries can help build these conditions beyond their borders through their own example and by building bilateral and multilateral partnerships. There is also the opportunity to use direct development assistance to help extend prosperity and provide

the conditions for international, regional and national security.

Yet despite the United Nations urging developed countries to spend 0.7 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) on overseas development aid, very few countries have reached this target. The median size of the assistance provided by member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a global club of 34 well-off nations, is about 0.4 percent of GNI. (Admittedly, indicators of the leading donors in relative-size helped reach 1 percent of global GNI.) Progress has not been helped, in recent years, by the continuing fall-out from the global financial crisis which has left many countries with large public debts and reduced revenues.

But given the rise of violent extremism, cutting back on overseas aid may well be a false economy. It is certainly a view taken by Kazakhstan whose strong economic growth has seen it join the ranks of middle-income countries. It is against this background, its sense of global responsibility and recognition of the benefits it brings to both national and international goals that Kazakhstan has signalled it wants to assist in the development of other societies.

Kazakhstan is already playing its role in supporting Afghanistan – both a near-neighbour and one of the countries which has suffered most from the conflict and divisions caused by violent extremism. Humanitarian support has been offered to its people while 1,000 of its brightest young people are being trained in our universities. Kazakhstan is also increasingly offering emergency aid to those countries hit by natural disasters.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev signalled in 2013 a determination to extend and strengthen this work. He approved the document setting out the country's plans and ambitions in the field of overseas development assistance (ODA) which. After a lengthy legislative process, the plan to create an ODA capacity was signed into law last December. It outlined the country's intention to use aid to promote sustainable development regionally and globally.

Priority sectors for this work are agriculture and food security, protection of the environment, conflict resolution and security, combating transnational crime, supporting education and health care, improving public administration, poverty reduction including through the promotion of economic growth and business support and the development of trade. The primary and initial focus of the future ODA agency is to be in Central Asia.

At its heart is a recognition that, more than ever before, we succeed or fail together. It was a theme underlined by President Nazarbayev last year when he spoke at the seventh Astana Economic Forum in May 2014. He pointed out that it was "impossible in a globalised world to live in harmony and prosperity when there are serious problems in the world, especially in neighbouring countries." He added that Kazakhstan may have been one of the world's fastest-growing economies but its ambitions of joining the ranks of the 30 most-developed countries relied on "closer integration with our neighbours". This meant that the country could not be "indifferent" to what was happening elsewhere in the region.

It is clear that preparations for a specialised ODA programme under the brand of KazAid show the government's determination to put these words into action. They demonstrate Kazakhstan's maturity as a country and the strong commitment to being a growing force for good in the world.

If we are to win the global battle for hearts and minds, people have to be convinced that they have a better future through a peaceful path. It is here that well-targeted overseas aid can be so effective.

It would be extremely important then for Kazakhstan, other countries in the region and beyond, as well as the United Nations organisations, to continue cooperating in a constructive and timely manner on progressive programmes and projects in the countries that need those most to build a more secure environment for sustainable development and prevent the spread of instability and radicalism.

By strengthening stability and driving progress in Central Asia, development assistance can help roll back the threat of violent extremism from our borders and globally.

APK's 20th Anniversary Is as Much About the Past, as It Is About the Future

It would be no surprise if there was some bewilderment from those outside our country at the prominence given to the 20th anniversary of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK). After all, it is not our country's Parliament, it is not directly elected and its role remains largely advisory.

The confusion is not helped by the fact that there are not many similar bodies in other countries. Indeed, it is the very uniqueness of the Assembly and its role which can make its place in our national life difficult to grasp. So how do we explain why 2015 was officially declared the Year of the Assembly and the fanfare that will greet its 20th anniversary meeting in Astana this week?

Any explanation has to examine Kazakhstan's often troubled past, the legacy this left the newly independent nation and the threat this posed to our stability and ambitions. For the Assembly provides a window into Kazakhstan's history and brings to life the values which underpin our modern nation.

Our land, from the age of the nomads to the Khanates and the birth of the Kazakh nation, through the Great Silk Road between Asia and Europe and, of course, in more recent times has been a melting pot of peoples and cultures. It has left its mark in a remarkably diverse population of more than 130 ethnic groups and 17 religions.

This history has, of course, not always been a happy one. Many of the ethnic groups in Kazakhstan are here as a result of the forced relocations of the Stalin era. Whole populations were uprooted – often on the flimsiest of excuses – from their lands and forcibly transported to a new home in Kazakhstan. Over 150,000 Koreans, for example, living peacefully in far eastern Russia, were deported in the 1930s to Kazakhstan over unfounded fears that they could be Japanese spies.

Our lands became a dumping ground for many other ethnic groups and people because of suspicion and paranoia. It marked a terrible moment in their cultural history and in many cases threatened their very existence. They were often forced to work in extreme conditions while practice of their culture was suppressed.

But it is a testament to their determination and perseverance – and to the openness of the Kazakhs, the native people of this land who in many cases sheltered and helped them – that despite all the obstacles they made a successful new life in their new surroundings. Tolerance and hard work have a long tradition in our country.

The result, however, was that our

newly independent nation inherited a rich mosaic of peoples and cultures. The violent experiences of many other countries shows that this diversity can be a source of conflict and division. As the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said when visiting the Assembly in Astana in 2010: "Too many countries in the world have been torn apart by ethnic strife. Too many have seen their development held back by discord and suspicion. Distrust among cultures and faiths is still an obstacle to peace and progress in our globalised world."

The creation of the Assembly in 1995 was a powerful signal of the determination of our country – and President Nursultan Nazarbayev – to ensure Kazakhstan did not suffer this fate. Its representatives, drawn from all the ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan, are the guardians of Kazakhstan's rich and harmonious ethnic diversity and ensure it is a strength rather than a weakness.

As part of this role, the Assembly assesses all laws to ensure they meet the rigorous standards set out in the nation's constitution to uphold the rights of ethnic groups – rights which were often ignored in the Soviet era – and promote respect and tolerance. But they also positively promote this diversity by operating cultural centres, specialist schools and media across the country.

The Assembly is responsible for running nearly 90 schools providing education in the many languages of our varied population. It supports close to 200 specialised linguistic centres where children and adults can study 30 different languages, and provides funding for newspapers and broadcasts in the native languages of our many citizens.

But the influence of the Assembly goes well beyond this formal role. By giving a voice and representation to the many different cultures that have come to call Kazakhstan home over the last 20 years, it has shown the country's determination not to fall into the traps that the UN secretary-general so eloquently spelt out.

The new freedom that independence has brought saw some people decide to return to the countries of their ancestors. But the overwhelming majority have decided to remain and continue to build their lives here. They have been joined by hundreds of thousands of those with Kazakh roots who had been living beyond our borders and returned home.

It is a strong symbol of how, in an era when ethnic and religious tensions have seen nations – including some in our

own region – pulled apart and descend into conflict, Kazakhstan is seen to offer people of all backgrounds a chance to be part of a stable and prosperous future. The diversity has been an important part of this nation's success story.

It is not only, of course, within our borders that this diversity has been important. It has also been invaluable in shaping the openness, mutual respect and friendship which are the hallmarks of our country's foreign policy.

We have been able to build on the historic ties of language and culture we have through our ethnic groups to forge modern, friendly relations with the countries of their ancestors. The 100,000 citizens of Kazakhstan of Korean descent, for example, have given us an advantage other countries have not possessed in building strong trade and educational ties with South Korea. Even when people have left to begin new lives elsewhere, they continue to have warm feelings for our country and the connections are strong and beneficial. The same can be said of the ethnic Germans, who are the descendants of those exiled to Kazakhstan from the Volga region in the 1940s and many of whom moved to Germany from Kazakhstan in the 1990s. They are now famously called the living bridge between the two countries, creating a myriad of cultural and business ties.

Over the past two decades, Kazakhstan has become internationally recognised as a positive story of ethnic and religious accord and worked to promote these values internationally through initiatives such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. With sectarian conflict and religious intolerance on the rise around the world, the Fifth Congress, which takes place June 10–11 this year, could not come at a more important time.

Indeed, it is the values embodied by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan that have enabled this country to act as a bridge between nations and cultures. It is a role that we have embraced with our chairmanships of organisations including the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, among many others.

It is against this background and track record of positive results that we are marking the 20th anniversary of the Assembly. In doing so, we are also celebrating the values which have underpinned this country in its modern history. As the UN secretary-general said, celebrating and strengthening diversity is the way to build "an inclusive society – stable, modern and successful."



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Editor-in-Chief
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KazPost Subscription index: 64572

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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: 489

PRINT RUN: 6,000

OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

Iran at the Crossroads

By Timur Shaimerzhanov

Despite the diplomatic success achieved in the talks between Tehran and the P5+1 group in March, the situation surrounding Iran is still uncertain. Presently, the Iranian issue is one of the most complicated in world politics – it intertwines the geopolitical, economic, energy and military interests of a number of countries and entire regions. Not only the fate of Iran itself, but also the prospects of many regional projects far removed from nuclear projects or geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East all depend on the solution to the problem.

On one hand, all would benefit if economic sanctions are fully lifted from Iran. This would give an opportunity to investors to return to the quite sizeable Iranian market and start developing the country's rich oil and gas resources. Many Western and Russian companies have already stated their readiness to return to Iran. This would benefit the EU in



particular, which could then diversify its energy imports, one of the key issues on the agenda of development and security for Brussels.

However, many experts are saying that the return of Iran, with its powerful export opportunities, to the world market could cause already-low prices for hydrocarbons to fall even further, due to possible special offers. In this case, long-time rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia might find themselves again with serious conflicts of interest. Moreover, at the moment, this

regional rivalry has acquired a new edge from the armed conflict taking place in Yemen (where, according to some sources, pro-Iranian and pro-Saudi forces are facing off).

The conflict in Yemen has again illustrated the complexity of Middle Eastern geopolitics. Now the West has to make a difficult, almost impossible choice: support their long-standing ally, Riyadh, or try to build a fragile, peaceful dialogue with Tehran. Despite the difficulty of the decision, neutrality and non-interference in general can lead to unpredictable results in world politics.

In spite of the apparent locality of the conflict, the war in Yemen, as with many others in the Middle East, affects the interests of many global and regional powers. In addition, the intersection of major international conflicts and problems, including the Sunni-Shiite conflict, the development of the Islamic State terrorist group and low oil prices, are attracting attention.

On the other hand, it is clear that a new geopolitical game has begun around Iran, the aim of which is Russia. Apparently, behind the efforts of the West to return Tehran to the energy market might be a plan to pit Russia against Iran, the economy of which has weakened over the years of sanctions and needs an influx of funds (which is possible only through the sale of energy resources). For the West, it is very important to drive a wedge in the longstanding Russian-Iranian relationship. With the background of the Ukrainian crisis, this problem is becoming strategic for the West.

In addition, if Tehran ends up in competition with Russia for European markets, the West would solve the question of how to create additional pressure on the Russian economy, which is to some extent dependent on energy exports. Russia is already taking its own steps, removing restrictions on the supply of anti-aircraft missile complexes, long requested by Iran. This friendly signal to Tehran could help Moscow preserve the partnership.

Thus, the political bargaining

around the Iranian issue gets more and more complicated each time. It is constantly being updated with new components; indeed, it is beginning to seem that Iran's position on its nuclear programme is already playing a minor role.

Despite all the constrictive concessions and compromises of Tehran on nuclear development, the abolition of sanctions will take a long time, and it is not clear how the sanctions will be removed – completely or gradually. According to statements by Iranian officials, this uncertainty is annoying the Iranian elite.

It seems that for the West, it is important not to keep the issue in limbo for too long. Otherwise, the rapidly changing conditions in the world and in the Middle East could lead to a situation in which signing agreements with the West on its terms could become unprofitable for Iran, which will be a complete surprise scenario to all.

In general, lifting sanctions on Iran will undoubtedly be beneficial for Kazakhstan, both from the position of the removal of military tensions around its neighbour across the

Caspian Sea, and in light of future transportation corridors from Asia to Europe. Last year, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran launched a new railway line. Today, this new line can serve as an important artery in creating the Silk Road Economic Belt, which was initiated by China.

The implementation of this macro-regional initiative can become the beginning of the formation of a new geo-economics of a grand Eurasia, as well as provide an opportunity for the development of new, rapid trade and economic communications between East and West and North and South. If they succeed, the new trade channels would enable all member states to create new points of economic growth. However, at the moment, the prospects of the modern Silk Road depend on the outcome of complex international agreements on Iran, its nuclear programme and geopolitical trends.

The author is deputy director of the Library of the First President of Kazakhstan - Leader of the Nation and has a PhD in political science.

Eurasian Economic Union Minister Discusses Competition, Antitrust Regulations

By Julia Polonskaya

Minister for Competition and Antitrust Regulation of the Eurasian Economic Commission Nurlan Aldabergenov discussed further developing the economic union.

How powerful is the supranational antimonopoly body and how does it help Kazakh producers who are now entering the Russian and Belarussian markets?

We face a complicated task. On one hand, the Eurasian Economic Commission must ensure equal conditions for competition in cross-border markets and on the other, we want to protect domestic businesses. This can be achieved only by introducing antitrust laws. We are talking about eliminating dominant market positions, identifying unfair competition and third, the early elimination of cartels in cross-border markets. All of these tasks should be executed by the supranational antitrust body.

This mechanism enables monitoring compliance with antitrust laws not only within one state, but also throughout the entire union. To be able to track violations in cross-border markets, the Eurasian Economic Commission formed a relevant regulatory framework. Two commissions have been created via the union's court in Minsk.



Nurlan Aldabergenov

These commissions will address issues of competition policy. As for the benefits, the union offers many to each participant, but especially, to Kazakh producers. It is vital for our fast-growing economy to have access to other markets, first and foremost, Russian markets.

The union also opens new opportunities for Kazakhstan based manufacturers in transporting goods through member states. ... In this regard, the supranational antitrust authority prevents and eliminates existing obstacles to the movement of goods originating in Kazakhstan.

Can you name such obstacles?

Unfortunately, we are often confronted with obstacles in exporting gas, oil and electricity. Aktobe and West Kazakhstan are now experiencing electricity shortages; the ability to transport through Russian networks via our country's northern regions would solve this problem.

You want to say that the supranational authority is capable of punishing monopolists who misuse their dominant position in a particular market?

The responsibility, which the commission imposes on unfair market players, is equivalent to a court resolution. I must say, in some cases, these sanctions are wider and stiffer than national antitrust laws.

However, it should be understood that in order to invoke the responsibility of a large monopoly, it is necessary to make a case using a legal basis. Therefore, the commission monitors the flow and realisation of goods and services. It also tracks down large monopolists on a national and transnational level. Such research includes poll analysis, sales conditions, interaction with consumers and obstacles that stop the flow of goods. By analysing this information, researchers are able to confirm whether the monopolist is violating the law or not.

You said that the legal framework for cross-border markets has been completed. It also means that a law on competition should be implemented. What can you say about that?

There is a model law on competition with a lot of provisions that have not been taken into account by national legislations before. As

practice shows, executing all the provisions within one year is possible. It has been decided to divide the implementation process into phases. The result of the first phase was the establishment of the admonition institute, which is also a tool for supporting local businesses. The next phase will solve the problem of eliminating discriminatory conditions.

The provisions of this law have also been included in Russian legislation; in particular, the provision concerning control over the creation of municipal enterprises. Similar legislative work is also taking place in Belarus.

Speaking of the transparency of cross-border markets, when will Kazakh entrepreneurs be able to participate in electronic trading on public procurement in Russia and Belarus?

Last year, our manufacturers had already signed about 166 contracts worth 265 million tenge (US\$1.42 million). Next year, we plan to introduce electronic trading on public procurement across the union. In the meantime, it is necessary to modify several legal and regulatory frameworks at the national level. ...

One of the most discussed issues of today is about opportunities for parallel imports. What are, in your opinion, the main options for how to move forward,

if we choose the principle of the exhaustion of rights that is?

In Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus and in today's world of open international exchange of goods, this principle is alive in well. Development of the domestic market is not always profitable. Under the current conditions, Kazakhstan can buy branded goods only from authorised distributors who dictate their own prices and conditions.

Here is a simple example, the medication Fosavance, which is produced in Spain, costs \$35. The legal owner of the trademark in Kazakhstan sells it for \$65. In Russia, the medication can be bought for \$108. However, in England, the same medicine can be easily purchased for \$32 from the local distributor. What does this mean? It means that the central office of the company or a dealer, who manufactures and sells the medicine, has simply divided the market into geographical and price segments. This is a violation of the rights of the competition policy.

Although we are changing the principle of the exhaustion of rights, we are not going to close the national market to foreign industrial giants, it must be admitted that the domestic manufacturing sector is dependent on foreign imports. We are pursuing only one goal: letting foreign partners work in our market under the same rules they adhere to in their domestic markets. The very first task of the commission is to

protect the rights of domestic producers and we intend to defend the interests of the nation's economy.

The issue of parallel imports entails positive changes in many related industries. In addition, the change in the principle of exhaustion of trademark rights will open new opportunities not only to Kazakh business, but also to third country manufacturers who can supply us with branded products at prices set by competitive markets. This will significantly increase the performance of cross-border turnover and lower the prices of imported goods in Kazakhstan.

Today, we see two ways of resolving the situation: either using the international principle of exhausting withdrawal rights (with the ability to regulate the market in some areas), or keeping the regional principle of the exhaustion of rights, but while opening some markets. I think we will come to a unanimous decision with our colleagues within a couple of months. After that, the issue will be submitted to the board of the First Deputy Prime Ministers of Participating States.

You are constantly talking about supporting domestic producers, but consumers often need to be protected too. What can you say about this?

Our experts are negotiating with manufacturers and explaining to them how they lose profit when overpricing merchandise. If a monopolist does not listen to our arguments and their actions do not change for a long time, it can be concluded that the company is deliberately violating the rules of competition. ...

Kazakhstan-Turkey Strategic Partnership Can Be an Example

By Zhansait Tuimebayev

From the first days of independence, Kazakhstan has held an open and balanced foreign policy. The country established friendly relations with many countries of the world. Turkey has a special place in these relationships.

An important factor of deepening friendly relations between the peoples of Kazakhstan and Turkey is a constructive interstate collaboration. The two countries understand and appreciate each other's success. There are no unsolvable problems between Kazakhstan and Turkey. Turkey recognises the leading role of our country in Central Asia and considers Kazakhstan a priority partner in the region. The state visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Kazakhstan on April 16-17 will contribute to further development of bilateral relations in all areas of strategic cooperation.

Located at the crossroads of East and West, Turkey is always ready to support the initiatives of Kazakhstan, located at the heart of Eurasia, because we have common roots and a common worldview. Our common ground and mutual support on many political issues are reflected in the interaction within the framework of international and regional organisa-



tions, such as the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Turkic Council and TURKSOY.

The Turkic Council clearly states the importance of common Turkic integration processes. Turkey, as well as Kazakhstan, is an active supporter of this idea. Several meetings of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, better known as the Turkic Council, were held on Turkish territory.

Historic decisions have been made by the meetings among leaders of these countries, including the creation of the Secretariat of the Turkic Council, the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of El-

ders and Turkic Academy based in Astana.

The spectrum of interaction between Kazakhstan and Turkey in bilateral and multilateral formats is very wide. It should be noted that the current level of strategic partnership is largely achieved due to the contacts at the highest level. As it is known, the intensity of mutual visits at the highest levels can serve as an indicator of bilateral relations. The dynamics of visits between Kazakhstan and Turkey demonstrate close cooperation. In 2014, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev paid working visits to Turkey twice. During the first visit, he participated in the summit of the Turkic Council; during the second visit, Nazarbayev took part in the inauguration of President Erdogan.

The April 16-17 visit of the Turkish leader to Kazakhstan will provide an opportunity to evaluate the 24-year strategic partnership. Many projects in many spheres were realised over the past years. Mutual ties in trade and economy, culture and humanitarian work are developing steadily. At the moment, there are more than 1,400 Turkish firms and companies operating in Kazakhstan. Trade turnover between the two countries has reached \$3.29 billion. However, there is the potential to increase these numbers.

The New Synergy Programme, developed under the patronage of the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkey, is a fundamentally new concept on trade and economic cooperation and is aimed at increasing mutual trade turnover to \$10 billion by 2015.

In 2013-2014, the Turkish provinces of Sakarya, Kocaeli, Izmir, Izmit, Eskisehir, Nevsehir, Trabzon, Rize, Istanbul, Nide, Samsun, Konya, Giresun, Malatya, Manisa and Denizli successfully hosted regional business forums with the participation of Kazakh entrepreneurs. During the same time period, the visits of Turkish business delegations were held in different regions of Kazakhstan.

Turkish investment has found its niche in our country. The construction industry, pharmaceuticals and medicine and soft drinks are not the only areas in which Turkish businessmen showed their professionalism. Turkey has a long and successful experience in the establishment of organised industrial zones that serve as the locomotive of development of industry and the economy as a whole. The Kazakh side is interested in studying and applying this experience. Opening joint industrial zones in Kazakhstan partly funded by Turkish capital gives an additional opportunity to Turkish businesses to enter the domestic market and im-

prove the investment climate in our country.

Successful Kazakh-Turkish cooperation is continued in the cultural-humanitarian sphere. The most advanced project in the field of education is the Khodja Ahmed Yasawi International Kazakh-Turkish University in Turkestan. Presently, this university is a modern higher educational institution with a solid methodological and experimental base. The education of Kazakh students in Turkey's higher educational institutions is also continuing.

In turn, 28 Kazakh-Turkish high schools with more than 5,000 students successfully operate in Kazakhstan. There is also the private University of Suleyman Demirel opened in 1998. Many Kazakh scientists and experts teach a in Turkish universities. Through the experience exchange programme between specialists of the two countries, over 300 teachers, more than 200 representatives of law enforcement agencies and more than 150 representatives of health care were trained.

On the initiative and support of the Kazakh Embassy in Turkey, two books of Kazakh classic literature were translated into Turkish and published.

On the initiative of the Turkish side, a number of monuments devoted to Kazakh leaders such as Abai,

Abylai Khan, Magzhan Zhumbabayev, Mukhtar Auezov and Kabanbai Batyr, as well as a monument to the first President of Kazakhstan, were opened in Turkey. There are also central streets named Nursultan Nazarbayev and Kazakhstan in the cities of Kirsehir and Nevsehir.

In turn, Kazakhstan opened the majestic monument to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk on the bank of the Ishim River. The Turkish community expressed enthusiasm, considering this event a tribute and a sign of confidence in their country.

On his first visit, President Erdogan will visit Astana and Turkestan. Astana will host the second meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Council with the participation of the two presidents. The Kazakh-Turkish business forum will also be held there.

In Turkestan, Erdogan will attend the opening of the major cultural and educational facilities, including a mosque, the foundation of which started about 15 years ago.

In general, the visit and all of these examples of mutual cooperation benefit the brotherly countries and peoples. Bilateral relations have not just reached the level of a strategic partnership, but have all the prerequisites to serve as an example.

The author is the ambassador of Kazakhstan to Turkey.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

Kazakhstan, Hungary Create Joint Agricultural Development Fund

By Julia Rutz

Kazakhstan established an agricultural development fund during Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban's recent visit to Astana, the KazAgro press service reported.

KazAgro established the fund jointly with the Hungarian Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) in a project spearheaded by both Orban and Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Masimov. The main mission of the new fund is to provide investment support to Kazakhstan's agricultural sector. A total of 40 million dollars has been set aside for the fund's use; 50 percent is controlled by Hungary and 50 percent by Kazakhstan.

The fund is also charged with fostering bilateral trade links between the two countries. It is a pilot project and in June 2014, topped the two countries' agenda during the meeting at which the first cooperation memorandum was signed in Budapest. The fund is meant to create a platform for direct investment in Kazakhstan's

agricultural sector and transfer Hungarian and Western technologies and knowhow. The agricultural development fund will facilitate investments between companies located in Kazakhstan or ones with operations mostly carried out in one or both of these states in the agricultural or food processing sectors.

KazAgro is the largest national holding responsible for executing national development policies in the agricultural sector through managing its subsidiaries' investment funds. The holding includes the National Company, Food Contract Corporation, KazAgro-Produkt, KazAgroFinance, the Agrarian Credit Corporation, the Fund for the Financial Support of Agriculture, KazAgroGarant and KazAgroMarketing.

Orban also visited President Nursultan Nazarbayev on April 1. The Kazakh leader noted the importance Hungary plays in Kazakhstan's foreign policy and Astana's willingness to develop trade relations with the Central European nation.



"Hungary is a very important European partner of ours. I know that you came with business people this time. This gives us the opportunity to exchange our views,"

Nazarbayev said during the meeting.

The President also reminded

that Hungary was the first European country to sign a cooperation agreement with Kazakhstan. The Hungarian Prime Minister thanked

the Kazakh President for inviting him to the country and said that Kazakhstan has a reliable European partner in Hungary.

First Stage Completed in Steppe Eagle 2015 Peacekeeping Exercise

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – The first phase of the Steppe Eagle 2015 peacekeeping exercises was completed April 6-17 at Iliskiy training area near Almaty, reported the Kazakh Ministry of Defence press service.

"The main purpose of the event is to improve the practical skills of the staff of Kazakhstan's peacekeeping brigade and the peacekeeping battalion in the course of the UN peacekeeping operations,

as well as improving combat coordination units in peacekeeping operations in the conflict between the warring parties," said airmobile forces commander Major General Daulet Ospanov.

About 100 soldiers from the United States and Great Britain and representatives of the KAZBRIG peacekeeping brigade, which includes the Kazakh armed forces airmobile troops, attended Steppe Eagle 2015. Soldiers worked on an episode of the peacekeeping operation to

detect illegal military formations and cordon the area. According to the introduction of this episode, members of mock gangs had captured civilians and the task of peacekeepers was to carry out an operation to rescue the citizens and evacuate them from dangerous areas, as well as to capture and destroy the insurgents.

The coherence of international peacekeeping forces helped to successfully complete the mission. In addition, the interoperability of soldiers, achieved in the course of

this phase of the exercise, played a major role in the quality of the episode.

This year marked the third time the exercise was held. The second phase will take place June 15-26, when the current participants will be joined by military members from Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Tajikistan.

The final part of phase one was attended by representatives of general staffs from the Kazakh, United States and United Kingdom armies. They praised the work of the

commanders and operations units with whom they worked.

The annual Steppe Eagle exercise series is designed to prepare the Kazakhstan armed forces to join international peacekeeping exercises led by NATO or the United Nations (UN).

The first exercise was held in 2003 as a trilateral drill involving troops from Kazakhstan, the U.K. and the U.S. The number of participating countries has since doubled and includes several additional European and Central Asian

states. KAZBRIG's growing capabilities have resulted from years of hard work, as preparatory efforts have included the establishment of the Partnership for Peace Training Centre of the Military Institute of Land Forces (KAZTSENT) to train Kazakh military personnel to NATO standards and procedures. NATO certification would also confirm KAZBRIG's ability to operate in a multinational peacekeeping environment under a UN mandate.

Kazakhstan Responds to Syrian Opposition Negotiation Request, Supports Continued Dialogue



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the country did receive a request from some quarters of the Syrian opposition to provide a platform for dialogue in the hopes that the involvement of Astana even in this way may be helpful to ending violence and bloodshed in the Middle Eastern nation.

"We would like to confirm that we received a letter to President Nursultan Nazarbayev from certain representatives of the Syrian opposition, which was reviewed as befits such cases and required by the rules of politeness. In this regard, a reply letter on behalf of

Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov was also sent," Altay Abibullayev, official spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on April 20.

As a matter of principle, he said, "Kazakhstan supports the measures taken by the international community through the United Nations, the Arab League, the United States and the Russian Federation, as well as the actions of the Syrian government and the opposition aimed at determining the political future of Syria through dialogue and reconciliation with a view to the immediate end of violence and bloodshed. In this regard, Kazakhstan hopes for continued talks between the Syrian government and the op-

position in the framework of the Geneva II Conference on resolution of the conflict in Syria. Kazakhstan strongly supports the position that resolution of the Syrian conflict is possible only by peaceful means."

In his letter, the foreign minister emphasised that "Kazakhstan is ready to consider the possibility of establishing a dialogue platform for the concerned parties and in accordance with this, invite the authors of the address to Astana for the first informal and non-public exchange of views," Abibullayev added. "The letter specially pointed out that the format, composition of the delegations, its representativeness, commitments and final goals of the participants of the proposed platform are particularly important for achieving success."

The spokesman explained that at the moment the talk now is only about a deeper study of this issue, confirming that Kazakhstan supports the existing negotiating platforms, such as the ones in Geneva and Moscow, and "has no ambitions to solve the Syrian crisis or intentions to replace the existing platforms."

According to the spokesman, in his letter, Idrissov also noted the "deepest concern over the grave humanitarian crisis in Syria" and stressed that Kazakhstan has provided assistance to ease the conditions of the civilian population in Syria and intends to pursue further work in this direction, as well as believes that the international community should place priority focus on this area.

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Nation & Capital

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

CULTURE

Astana Piano Festival Supports Young Musicians

B3

SOCIETY

New Social Network Meant to Increase Kazakh Law, Financial Knowledge

B5

SPORTS

Arlans Beat Condors, Extend Undefeated Streak to 13

B7

KazGeo Expedition Succeeds in Reaching North Pole on Skis

By Nurlan Meirmanov

ASTANA – The first Kazakhstani ski expedition to the North Pole has conquered the extreme northern tip of the world on April 15 and planted three flags on the Pole: the national flag of Kazakhstan; the flag of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, which marks its 20th anniversary this year; and a flag designed specifically as part of Kazakhstan's bid to win a nonpermanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for 2017–2018.

The expedition was organised by the Kazakh Geographic Society (KazGeo) with support from the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK), the Kazakh Foreign Ministry and the Kazakhstan Bloggers' Alliance. The expedition started its journey to the North Pole on March 31.

The group of eight people started its journey to the North Pole in Al-

maty, then flew to Norway and on to the island of Spitsbergen. From Spitsbergen the group flew to Barneo, a temporary ice base established annually on an ice floe in the vicinity of the pole. The main part of the ski expedition to its final destination started from the Barneo base.

"The expedition was quite tough. We have been at the dome of the planet, in difficult conditions. We walked down the frozen ocean, leaped over cracks in the ice, overcame a lot of obstacles, and stayed in tents. We had a mission: to set up on the northernmost point of Earth the flags of Kazakhstan and the APK," said Sergei Bodrov, one of the members of the expedition to the North Pole.

According to head of KazGeo Nurlan Abduov, Kazakh scientists and travellers have even more ambitious plans for future. "In 2016 in December we will organise an expedition to the four poles to

mark the 25th anniversary of our independence: the Pole of Inaccessibility, the Magnetic Pole, the Pole of Cold and the Geographic South Pole. Our biggest dream is certainly opening a station [on the Antarctica]," said Abduov.

Established in 2010, KazGeo seeks to popularise geography and natural science in the country, as well as to promote travelling as a way to learn more about the world, and to popularise knowledge about Kazakhstan internationally by arranging thematic expeditions to various parts of the world.

Kazakhstan is vying to become the first Central Asian state to serve on the UN Security Council in 2017–2018. Thailand is the sole competitor for the nonpermanent seat representing Asia during the term. Kazakhstan's campaign is being promoted under the slogan "United for Global Security" and highlights food, water, energy and nuclear security, as priorities.



The KazGeo team planted three flags at the North Pole including a flag designed specifically as part of Kazakhstan's bid to win a nonpermanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for 2017–2018.

Astana's Rotary Club Launches

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Astana's Rotary Club has now become operational, marking their launch with an opening ceremony in the capital's Hilton Garden Inn on April 16. The humanitarian club has launched with around 30 members, but will be hoping to attract more, Chairman of the Membership Committee Taylan Karamanli confirmed in an interview on April 17.

"There is a need in all countries, developed or developing, for charitable humanitarian organisations," Gareth Stamp, first president of the Astana Rotary Club, said in a statement on the launch. "Government cannot be expected to do everything and deep down people care and want to help others. During my time in Kazakhstan I have been privileged to meet amazing people who do amazing things for others. Kazakhs have shown me amazing hospitality,

generosity and friendship and I want to do my bit in return."

The invitation-only clubs, which are found in nearly every country in the world, gather prominent members of their local communities to coordinate charitable and humanitarian projects.

The nearly 100-year-old organisation is currently working on the End Polio Now project, an ongoing, 10-year collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),

the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that has seen the gradual disappearance of the disease in all but a handful of countries.

Now that the Astana chapter has launched, it will also be focusing on local issues, and they plan to tackle even difficult topics like health education and sexual health, Stamp reported. "The new Rotary Club of Astana will be the second in Kazakhstan but is already the biggest with nearly thirty members, who are all committed to doing good for others. ... Over the coming months we will be investigating areas where we can best target our resources to make long lasting and sustainable projects. We will be concentrating on projects that change lives – whether they are in education or vocational training, health – particularly women's and children's health – providing clean drinking water or developing people's entrepreneurial spirit. All of our members have skills and expertise that will be shared to help develop future generations," he said.

Continued on Page B8



Governor of Rotary International District 2430 Korhan Atilla and President of the Astana Rotary Club Gareth Stamp (from centre) with attendees at the Astana club's official launch.

Historic Scenes, Retro Military Equipment to be Presented in Victory Parade

By Julia Rutz

Retro military equipment, much of which is currently exhibited as monuments in different cities throughout Kazakhstan, will line the streets of Astana May 7 as part of the military parade dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War. The procession will kick off May 7.

"This military equipment was partly stored in our reserve and some was showcased on the city streets as monuments of the Great Patriotic War. The restoration work was executed by the Semey-based Kazakhstan Engineering plant," said Deputy Commander of Kazakh Land Forces for Educational and Ideological Work Colonel Zhumabek Khassenov.

The parade participants, approximately 3,500 soldiers from different regions of the country, are living in the field camp constructed near Astana.

"We have here 150 tents, four bath houses and 11 canteens for convenience. We will also manage a modern amphitheatre and two field automobile clubs of locally-produced vehicles," said Khassenov.

Full-scale training began April 1, while the joint equipment and personnel training started after April 15, he added. The final rehearsal, with the participation of public authorities, will take place May 3–5 on Astana's Kazakh Eli Square.

According to the announcement by the Kazakh Ministry of Defence, the parade will consist of two parts – historic and contemporary. The latter will present examples of modern military equipment which is now used in the army and military personnel will be dressed in modern uniforms.

"The legendary Katyusha multiple rocket launcher will be presented at the parade for the first time. All in all, 12 units of Soviet rocket artillery, a world-famous T-34 tank, 48 Maxim and Degtyaryov machine guns and about 180 soldiers armed with Mosin rifles sample of 1896 will be involved in the parade," explained Khassenov.

Plans are underway to use 220 pieces of heavy equipment and weapons, as well as 84 aircraft. In addition, about 200 female soldiers will be involved in the parade, representing not only the modern army but also the women who participated in the Second World War.

Continued on Page B2

'Bike Away the Atomic Bomb' Begins

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On April 21, the Bike Away the Atomic Bomb riders began their journey from Washington, D.C. to New York in another push to a global drive to rid the planet of nuclear weapons.

The project, coordinated by Bike for Peace, Mayors for Peace and The ATOM Project, the global online petition against nuclear testing, is a call for real action to be taken at the UN Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York that begins April 27.

Bike for Peace and The ATOM Project, have joined Global Wave 2015 in its schedule of coordinated public actions taking place this month as the UN prepares for the conference. Global Wave 2015 is urging humanity – and particularly the decision-makers at the UN conference – to wave goodbye to nuclear weapons.

Activists from around the world gathered in Washington, D.C., to kick off the Bike Away the Atomic Bomb ride.

Tore Naerland, co-founder of Bike for Peace, and Thore Vestby, mayor of Frog, Norway, who is also vice president of Mayors for Peace and a member of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (PNND), will ride from Washington through Baltimore, MD, Wilmington, DE, and Princeton, NJ over four days before arriving in New York on April 24, just ahead of the begin-



Riders of the tour pose for pictures as they prepare to depart from the U.S. Congress on April 21.

ning of the month-long conference. They are joined along the way by Frank Tomlinson, vice president of Bike for Peace; Svein Arne Jerstad, mayor of Kvinesdal, Norway; and Ann Suellentrop, an American anti-nuclear activist, plus Kazakhstan's first ever Olympic gold medallist Vladimir Smirnov and members of the Potomac Pedallers Touring Club. And they will supported and joined for meetings throughout the ride by Karipbek Kuyukov, Honorary Ambassador of The ATOM Project and a famous armless artist.

The riders began from Capitol Hill on April 21, a Bike Away the

Atomic Bomb press release reported, after a starting ceremony including speeches by Kazakh Ambassador to the U.S. Kairat Umarov.

Bike for Peace representatives have crossed more than 100 countries since the founding of the organisation in 1977, and Vestby has joined Naerland and Tomlinson on rides through most of the world's nuclear-armed states. For this tour, Vestby says, he has a specific message: That nuclear weapons cannot be used, because of their enormous humanitarian and environmental consequences, and are therefore useless.

Vestby is hoping to meet decision-makers on this trip – particularly those not yet committed to disarmament. "I really hope to meet a lot of mayors along the route, but also senators and members of the House of Representatives in D.C. I also want to meet Republicans who are not on the nuclear disarmament path. I want to hear their arguments. Those are the ones that are important to talk to. You know, the peace and disarmament people are also important, but they are already 'in place,' they do not need to be convinced," he told The Astana Times on April 17.

THINGS TO WATCH & PLACES TO GO

ASTANA OPERA

- April 24, 25 at 7 p.m. Astana Piano Passion, Concert
- April 29 at 7 p.m. From Classical Music to Jazz
- May 7 at 7 p.m. Spartacus, Ballet

CIBUS RESTAURANT

- April 24 at 8 p.m. Fryday 3-Year Anniversary

MIDDLE SCHOOL NO. 32

- April 25 at 9 a.m. Spring Play Astana, Mini-Football

KOKTAL 13

- April 26 at 12 p.m. 45 metre Fly Rope Jumping

GORKY THEATRE

- May 3 at 6 p.m. Master and Margarita

PEOPLE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

State Archive to Present Book Chronicling 20th Century History of Kazakhstan's Jewish Community

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – A presentation of the book "History, Memory, People," which depicts the losses of Kazakhstan's Jewish community in the 20th century, will be hosted by the Central State Archive April 28 in Almaty.

The Mitsva Association of Jewish organisations announced the authors and publishers wanted the book to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK) and 70th anniversary of victory in World War II.

The book consists of four thematic sections. The first part includes 20 articles on the subject "Eurasia in the 20th century: evacuation, resettlement, refugees," while the second portion concentrates on the history of individual Jewish communities in various parts of Kazakhstan. The third section features stories of outstanding figures among survivors of the ordeal of both world wars, the Stalinist purges, persecution, displacement, deportation and evacuation. It stresses the remarkable contributions made by Kazakh Jews to the progress of their newly-acquired homeland as they worked in various industries, taught, pursued science, saved lives and helped build cities. The final portion, dedicated to the vic-

tory against Nazism, includes articles about the roles of Jews in the Soviet Union and Allied military efforts.

The publication is the result of an international project involving more than 50 authors from Belarus, Canada, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Russia and Uzbekistan. "History, Memory, People" recounts the fate of those who lived through the tragic events that left deep scars in the hearts of the individuals who faced so much injustice. Many articles came from presentations made in September 2014 by professors, researchers, journalists and archivists at a conference in Almaty dedicated to mass deportations of the Second World War period and the losses of Jewish communities at the time. The conflict forced masses of people to move across Eurasia. Many of those who survived did not return to their former homes and chose or were required to stay in relocation sites, contributing to the multicultural make-up of Kazakhstan's population.

As the Mitsva association notes, this year marks the second decade of APK – a consultative body under the President which plays an important role in ensuring religious freedom and human rights in the country. APK consists of 384 representatives of all ethnic groups drawn from the regional assemblies of the people and delegates nine deputies to the national parliament.

World War II Veterans Council, Veterans of Foreign Wars Discuss Ways to Honour Veterans

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Representatives of the Council of World War II Veterans, Home Guard and Kids of the War and the U.S.-based Veterans of Foreign Wars recently met virtually to discuss international best practices in honouring and preserving the memories of veterans worldwide. The council and English Access Microscholarship Programme organised student volunteers to document the veterans' memories and experiences and share them with their schools.

Chaz Martin, public affairs officer of the U.S. Consulate General in Almaty, noted the talks highlighted the typical experiences of soldiers from both countries.

"We organised a demonstration of photographs and films which were never shown. They are about everyday people who did great things, about women in the war, the U.S. and Soviet cooperation and of course Kazakhstan's contribution to the cause of peace and one victory for all people in the world. These events are very important for us and we admit great achievements of Kazakhstan veterans. In addition, we organised the virtual meeting using the Internet, which helped the Council of World War II Veterans and the U.S.-based organisation Veterans of Foreign Wars to share the experience," he said.

Timur Pochanov, a representative of the Council of World War II Veterans, valued the effort of all in-

involved in coordinating the meeting.

"We are truly thankful to the staff of the Consulate General of the U.S. in Almaty who visited our office in the fall of 2014, met veterans of World War II, nongovernmental organisation staff and volunteers of the nongovernmental organisation The Council of World War II Veterans, Home Guard and Kids of the War. The meeting was very cognitive and constructive. During the discussion, we came to the conclusion that it will be very beneficial for us and for the similar organisation in the U.S. to hold a session on expe-

"It is worth mentioning the high level of organisation of the web conference. We had a clear plan, time limit and detailed agenda for the meeting. For the start, we had an introduction session where each side talked about the organisation they represent. We were lucky to meet two nongovernmental organisations from the U.S. Then we talked about the ways and principles by which nongovernmental organisations in Kazakhstan and the U.S. work. We then talked about the ways nongovernmental organisations of these two countries cooperate

the projects our nongovernmental organisation is implementing, especially by the project of targeted assistance to the veterans. It was a great surprise for them that such a huge project gets financial assistance solely based on individual and corporate donations from those who feel social responsibility for the veterans who sacrificed their life and health for the right cause," he said about the meeting. Pochanov noted that six people took part in this session from the Kazakh side, including individuals from the nongovernmental organisation staff, volunteers and consulate office staff. He also thanked the consulate not only for providing the facility and equipment to hold this session, but also for arranging for an interpreter to facilitate the dialogue. "We did not have a purpose to involve a big number of volunteers, as this was the first meeting and mainly nongovernmental organisation staff and a couple of volunteers took part this time. The most important thing for us is the fact that we got acquainted and we also agreed that we will continue our cooperation and experience exchange exercises and quite possibly initiate a combined project. This type of event motivates us very much; we learn from each other, share best practices and finally we meet really nice people and we grow professionally with them. In this regard we count on the support from the Consulate General of the U.S. in Almaty," he said.

"This type of event motivates us very much; we learn from each other, share best practices and finally we meet really nice people and we grow professionally with them."

rience exchange on how veterans are being assisted and what are the milestones on building relationships with government bodies, as well as fundraising. The consulate staff took the burden of setting up such an Internet-based meeting. We decided to hold the meeting from the consulate office, so we started our meeting at 7 p.m. our time. We knew it was quite early morning in D.C., so we truly appreciate our colleagues in the U.S. for coming so early to the office because of us," he said.

Pochanov reviewed the items which were covered in the session.

with the local government administration, how interests of veterans are being defended and how they are being lobbied to initiate introduction of certain regulations. We also talked about the ways these veterans organisations are financed. Some good and relevant recommendations have been provided by our colleagues, which made this discussion very lively. It was of great interest for us to learn of existing social adaptation programmes for the veterans in the U.S. And we had an impression that our colleagues in the U.S. were very much impressed by

Floods in Karaganda Draw Unprecedented Outpouring of Support, Civil Activism

Continued from Page A1

However, as the traditional and social media noted, the major effect of this month's floods was that they generated an authentic urge across Kazakh society to help affected compatriots through numerous grassroots initiatives.

One may say that this event certainly left nobody indifferent. Hundreds and thousands across the country are actively involved in the process of supporting the people of Karaganda. Numerous volunteers from different regions of the country rallied and are providing incredible support.

Ordinary citizens and NGOs alike swiftly reacted in helping flood victims. People sent food, warm clothes, blankets, mattresses toiletries and toys to Karaganda.

In Astana, activists urged peo-

ple via WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and other social media outlets to collect clothes, blankets, food and toys for children. The main gathering point was behind the Saryarka Shopping Mall. The campaign was popularised by popular public figures, including political analyst Yerlan Karin, former parliament member Bakhyt Syzdykova, musical producer Bayan Yessentayeva and television anchor Dinara Satzhan, among others.

"I learned about [the floods] from Instagram. I brought items for men, women and children. I brought clothes and toys. I mainly brought warmer things, as the weather is still cold. We are worried and feel sympathetic [towards our compatriots]. I don't want this to happen again. Myself, I am a southerner, from Almaty," the Ten-

grinews agency quoted Indira, an action participant, saying.

"It can happen anywhere. We live in one country; we need to help each other. Many citizens brought baby clothes and food. We did not expect such a reaction from people. One apa [elderly woman] sent two vehicles full of supplies. Mangystau residents are not indifferent when people are suffering and they are willing to help," the media quoted volunteers from the western city of Aktau as saying.

In Almaty, volunteers gathered at Arman Cinema, which was full of emergency relief supplies. More than 50 volunteers helped warehouse the freshly arrived aid into boxes and bags.

Volunteers started a social media campaign, which consequently led to an increase of people willing to help. "We have a lot of friends liv-



ing in Karaganda. As soon as we heard about what happened there, we decided to help. We purchased goods, such as cereals and oil to assure that people had something to eat. As far as we know, there is no food, even in shops, everything has been flooded," Ainur Sergaziyeva commented.

Many commentators in the media and online social media networks commended the public's reaction and how they support each other in difficult times.

"This week, to me at least, my country proved itself an incredible place. In each photo out of Almaty, Astana, Aktau, Aktobe and Karaganda, I saw my friends. They brought food and various supplies and assisted in preparing them for shipment. I saw a lot more strangers, but felt that I knew them, not because they brought supplies, but because they brought a good and kind attitude," well-known Almaty-based journalist and editor in chief of Vlast.kz Vyachelav Abdramov commented on his Facebook page.

"I did not expect that within one

hour of posting on Facebook, so many people would gather just to help pack aid. Some even came with their children, saying that they must learn in their earliest years that humans must be com-

with huge hearts and good intentions.

As the threat of flooding in other areas is still present, the authorities are making every effort to prevent potential losses, as well as actively

"It can happen anywhere. We live in one country; we need to help each other. Many citizens brought baby clothes and food. We did not expect such a reaction from people. One apa [elderly woman] sent two vehicles full of supplies. Mangystau residents are not indifferent when people are suffering and they are willing to help."

passionate and ready to help those around them. The first lorry has been loaded and has already left. Karaganda, we are with you!" another popular blogger Syrym Abdrakhmanov wrote on his Facebook on April 18.

From all of the above, people can conclude from this story that Kazakhstan's citizens are people

working to start rebuilding roads, dams, bridges and houses.

"[A total of] 6,308 people, 112 specially equipped cars and 107 swimming facilities are involved [in tackling the floods]," Chairman of the Committee for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan Ruslan Imankulov said.



Social network activists supporting victims of the flooding in Karaganda gather in Astana (photo credit: Syrym Abdrakhmanov's Facebook page).

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

Almaty to Host Sixth French Film Festival

By Lyazzat Shatayeva

ALMATY – The latest sophisticated, vibrant and daring films from France will be showcased beginning April 23 during the sixth French film festival “Le cinéma français aujourd’hui.”

The four-day event, offering a delightful and entertaining European escape after the lingering winter, is co-organised by UniFrance, the French Embassy and Alliance Française. The films will be shown in the Arman movie theatre.

This year, the festival will include six new feature films: “Three Hearts,” a drama by Benoit Jacquot, “Jack in the Women’s Kingdom,” a comedy directed by Riad Sattouf, the drama “The Yellow Eyes of the Crocodiles” by director Cecile Teلمان, “In the Courtyard” by Pierre Salvadori, “Clouds of Sils Maria” by Olivier Assayas

and the comedy “Elle L’Adore” by Jeanne Herry.

Actresses Catherine Deneuve, Emmanuelle Beart and Juliette Binoche, the stars of the French cinema, have the leading roles in four of the films included in the programme.

French actor Pio Marmai is expected to travel to the city to present “In the Courtyard,” a gentle and occasionally hilarious tale about friendship where he plays a bicycle thief and drug addict named Stéphane.

Teلمان will also attend to promote her film, which is based on Katherine Pancols runaway best-selling novel of the same name.

The festival will also feature 20 short films to be presented in four programmes during the April 25 short film night, a regular feature of the festival.

France, the birthplace of cinema, is the third biggest film market in

the world based on admissions and revenues. French cinema is also the most successful film industry in Europe with the largest number of films produced annually, according to UniFrance, which is responsible for promoting the films outside the country. Last year, French filmmakers produced nearly 170 movies, making the nation the world’s second largest exporter of films following the United States.

A survey conducted in 14 countries in April 2014 showed that more than 70 percent of viewers greatly appreciate French cinema and when it comes to intelligent dialogues, aesthetics of directing and genuine acting, Kazakh viewers are no exception. French films are the third most-viewed movies in the country after American and Russian films and represented 8.7 percent of the market share in 2013.



Opening of the 5th French Cinema Today festival in the Arman theatre, Almaty, on April 23. Photo: UniFrance

Astana Theatre Production to Highlight Friendships between Country’s Ethnic Groups

By Shynar Ospanova

Kazakh Auenderi, a national concert company, will produce a theatrical performance about friendship between different ethnic communities of Kazakhstan, according to company President Askhat Maemirov, who spoke at a

press briefing of the Central Communications Service on April 14. “Kazakh Qusy” (Kazakh bird) is a lyrical drama, which unites all the peoples of our country and portrays topical problems of our society at the turn of 19th and 20th centuries,” said Maemirov during the briefing. “But everything that happens will be shown very subtly and humorously at times. The characters of the play are a social cross-section of our society. They love and appreciate the land on which they live and while some had to abandon their native lands not of their own volition, entire families become friends and help each other in difficult times,” said Maemirov.

MAEMIROV: “The Theatre of Nations is unique in its nature. It brings together all the creative forces of our country.”

press briefing of the Central Communications Service on April 14.

“Kazakh Qusy” (Kazakh bird) is a lyrical drama, which unites all the peoples of our country and portrays topical problems of our society at the turn of 19th and 20th centuries,” said Maemirov during the briefing. “But everything that happens will be shown very subtly and humorously at times. The characters of the play are a social cross-section of our society. They love and appreciate the land on which they live and while some had to abandon their native lands not of their own volition, entire families become friends and help each other in difficult times,” said Maemirov.

Famous director Nurkanat Zhakypbai was invited to stage

scheduled for April 25 at 7 p.m. in the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation in Astana.

“We plan to tour across Kazakhstan with this performance and show it in every city. The Theatre of Nations is unique in its nature. It brings together all the creative forces of our country. So I think it will be a unique and unusual performance,” said the president of Kazakh Auenderi.

The author of the play is famous Kazakh writer Dulat Issabayev. The artistic director of the Theatre of Nations of Kazakhstan is Lyubov Ni. Artistic director of the Zhastar theatre Nurkanat Zhakypbai directs the play, and the master artist of the play is Chief Artist of the Gorky Theatre Kanat Maksutov.

Astana Piano Festival Supports Young Musicians

By Rufiya Ospanova

ASTANA – The third international classical music festival and young pianist contest directed by Denis Matsuev, a world-famous musician and People’s Artist of Russia, will take place from April 24 to May 2.

The contest will begin with the semi-finalists because the first qualifying round has already taken place via video. Participants will perform a solo programme. A concert accompanied by an orchestra will be the last segment of the event.

The prize money will total \$60,000. The winners of the first three prizes will be awarded lithographs of Rene Magritte, Henri Matisse, Salvador Dali and Georg-

es Braque paintings from the Chinggis & Ethan publishing house (Luxembourg). Winners of the special prize from Director Matsuev will participate in the following international festivals: Crescendo (Pskov, Russia), the Annecy Classic (Annecy, France) and Stars on the Baikal (Irkutsk, Russia).

Winners will give concerts at the Moscow Philharmonic and next year’s Astana Piano Passion festival. There will be awards for teachers whose students take top places. The competition is divided amongst the junior (under 10 years of age), medium (ages 11-14) and older (15-18 years of age) age groups.

The performances will be evaluated by an authoritative international jury: Matsuev, composer and honoured figure Tolegen

Mukhamedzhanov; Rector of the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory and People’s Artist of Kazakhstan Zhania Aubakirova, famous Russian pianist and teacher, People’s Artist of Russia Sergey Dorensky, Honoured Artist of Russia, Professor of the Moscow State Conservatory Valery Pyasecky, famous pianist, conductor and teacher Arie Vardi (Israel) who is currently teaching at the Buchmann-Mehy Schol of Music in Tel Aviv and in the Hochschule fur Music in Hanover, inventor, innovator and researcher Pascal Eskande (France), famous pianist and teacher, head of the Department of Keyboard Instruments at the Royal College of Music in London Vanessa Latache (UK).

This year’s festival will include the

French music channel Mezzo Backstage, which plans to film three TV programmes about the Astana concert halls where these performances will be held: the Palace of Peace and Accord, the Kazakhstan Central Concert Hall and the Astana Opera.

This year, Astana Piano Passion will include Matsuev’s performance and a concert given by 2014’s Piano Passion winners, master classes given by Vanessa Latache and Arie Vardi. The grand opening and a gala concert will take place on April 24 at the Astana Opera.

The organisers of the music festival are the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan, the Astana Akimat (city administration) and the Accordi di Astana public fund.

Over the course of three years, the organising committee of Astana Piano Passion received about 400 applications from 45 countries. This year, more than 120 applications were received, 30 of which were selected. For the first time, young musicians from Mongolia, Macedonia, Norway and Finland decided to take part in the Astana competition.

“The competition is being held to support young musicians while they are in their initial stages of their career. It is also supposed to promote classical piano music as part of a well-rounded education for the younger generation. Young pianists aged 8 to 18 divided amongst three age groups will take part in the competition,” Lyudmila Doroshenko, director of Accordi di Astana said, www.ortcom.kz reported.

Receipt of applications to participate in the contest began on Dec. 1 and lasted until March 1.



People’s Artist of Russia and Director of Astana Piano Passion Denis Matsuev

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

Chinese Company Plans to Construct New Oil Refinery in Mangistau

By Julia Rutz

The Chinese company CITIC, which recently launched the first bitumen plant in Mangistau, is planning to finance the construction of a new oil refinery in the region, according to tengrinews.kz. The report was confirmed during the official visit in March of the Kazakh delegation, headed by Prime Minister Karim Massimov, to Beijing, China.

Despite the apparent shortage of domestically-produced petroleum products on the market, the Kazakh government chose not to build another refinery, proposing instead the expansion of an existing Shymkent-based oil plant. Built in 1985, the plant is the newest refinery that provides 30 percent of all oil products produced in the country. The decision was made because of the absence of the necessary investment needed for the construction of a new refinery. The Chinese project is cheaper,



The existing oil refinery in Atyrau

however, and will be financed by the country's Exim Bank. Accord-

ing to Mangistau region Deputy Akim (Governor) Rakhimbek

Amirzhanov, the project was first presented during the Third Ka-

zakhstan-Chinese Forum organised in January. The capacity of the new refinery is expected to reach six million tonnes of oil per year, the cost of the project is anticipated to be about \$5-\$6 billion and construction should be finished in five years.

"At the moment, Kazakhstan imports 1.8 million tonnes (30 percent) of oil products from other countries. This problem was caused decades ago, when Soviet Kazakhstan-based refineries were dependent on oil imports from Western Siberia fields located in Russia. In the current market conditions, this situation leads to under-loaded Kazakh refinery feedstock. In the early 1990s, domestic refineries processed about 17 million tonnes of oil, 80 percent of which were imported from Russia. In recent years, the total volume of processed oil has decreased by three times," explained Amirzhanov.

He also mentioned the 2014 annual address of Kazakh President

Nursultan Nazarbayev, who noted the country needs large amounts of gasoline, diesel fuel and jet fuel. According to the President, it is nonsense that an oil-producing state does not have enough refineries.

"Usually, the optimal location for the refinery is either near markets, which are in the Southern, Northern and Central Kazakhstan regions, or near oil fields, which are located in the western part of the country. According to the joint marketing analysis conducted by the Akimat of Mangistau region and Chinese oil companies, Mangistau was pointed out as the best location for the fourth refinery. This is due to the presence of raw materials, as the volume of oil production in the region amounted to 18 million tonnes during the past year, and the presence of the Aktau port logistics capabilities with the ability to handle up to 12 million tonnes of oil per year," concluded Amirzhanov.

Contest Names Best Children's Literature Authors

By Kseniya Voronina

Kazakhmys Corporation and the Union of Writers of Kazakhstan recently announced the winners of the Balansa competition to select the best literary work in the Kazakh language for children of preschool age.

Two-hundred-fifty works from 210 participants were received for the competition. The jury consisted of famous children's writers Yesken Yelubai, Sultan Kaliyev, Beibit Sarybay as well as representatives of the Union of Writers of Kazakhstan and Kazakhmys Corporation.

"This year, more works than in 2014 were submitted to the competition. We are pleased that with the growing number of participants the quality of works increases. This year, students and schoolchildren took part in the competition on a par with well-known writers. This indi-

cates the growing popularity of the contest. The jury has done a great and responsible [job]. We tried to select the most memorable works," said Yelubai, chairman of the jury and famous children's author.

The Grand Prix of the contest was awarded to Serikbai Ospanuly for the poem "Bes sausaqqa buiryq." First place was taken by Tolymbek Abdiraïym for his story "Kaishy-oïynshy kemes." Second place was shared by Toleubai Yermekbayev for his collection of poems "Balapan" and poet Kadirbek Kunypiyauy. Third place was awarded to three participants – Sabit Duisenbiyev with his story "Almatynyn aporyt," Shaken Kulisbauiuly for his story "Kupiya" and Akylbek Kozhauy for "Qazaqyn."

The authors of the best works were awarded cash prizes and their stories will be published in national publications.

"We hope that the competition will attract public interest to children's literature and will make a significant contribution to the development of national culture and the education of future generations and the further development of the Kazakh language. I am sure that the interest of writers, students and professors and creative Kazakhs gives us a reason to continue the tradition in the coming years," said Askar Matkenov, vice-president of a subsidiary of the Kazakhmys Corporation.

The first contest of children's works in the official language was launched on April 2, 2012 on International Children's Book Day. The main purpose of the contest is to support the authors of children's works and to educate children in patriotism, curiosity, a love of reading, the native language and the cultural heritage of Kazakhstan.

\$50 Million Wind Farm to Be Built in East Kazakhstan by 2016

By Yelden Sarybay

ASTANA – A new wind farm with 16 turbines and generating 78MW of power will be built in the Tainty Ulan district of East Kazakhstan this year.

All the necessary documentation of the \$50 million project is ready, and a private investor has been determined, according to head of the regional Department of Energy and Utilities Darkhan Tokhtarov. The project is scheduled for completion in 2016.

The construction of the wind park in the East Kazakhstan re-

gion was approved by a government decree in 2013. Based on the document, Kazakhstan plans to build 106 wind energy facilities by 2020.

Also in 2013, during the Green Economy Forum, a memorandum of cooperation in the field of renewable energy was signed between Spain Consulting, Yertys National Company and Hydro China International Engineering LTD, which aims to build a wind farm on the Umysh mountain pass.

Last year, the government also announced plans to build up to six wind projects in North Kazakh-

stan by 2018, according to a recent statement by Anton Fedyayev, head of the regional Department of Housing and Communal Services and Energy.

Fedyayev said the projects form part of an existing state programme to develop renewables in the country through to 2018. "These wind farms will be built in four districts of the region – Tayinshin, Akkayin, Yessil and Musrepov," added the head of department. "In this case, the expected capacity of wind power will be from 35 to 100 MW."

Kazakhstan Naval Forces Celebrate 22nd Anniversary

By Julia Rutz

Twenty-two years ago, the Kazakhstan Navy was established as part of the Armed Forces of a new independent state. The corresponding presidential decree was issued on April 2, 1993, according to press service of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Defence.

Aktau city, being the main sea gate of the country on the Caspian Sea, has organised several festive events in order to commemorate the date. A public wreath laying, a parade of naval servants and a gala concert were part of the celebration programme.

"The Caspian region is of a paramount importance for the economy of Kazakhstan and neighbouring countries. To ensure its protection, as well as to secure economic interests and state borders, Kazakhstan

decided to establish naval forces twenty-two years ago," noted the press service of the ministry.

The Caspian Sea is considered the largest inland body of water in the world. Five countries, Kazakhstan, Russia and Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran border the sea. The strategic importance of the sea lays in its abundance of energy resources. The sea contains large volumes of natural gas and oil in both offshore deposits and onshore fields. Moreover, it is endowed with vast marine resources.

Over the past 22 years, the five countries have been negotiating over a Caspian Sea legal status and at the September 2014 summit in Astrakhan agreed to move forward with determining the principles of the status. The next Caspian Sea

littoral states summit is to take place in Astana in 2016.

Kazakhstan's fledgling Navy has been helpful in protecting the country's economic interests, including against poachers.

"Over the past three years, we have introduced three rocket-artillery ships, which were built on the base of the domestic enterprise Zenit Ural Plant. Also, a mine vessel is under construction now in the Russian ship-building yard Alatau. Moreover, we are considering the possibility of acquiring a new heavy guard ship," according to a Defense Ministry representative.

Naval officers in Aktau congratulated the navy seaman and noted that the naval force of the country successfully executes its duties and protects Kazakhstan's western borders.



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SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

New Social Network Meant to Increase Kazakh Law, Financial Knowledge

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – A new website, www.lccc.kz, has been created by the Financial Academy to increase Kazakh citizens' understanding of the law and financial literacy.

"The social network is a specialised professional website operating online. It is unique because of its opportunity to get information from professionals' own lips," said Olga Yanovskaya, president of the Financial Academy and an academician at the Eurasia International Academy of Economics, at press a conference of the Central Communications Service.

She noted businessmen and taxpayers are concerned with financial matters and legislation under present-day conditions. At times, individuals are unable to find dependable and adequate material and the website provides the necessary data as well as qualified



Olga Yanovskaya

comments regarding regulatory legal acts.

"Our activity and the assistance of the Ministry of Finance enables them to get reliable and sufficient information concerning legalisation, privatisation, business accounting, auditing activities, tax, customs legislation and electronic state purchases," said Yanovskaya, as reported by the Novosti-Kazakhstan Informational Agency.

The website contains video lectures and clips and informational charts. Users can participate in forums, webinars, trainings and seminars, find associates and join communities to discuss topical questions regarding tax and customs control of state purchases, business accounting and audits. Users can ask questions of experts in any topical discussion, with the vice ministers of finance Ardak Tengebayev, Ruslan Dalenov and Ruslan Beketayev and others also acting as advisors.

The website developers plan to create a news section which will be updated on a regular basis and have feedback from specialists providing necessary information on users' requests. The social network will also be adapted for iOS and Android platform, which can sufficiently increase the quantity of users.

"Currently, the workflow in the state (Kazakh) and Russian languages is on the same level," said Turgambaev, IITU financial and commercial director. "We intend to supply the keyboard not only to schools, but also national companies."

Kazakh-Specific Keyboards Expected by End of 2015

By Yelden Sarybay

A recently patented keyboard with comfortable positioning of Kazakh letters will be produced in Almaty and is expected by the end of the year, according to project curator Medet Turgambaev.

The inventors are Dias Zhunisbekov and Yergali Adambayev, students at the International Information Technologies University (IITU). The keyboard is currently made in small batches in Chinese factories and they have been searching for a means to transfer production to Kazakhstan.

"Work is being done on obtaining orders. This is at the level of government, so we can equip all schools in Kazakhstan with this keyboard," said the curator.

The patent for the students' invention is protected in Kazakhstan, as well as all Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. Documents are currently being prepared and an application for funding and the commercialisation of the project will be submitted in May, said Turgambaev.

Turgambaev noted that the project needs to buy the necessary equipment for keyboard production. The developers intend to produce them at the Alatau Park of Innovative Technologies, a special economic zone in Almaty.

Almost all the 3,000 pilot keyboards have already been distributed to schools in Kazakhstan, said Turgambaev. Positive feedback about the gadget will allow the inventors to apply to the National Agency for Technological



A keyboard that positions Kazakh letters comfortably will be produced this year.

Development (NATD) for grant funding.

"Therefore, it would be beneficial to us as producers and it will be reflected in the final value of the goods. If we receive a grant, we can set up domestic production of the keyboard by the end of this year," he added.

Moving production from China to Alatau will eliminate the necessity of minimum orders, for once production begins the devices will be released as needed. Manufacturing in the country will lead to self-sufficiency, as there will be no need to spend money on transportation and customs duties, which currently represent about 10 percent of the cost. Local production will also allow the institute to enjoy the tax benefits of the innovative technologies park," said Turgambaev.

"We will submit an application," he added.

Historic Scenes, Retro Military Equipment to be Presented in Victory Parade

Continued from Page B1

Forty Kazakh veterans who fought in the Great Patriotic War will also march during the event.

An equestrian procession of the 106th National Cavalry Division is also expected to be recreated, said the head of the Kazakh National Archive Fund Management Service Akzada Hairullina. The

offspring of those who were in this cavalry will help in reconstructing the departure scene, which took place March 23, 1942. According to protocol No. 87 of the Akmola region committee, the cavalry had to join the sixth light brigade of General A. Noskov to rescue the city of Kharkov, Ukraine. According to the report of that time, 90 percent of the cavalry, of the 4,000

soldiers in total, were ethnic Kazakhs.

"This event is already included in the plan. There are volunteers and enthusiasts who want to take part in the reconstruction of this event. All of them will be dressed in uniforms of that period of time. The procession will walk through the main streets of Astana in April," said Hairullina.

Autism Resource Centres to Open as Almaty Holds World Autism Awareness Day



By Dmitry Lee

Hundreds of blue balloons were released into the sky to draw attention to the Light Up Blue campaign to mark United Nations Autism Awareness Day on April 2 in Almaty organised by Assyl Miras, a private fund. In addition, the fund will open four resource centres in Kazakhstan to help combat the growing disease.

"We intend to develop and implement a variety of services within the walls of this [Almaty] resource centre. They include diagnostic services, rehabilitation services and medical support. We propose introducing a model of inclusive education in order to prepare children with autism for school," said Marat Aitmagambetov, director of the Assyl Miras Fund in an interview with Kazakh TV.

The main goal of these centres is to improve the quality of life of children with autism and their families through early diagnosis, rehabilitation and inclusive education and social integration. Children with autism will receive qualified rehabilitation services in the centres and will be integrated into society, while their parents will receive all necessary information, advice and psychological assistance. It is planned to help socialise and rehabilitate more than 1,000 families. Approximately 15 percent of people in Kazakhstan will gain primary knowledge of autism during the first three years.

"It is important that the government pays attention to autism and introduces a system of early detection and timely assistance for children with the Autism Spectre Disorder (ASD) and their families, based

on the principles of early diagnosis, comprehensive rehabilitation, quality education and social adaptation. We also believe that Kazakh society must know more about people with autism and not alienate them, serve their needs and support their families," Aitmagambetov told kursiv.kz.

In total, 77 cases of autism were registered in Kazakhstan in 2003 and today, there are 1,500 cases nationwide, according to Kazakh TV. Almaty and the country's capital Astana are to open the doors of the first autism resource centres in May-June of this year, while the Oskemen and Kyzylorda centres are to follow in 2016. These centres will serve children and take special measures regarding insulation and colour combinations, as some colours may adversely affect the perception of children with autism.

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NATION&CAPITAL
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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

The Short, Colourful Lives of Spring Steppe Flowers



By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – The hardy souls who stick out one of Astana's long and frigid winters can count on at least one reward: when the snows finally melt in April and May, the steppe bursts brightly, if briefly, into bloom around them in the few weeks between extreme cold and extreme heat that constitute spring in this part of the world.

"Annual plants bloom first in the steppe in spring, painting the landscape like a colourful carpet," Mikhail Danilov, lead researcher at Almaty's Phyto-Introduction and Botany Institute, told *The Astana Times* on April 7. "The plants live during the few warm and humid days of early spring. They are able to bloom and seed during these few days."

The steppe spring is short and intense for a reason: "The biological strategy of the majority of steppe plants is simple: a plant has to finish blossoming as early as possible, during that short period when the soil is already out of winter frost, but is still soaked enough with snowmelt waters," Andrey Mikhailov writes in his article "Steppe in Bloom" on the Unique Kazakhstan website. "It has to do it so that afterwards it could lie dormant in the form of a

tiny seed, or a bulb, up to the next year." It is this strategy that makes the steppe spring so intense, he writes, "when suddenly and in no time every single thing here revives, germinates, and literally explodes in billions of delicate and gentle flowers."

After the annuals start things off, perennials like tulips, gagea (a group of spring flowers of the lily family), blueflags, crocuses, hazel grouse and wind flowers start to open as well – but all disappear by summer, Danilov says, preferring to spend most of their time resting as bulbs or other forms of rootstock.

Because Kazakhstan is so huge and varies so much geographically and climatically, the blooming seasons are different across the country, and springtime creeps only slowly northward from southern cities toward the capital. "You can see the flowering of crocus alaticus [white crocuses] around Almaty city in February," Danilov said. "The first flowers bloom in northern Kazakhstan not earlier than in the end of March or in the beginning of April."

There will be blossoms overhead as well as underfoot, he notes: in addition to the wild apples the country is known for, there are the progenitors of our cultivated pear, plum and apricot trees, plus pistachio, raspberry,

blackberry and currant flowers.

Almost all the plants you'll see on the steppe are native to Kazakhstan, Danilov said, and the dominant colours of the steppe in spring are the reds and yellows of wild tulips and poppies. Delicate red wild corn poppies abound in the country's south, Mikhailov writes. There are also swathes of violet, white and light and dark blue, depending on the time of year and the location, Danilov said. Poppies and tulips provide yellow and red, blueflags, speedwells, violets and gentians bring

shades of blue and purple and crocuses provide the white. It is sometimes said in Kazakhstan that red poppies grow where there have been battles, while blue flowers grow in places of mourning.

Among the spring steppe flowers, the most famous are probably the country's wild tulips – native to this region. There are dozens of tulip varieties in Kazakhstan, Mikhailov notes – some with the classic tulip bowl shape, others looking more like small stars, like the *tulipa turkestanica*, which

shares the name of the southern Kazakh city of Turkestan.

The flowers and their short lives recur in Central Asian art and have been loaded with symbolism over the centuries. "[The] tulip was the symbol of the ephemerality of earthly existence in the mythology of the nomads of Central Asia," writes Oleg Belyalov in "Flowers of the Paradise Gardens," on the Unique Kazakhstan website. "The blooming coincided with the main spring holiday, Наурыз, the beginning of a new year.

Watching the eternal cycle of life – lush spring blossom and [the] rapid fading of beautiful flowers, nomads believed that only in the gardens of Paradise would they bloom forever. When nomads laid their leaders to rest, they decorated their clothes with gold plates depicting tulips."

No flowers on this earthly steppe can contend with both the pitiless cold and the pitiless sun – but over this month and then next, between punishing seasons, Kazakhstan's patient native posesy will be blooming their hearts out.

Forbes Kazakhstan Establishes Architectural Innovation Award

By Julia Rutz

In light of the coming international exhibition EXPO 2017, which will largely focus on sustainable development and the face of energy in the future, Forbes Kazakhstan business magazine decided to establish an architecture award this year. The award is intended to bring out the most creative and innovative projects in local architecture and create a platform for extraordinary Kazakh architects.

Some of the world's leading experts, with more than 30 years' experience in the field and who also have created great architectural achievements have been invited to participate as project judges.

"Such contests truly benefit everyone, because if a project is not only recognised by investors or a client, but also by independent professionals, it creates a huge incentive for architects to develop themselves further and as a result, the competition enhances the quality of services available. Moreover, the award is an impetus for developing urban culture, bettering

city appearance and lessening human impact on the environment," explained Jury Chairman Rudolf Wienands, who is also a professor at Munich Technical University (Germany) and the founder of Wienands Plan GmbH architectural bureau.

The esteemed judges are going to nominate contestants in the following categories: Best Residential Complex (housing), Best Public Building, Best Public Building Interior; Best Residential Interior, Best Villa, Best Sustainable Design and the Grand Prize (Forbes Kazakhstan's choice).

According to competition rules, any group or organisation which executes any single or collective architectural project that was submitted to the contest, may participate. Moreover, all contestants should have a Kazakhstan construction license. Submitted projects may be under construction or can have been in progress for no more than 10 years before the application deadline.

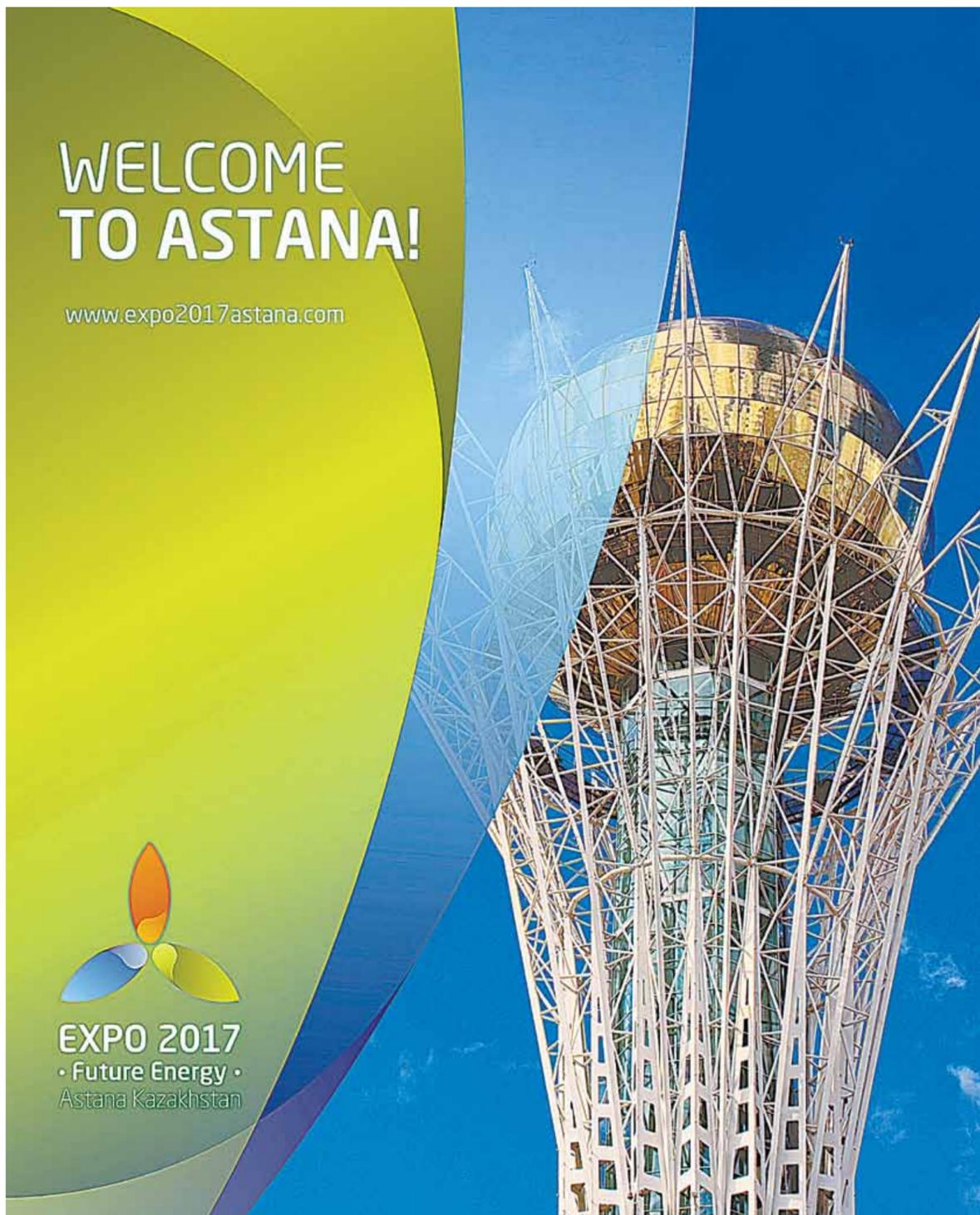
The application submission period began on March 16 and ended on April 15. Final results are expected to be announced on April 28.

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NATION&CAPITAL
SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015



Tatyana Kapustina (second from right)

Kazakh Weightlifters Win Four Medals at World Youth Championship

By Dmitry Lee

Kazakh weightlifters earned four medals at the April 8-12 World Youth Championship in Lima, Peru.

Igor Song and Tatyana Kapustina won gold medals, Aigerim Aulbek took silver and Shyngys Sagyndykov won a bronze medal, while Igor Schwartz and Arystanbek Zhakansha both took eighth place in their weight categories, according to vesti.kz.

Song was the first to win gold for Kazakhstan in the 50 kilogrammes category. Song had previous high-level competition experience from competing in 2013 through 2014, but had failed to enter the top 10. Later, Song topped the list of athletes on his team, then became Asian youth champion and now world champion.

Kapustina travelled to the championship as an experienced athlete, having participated in the Youth



Igor Song (c)

Olympics and youth championships before.

Kazakhstan established itself as a powerhouse in the weightlifting world at the 2012 London Summer Olympics by winning four gold medals. And the national team has included two-time Olympic and

four-time world champion Ilya Ilyin. Today, on the threshold of the next summer Olympics in Rio 2016, as the stakes and pressure are higher, the country is betting on new talents and has shifted its efforts to producing new champions to strengthen its positions.

Astana Arlans Beat Condors, Extend Undefeated Streak to 13

By Dmitry Lee

The Astana Arlans continued their domination of Group B of the World Series of Boxing (WSB) by knocking out the Argentina Condors 4-1 in an away match on April 19. The victory extends the Arlan's

undefeated streak to 13 wins this season.

That same night, Kazakh boxer Vassiliy Levit earned a bid to participate in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio, worldseriesboxing.com reports.

The night started with a loss for

the Arlans in the light flyweight category (49 kilogrammes). Junior Zarate beat Zhomart Yerzhan to put the Condors ahead. The lead was short-lived, however, as the Arlan's took match number two.

In the bantamweight (56 kilogrammes) category, 2013 Interna-

tional Boxing Association (AIBA) World Championship bronze medalist Kairat Yerliyev managed to beat newcomer Jonathan Emanuel Sanchez to equalise the situation for the Arlans.

In the next bout, Samat Bashe-nov of Kazakhstan put his club ahead by winning every round against Lucas Ivan Gimenez in the welterweight category (64 kilogrammes).

2013 AIBA World Champion Zhanibek Alimkhanuly managed to drop Christian Zarate in round one in the next bout, but the Condor's fighter resumed the fight and finished it. Alimkhanuly still won by points in the middleweight category (75 kilogrammes) to make it 3-1 for the Arlans.

And finally in the spotlight during the evening was Kazakh heavyweight (91 kilogrammes) star Vassiliy Levit of Kostanai who won a technical knockout against Diego Blanche to earn his seventh consecutive win this season, including five with knockouts. The victory also earned Levit a bid to participate in the 2016 Olympics in Rio.

The Astana Arlans will next face the Italia Thunder on April 25 at Centro Sportivo Italcementi Bergamo in Rome.



Barys Goalie Achieves Playoff's Highest Save Percentage

By Yerlan Zhanayev

The seventh season of the Continental Hockey League (KHL) wrapped up on April 19 with the premier Gagarin Cup going to SKA Saint Petersburg.

The club from Russia's second largest city defeated Ak Bars of Kazan in five matches (series are played until one side reaches four wins). This victory came on the back of SKA's spectacular comeback in the semifinals against CSKA Moscow, the more famous of the two clubs with strong historical ties to the Red Army, after losing the first three matches. The only other series that went to seven games involved Barys Astana, who lost to Avangard Omsk.

As is customary at the end of the season, various statistical data were announced regarding league teams and individual players. The Kazakh fans may find consolation in the fact the Astana club's goaltender Jan Laco was determined

to have the playoff's highest save percentage. The Slovak's result was 94.8 percent. With number 50 on his jersey, the Barys keeper more than once this season confirmed an old hockey proverb that a good goalie is worth half a team.



National Hockey Team Dominates in First Two Group Games



By Arsen Dilim

Kazakhstan's national hockey team has made a confident start in the first division of the world championships in Krakow, Poland. In their first two games in Group A, Kazakhstan convincingly beat the national teams of Ukraine and Hungary, 5-2 and 5-0, respectively.

The Kazakhs controlled both of

their first games, which strongly resembled each other. The only difference was that in the first game, Kazakhstan allowed their opponents to score twice in the last minute of the match.

Kevin Dallman scored the first goal for Kazakhstan at the tournament.

"Our opponent could not create big problems for us, but still,

we have to play better," said Andrey Shayan, assistant to the head coach of Kazakhstan's team, after the first game. In his words, the trio of Vadim Krasnoslobodtsev, Konstantin Savenkov and Evgeni Rymarev played successfully in the team's first effort.

In the second game, Kazakhstan, as if remembering their disappointing defeat two years ago at the hands of the Hungarian team, came to the game focused and seemingly playing according to the idea that the best defence is to attack.

In the first two periods, the Kazakh team significantly outperformed its opponents in speed and had the Hungarians locked tightly in their own area, as evidenced by the 4-0 score and the three-to-one ratio of shots on goal in Kazakhstan's favour (19-7). In the third period, Kazakhstan scored again, bringing the final score to a decisive 5-0.

As this edition goes to print, the outcome of Kazakhstan's third game against Japan will be decided. Following that, the team will play two more group games, against Poland and Italy.

In the previous hockey champi-

onship held in Minsk, our players dropped out of the elite division,

having lost all their games. In the current tournament, Kazakhstan

must reach at least second place to return to the world elite group.



The Kazakh national team celebrates a Group A win.

CAPITAL

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015

Marriott Seeks New Partners, New Local Relationships with Open Day

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – The Marriott Astana opened its third floor event facilities to all comers during its Open Day on April 13, an event intended to demonstrate the hotel's event capabilities and reach out to new and existing partners in the Kazakh capital.

"We're trying to reach out more," said General Manager Philippe Mahuas. "I think that when you enter a new city, there is a historical relationship that has been created in the area with existing partners, existing hotels, et cetera. We are a new hotel – OK, we are a leading brand, but we're still a new hotel, so we want to make sure people know we are here."

Marriott's two meeting rooms and board room were set up and ready for delegations to enter and sit down, in-

cluding one room demonstrating its more intimate concept for presentations, Meeting Imagine. In the larger halls, the hotel had laid out different décor and entertainment options, starting with an Aladdin-themed kids party room with cake pops and photo stages and moving on to its Grand Ballroom showing seasonal options for wedding decorations.

Most hotels have an open day as soon as they open – but Mahuas chose to wait until some nine months after the hotel's official launch. "When you're new, you have lots of ideas but you don't have the structure in terms of operations, in terms of the knowledge of the local partners – you can't automatically deliver them because you don't know how strong you're going to be [in different areas]. So

we decided to wait a little bit."

After nine months, he says, they now know who they can work with – the hotel's current partners are Vostorg Decor and the Astana Concert entertainment management company – and they've got a good understanding of the market in Astana and have proven themselves as a successful venue for corporate and private events. "But we want to do more. We didn't want to just sit here and wait for people to come to us or react to some of our sales promotions – we wanted to create a day that would be an opportunity for everyone to come and see the hotel and the different set ups and different possibilities that we have for hosting events," Mahuas said. The hotel was looking forward to seeing their existing partners and new potential partners and clients –

as well as curious Astana residents. "That's OK – we're happy with curious people, we just want them to come and say hello, we want to meet them, have the opportunity [to introduce ourselves], to have the opportunity to reach out to people."

Local and international companies in Kazakhstan are obvious potential clients and partners for the hotel, Mahuas said. But because Astana is the capital, there is an additional market here: governments and embassies. And with EXPO 2017 coming, he said, there will be national companies travelling to Kazakhstan to be involved with the expo project and working with their embassies in Astana, and he hopes to also reach out to them.

But the hotel also values its personal relationships with the residents of the Kazakh capital. The



General Manager Philippe Mahuas (c) with the partners of the hotel at Marriott Open Day on April 13.

Marriott has already hosted kids' birthday parties, parties for entering school, traditional Kyrkynan shygaru celebrations that mark the 40th day after a child is born, weddings, funerals and other important family occasions, and about which the staff seems the most excited.

Standing amid the hall full of Disney characters and themed sweets, Marriott Astana Marketing Manager Nina Nikitina said, "We like kids' parties!" The most recent

party organised by Astana Concert at the Marriott was a children's party, said Chingizkhan Nurkenov, part of the Astana Concert team.

"People in Astana are happy that we have a new venue to organise social events," he said. "Each event is special for us; we treat each one like it's the only one. It could be a big concert or a VIP party or a kids' party: they're all important to us, and we try to leave our guests with lasting memories."

Nazarbayev University Commercialisation Office Supports Domestic Innovation

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – At Nazarbayev University, the drive to research and innovate is being balanced and informed by the need to create practical, marketable products – a process that is supported by the university's Commercialisation Office, launched in the beginning of 2013.

"[The Commercialisation Office] provides administrative assistance (procurement, contracting, consulting, patenting, et cetera) to approved projects, aiming to get them to the working prototype stage," Daniyar Zhumagulov, director of the Commercialisation Office, told The Astana Times on April 2.

In the process, he said, a scientist will describe his or her innovation in an application for financing. "We have formal rules that govern financing commercialisation projects initiated by Nazarbayev

University scientists, and a special commission that reviews the applications," Zhumagulov notes. Applications are subject to external, independent review and given scores that are taken into account by the commission that decides on funding.

If a project is accepted for funding, the Commercialisation Office then offers an administrative hand to the scientists, helping them approach the stage where they might interest a business, and then bring the business community into the mix when there is a working prototype to show them or to produce, he said.

The Commercialisation Office is part of the university's Innovation Intellectual Cluster (IIC), which consists of the Commercialisation Office, the Business Incubator, the Prototyping Centre, the Technopark and the Research Park. "The cluster is designed to create favourable conditions for innovators, assist in introducing the re-

sults of research and development to the market, and form a ring of research-intensive and high-technology companies around Nazarbayev University. It must also create a favourable environment for researchers, attracting investments to new technology research within Nazarbayev University, developing engineering potential in Kazakhstan, fostering transfer and commercialisation of cutting-edge technologies and creating jobs for Nazarbayev University alumni," the IIC website says.

Technopark Director Diaz Baiseitov says their efforts are beginning to see results. "One of the projects we are proud of is a novel battery type (Li-Sulfur and Li-aqueous) developed by our team of scientists led by Professor Zhumabai Bakenov. Compared to conventional batteries, it holds up to 10 times more energy and withstands far more recharging cycles." The batteries are also cheaper to produce, he said, and the

sulfur-based battery has also been designed to use the huge amounts of sulfur waste produced by oil refineries in western Kazakhstan, thereby providing a solution to an ecological problem. The two types of battery are currently being patented and produced on the small scale; production will be scaled up into larger consumer packs by the end of the year, he said.

"The project received strong interest from national companies such as KazAtomProm and Samruk Energy as a means of replacing bulky lead acid batteries, the price, weight and size of which hinders renewable energy accumulation," he told The Astana Times.

Baiseitov himself led another project through the Commercialisation Office, this one to produce flat solar thermal collectors with efficiency rates of up to 90 percent, as opposed to 15 percent for photovoltaic devices, he explained. The KunTech start up produces the heat collectors through a technology developed in cooperation with

Western partners that uses locally produced components. "This allows for a cost in Kazakhstan [that is] half the selling price of such a device in Europe," Baiseitov said. "The project is mainly driven by the push towards renewable energy sources in Kazakhstan, sprung in 2012 by the President Nursultan Nazarbayev's legislative initiative to follow green economy principles, as well as the decision to hold EXPO 2017 in Astana."

This year, the devices are being assembled manually, but in the next two years, a full production line using local resources and labour is to be set up. "In October 2014, the project won the KazINNO Energy competition organised by the National Agency for Technological Development (NATD). The prize was an acceleration programme in Silicon Valley, along with participation in the CleanTech Open Global Forum, the world's largest accelerator of projects in the field of energy efficiency and resource conservation," Baiseitov said. As

the devices can help save more than half of annual heating costs, they are already attracting interest from industries and homeowners, he reported.

Nazarbayev University's Commercialisation Office collaborates with some other similar projects in the country, Zhumagulov said, in particular the Technology Commercialisation Centre (TCC) in Astana under the Ministry of Education and Science and World Bank. Nazarbayev University scientists have received funding through the TCC's grant competition, which is currently supporting projects by Nazarbayev University researchers on making batteries, developing current stabilisers and developing industrial robots and software to operate them, TCC Lead Expert Erik Azulay told The Astana Times. He also reported that the two organisations will be working together more closely in the future: the university and the TCC are working on a programme to have Nazarbayev University business students work on some of the TCC's commercialisation projects to get hands-on training in providing market analysis, business development, commercialisation strategies and other aspects of matching technologies to markets.



The KunTech team, supported by Nazarbayev University's Technology Commercialisation Office, with one of their solar thermal collection panels.

Astana's Rotary Club Launches

Continued from Page B1

The group's first activities will probably be related to raising awareness of the group and fundraising. These may include a bike tour around Astana sometime next month, Karamanli said, and a car journey from Astana to the U.K., with stops at other Rotary clubs along the way, Stamp suggested.

Projects will be decided upon by members as the group evolves. Rotary membership rules stipulate that clubs should strive for broad representation among a variety of profes-

sions, and Stamp says the Astana club will first be looking in particular to attract legal professionals and international members, as well as any former members of other Rotary clubs (Karamanli, for example, was a member of a Rotary club in New Jersey before moving to Kazakhstan).

"It'll be good for the city," Karamanli, managing director of the alternative energy company KB Enterprises in Astana, said. "It's important for Astana. Astana is a good city, a big city, but still, the image is not there yet," he said. Having

a Rotary Club will add to Astana's prestige, he suggested, and because of attendance requirements for Rotary meetings and events, having a club in Astana means travelling Rotarians – who will be prominent members of their home communities – will have an opportunity to attend meetings in Astana, increasing connections between Astana and the international community.

Astana's Rotary Club is the second in Kazakhstan, though it is already the largest; Almaty's Rotary Club launched in 1995.

