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President Nazarbayev Addresses the International Anti-Nuclear Conference

This week representatives of over 70 countries visited Kazakhstan to attend a major conference on the theme: “from the nuclear test ban to a nuclear weapons-free world.” Jointly organized by the Majilis, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Nazarbayev Centre and the international organization of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, the conference was held on August 28th and 29th, two dates of special significance: the third UN International Day Against Nuclear Tests and the 21st anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk test site.

Among the politicians, scientists, experts and parliamentary representatives gathered at the conference were: Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventative Diplomacy for Central Asia Miroslav Jenca; Chairwoman of the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of Russia Valentina Matvienko; German Minister of Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle; US Congressman Eni Faleomavaega; and Douglas Roche, founder and representative of the Middle Powers Initiative.

On August 28, over 140 participants went to Semey and Kurchatov, East Kazakhstan, where the first day of the conference took place. In Kurchatov, the guests visited the National Nuclear Centre, one of the country’s flagship scientific enterprises. In Semey, the delegation got acquainted with the city’s scientific, health, education, and cultural institutions. A mass meeting near the monument “Stronger than Death” to commemorate the 21st anniversary of closing-down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was the culmination of the day. Here the participants of the Conference laid foundation capsule of the future Museum of Peace.

In his opening address on August 29, the President recalled that the International Day Against Nuclear Tests was inaugurated by the UN on the initiative of Kazakhstan – the first country in history to close its nuclear testing site. This followed four decades during which Kazakhstan endured almost half of all nuclear tests carried out in history. President Nazarbayev reminded the conference of the lethal legacy: “from day to day the radiation poisoned our steppes, rivers and lakes, slowly killing all life in the area. This nuclear Evil destroyed the lives and health of over 1.5 million Kazakhstanis living in the vicinity of the test site. The effects of the nuclear tests are being felt to this day.”

The Head of State described the closure of the Semipalatinsk Test Site as marking the start of a new era of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament around the world. One of the most significant steps forward has been the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), set out by UN decree 16 years ago.

However, Nursultan Nazarbayev also cautioned that the non-proliferation regime has by no means become universal, with a number of new nuclear states and threshold states which have not signed up to the CTBT and similarly, some countries of the official “nuclear club” failing to follow the USA and Russia in their 2010 Prague agreement to continue reducing the amount of strategic offensive arms. Last year’s disaster at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, said the President,



Speaking at the Conference, President Nazarbayev suggested creating a global antinuclear parliamentary assembly.

clearly demonstrates the potential dangers of outdated nuclear security technology, and the need to establish global control over the development of nuclear energy programmes.

President Nazarbayev emphasized that the need to rid the world of nuclear weapons is all the more pressing because of the enormous potential for nuclear energy to bring positive benefits to humankind in the 21st century:

“Many countries resolve their poverty and unemployment issues and problems with supplies by implementing peaceful nuclear energy projects, under the strict control of the UN and IAEA, of course. That is why our position on a nuclear-free world has nothing in common with a fear of radiation or a utopian desire to once and for all ‘forget’ the secret of atomic energy. A non-nuclear world means a comprehensive ban on the use of nuclear energy for military means. This is the essence of my proposal to draw up and adopt a universal declaration for a world free of nuclear weapons.”

Three key measures needed to achieve this aim were outlined by the President: firstly, the CTBT needs to come into force; secondly, the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) must be gradually brought into effect with the participation of all nuclear states; thirdly, a mechanism must be developed to encourage states that have essentially turned away from military nuclear programs, to continue on this path.

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Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan

Finally, the President called on participants to support two online initiatives from Kazakhstan: the ATOM Project (the name derives from “Abolish Testing. Our Mission”), a global online petition which will urge governments around the world to definitively reject nuclear testing and to bring the CTBT into force as quickly as possible; and the G-Global Forum, which facilitates far-ranging discussion on setting up a new and fair world order in the 21st century, without the fear of nuclear self-destruction.

President Nazarbayev concluded by urging all conference participants and everyone around the world to support all of these endeavours and to make a nuclear-weapons-free world the most important goal of humankind. As a result of the two-day conference, parliamentarians, mayors, disarmament experts, as well as civil society representatives adopted an appeal to the Parliaments and Governments around the world.

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Kazakhstan Marks Constitution Day with International Conference

The 21st century requires a new interpretation of the Constitution of Kazakhstan, which is a living mechanism enabling society to achieve legal and social innovations fitting to modern Kazakh society. This was the message from President Nursultan Nazarbayev, in his address to an international conference devoted to Constitution Day, August 31.



The Constitution Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Delegations from international organizations and representatives of state bodies and human rights organizations from over 20 countries joined the leaders of Kazakhstan's state bodies to participate in the Constitution Day Conference, held at Astana's Pyramid of the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation.

President Nazarbayev commented on the symbolism of the Conference location, saying: "The Constitution is the foundation for the whole pyramid of the State. Peace and Reconciliation are values endorsed in the 18th century, which allowed this political innovation to unfold. Kazakhstan's Constitution is grounded in the highest principles of freedom, aiming towards legal harmony and supporting the welfare of the nation."

The Constitution set out in 1995 has become a key factor in the success of Kazakhstan, said the President, pointing to the central tenet of the Constitution that economic growth should be of benefit to society as a whole. The resilience of Kazakhstan to the global financial crisis is, he said, evidence of the validity of this approach: "The provisions in our Constitution have helped our country to overcome the most acute effects of the global crisis. Since 2010, around 440 new industrial facilities have been built, and over 250 businesses will be built in the next 5 years. They will employ around 150,000 Kazakhstani. Financing for education, science, healthcare and social protection has been increased over the past decade, and dozens of large medical centres with cutting-edge technology have been built."

The President also pointed to the continuity between the approach to economic growth enshrined in the Constitution and the current program of social modernization:

"The concept of a consumer society, which has been forced upon the world over the last 50 years, has turned out to be an illusion. In many countries it has led to widespread social crisis. I think the concept of a Society of Universal Labour gives an alternative to the growth of social dependency and the illusion of making fast money, which are not supported by a labour input."

President Nazarbayev said that the main aim of social modernization is to create a Society of Universal Labour in Kazakhstan, which can best be achieved through the step-by-step implementation of the Constitution's social provisions. The task of Kazakhstani legislators is now, he said, to disclose the pioneering spirit of the Constitution: "It is important to convert the energy of the Basic Law into the force of practical solutions and new laws ensuring the progress of the country," Nursultan Nazarbayev said.

President Nazarbayev went on to highlight the clear commitment of the Constitution to an open foreign policy, which laid the foundations for the economic integration since developed with Russia and Belarus in the Customs Union, as well as the strong relationships Kazakhstan now enjoys with China, Russia and the EU.



A gala concert at the "Kazakhstan" concert hall in Astana concluded a series of celebrations held on the Constitution Day.

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The success of the Constitution in helping to forge these relationships was amply demonstrated by the series of international attendees who paid tribute to the achievements of Kazakhstan:

The President of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission, Gianni Buquicchio, congratulated President Nazarbayev on the level of economic success and regional stability achieved by Kazakhstan and added his good wishes for the future: "It is my dream to see Kazakhstan developing even further and becoming an even more competitive country in the next 15 years."

The Chairman of the Constitutional Court of Armenia, Gagik Arutyunyan, highlighted that Kazakhstan had consciously avoided constitutional idealism and instead chosen to modernize social relations through the principles of the Constitution, while effectively negotiating conflicts between the Constitution and legal system.

"It is my dream to see Kazakhstan developing even further and becoming an even more competitive country in the next 15 years."

Gianni Buquicchio, President of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission)

Russia's Supreme Court Chairman Vyacheslav Lebedev drew attention to the substance of Nursultan Nazarbayev's article on "Social Modernisation: 20 steps to a Society of Universal Labour," which he described as "an important contribution to the development of constitutional, conceptual positions on the social orientation of the state."

The celebration of Constitution Day concluded with a gala concert in Astana's Central Concert Hall, with a program performed by the Kurmangazy Kazakh State Academic Orchestra of Folk Instruments and the symphony orchestra of the Baisseitova National Opera and Ballet Theater, accompanied by the leading soloists of Kazakhstan.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Addresses Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Tehran

Yerzhan Kazykhanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, attended the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, which took place in Tehran on August 30-31.

The Non-Aligned Movement was founded by 25 states at the Belgrade Conference in September 1961. Today, the NAM includes 120 members and around 20 observer states, of which Kazakhstan is one. Over 50 heads of state and government from the Near East and Far East were among 150 delegates and observers participating in the Summit, which is held once every three years.

The Tehran Summit investigated the most pressing issues on the international agenda, including: the prevention and regulation of local armed conflicts, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, sustainable development, and overcoming the global financial and economic crisis.

In his address, the Minister paid tribute to the dedication and perseverance of NAM Member States, describing the NAM as a dynamic forum and an important channel for developing nations to speak with one voice. He noted that Kazakhstan shares the principles and goals of the Movement and that its foreign policy, which aims at strengthening sovereignty and statehood based on the principles of good neighborly relations and cooperation, is fully consistent with the philosophy of the NAM.



Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov led Kazakhstan's delegation to the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Tehran on August 30-31.

Mr Kazykhanov pointed out that Kazakhstan's unwavering commitment to the ideal of a nuclear-weapon-free world is in complete harmony with the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which remain central to the agenda of the NAM. As President Nursultan Nazarbayev has said, Kazakhstan's experience shows that nations reap huge benefits from turning their backs on nuclear weapons: there is no doubt that Kazakhstan is a more prosperous, stable country, with more influence and friends in the world, thanks to its stance. The Minister urged all Member States to support Kazakhstan's initiative in adopting the Universal Declaration on a Nuclear Weapons-Free World.

Mr Kazykhanov went on to call for closer cooperation between the NAM and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). As current Chair of the OIC Foreign Ministers Council, Kazakhstan has been focussing on the unprecedented challenges facing the Muslim world today, including a peaceful solution to the Palestine issue and the conflict in Syria. Recognizing the humanitarian consequences of a catastrophic civil war, he called on both the Syrian Government and the opposition to lay down weapons and turn to diplomacy to resolve the conflict.

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The need for creative, new ideas to deal with the global economic and financial crises was the next topic raised by the Minister. He outlined a new initiative from Kazakhstan, to convene under UN auspices a World Anti-Crisis Conference in May 2013 in Astana, and called on all NAM Member States for their support.

The Minister then reminded the Summit of Kazakhstan's proposal to develop a Global Energy-Environmental Strategy (GEES) for Sustainable Development in the 21st century and to promote the "Green Bridge" partnership programme which was included in the Final Document of the RIO+20 Conference in June 2012. Mr Kazykhanov also called on NAM member states to support Astana's bid to host "EXPO-2017" on the topic "Energy of the Future," through which it hopes to focus international attention on renewable energy.

Mr Kazykhanov applauded NAM efforts to promote inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, founded by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, met for the fourth time in Astana in May 2012.

"Minister Kazykhanov drew attention to the shared goals of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the NAM, and recommended a strengthening of the links between the two."

Kazakhstan supports the NAM in its efforts to develop cooperation with other regional organizations, in keeping with its own firm commitment to regional cooperation. Mr Kazykhanov drew attention to the shared goals of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the NAM, and recommended a strengthening of the links between the two. To that end, he invited Summit participants to come to Astana on September 12 for the 20th Anniversary and 4th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CICA.

The Minister concluded his address by calling for a constructive spirit at the Summit and pledged to strengthen mutual assistance and support and broaden the areas of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the NAM.

"President Nazarbayev's successful visit to Germany last year was a landmark event, acknowledging the high level and long-term nature of Kazakh-German relations. Signing the unprecedented partnership agreement on natural resources, industry and technology has been of significant importance in strengthening our economic cooperation."

Guido Westerwelle, German Foreign Minister

German Foreign Minister on Official Visit to Kazakhstan



Guido Westerwelle (L) and Yerzhan Kazykhanov (R) sign a joint statement on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Germany and Kazakhstan

August 29 saw the first official visit to Astana by the German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle. The Minister first met with President Nazarbayev, then went on to attend the International Anti-Nuclear Conference before meeting with his Kazakhstani counterpart, Yerzhan Kazykhanov.

In his opening remarks to the conference, Mr Westerwelle paid tribute to President Nazarbayev's decision, 20 years ago, to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and disarm the world's fourth-largest nuclear arsenal. He also praised Kazakhstan's efforts to regulate the situation arising from Iran's nuclear program.

Mr Westerwelle outlined Germany's main priorities in nuclear disarmament - a key element of his foreign policy. One of the few German politicians committed to removing US nuclear warheads from Germany, Mr Westerwelle also supports obligatory criteria for comprehensive nuclear security. He instigated the 'Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative' with the participation of ten states and is a proponent of resolving the nuclear conflict in Iran through a joint and transparent approach by the 'E3+3' countries (UK, USA, China, Germany, France and Russia).

At the meeting of Foreign Ministers, Mr Kazykhanov drew attention to the fact that his German colleague's visit marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and Germany. The Ministers reviewed progress on agreements made during Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Germany last February. "President Nazarbayev's successful visit to Germany last year was a landmark event, acknowledging the high level and long-term nature of Kazakh-German relations. Signing the unprecedented partnership agreement on natural resources, industry and technology has been of significant importance in strengthening our economic cooperation," said Mr Westerwelle.

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According to Mr Westerwelle, Kazakhstan is a key partner of Germany in Central Asia and Germany intends to further cooperation in all areas. He emphasized the importance of technological cooperation in the field of renewable energy and agriculture. Mr Westerwelle also called for early liberalisation of the visa regime between the EU and Kazakhstan.

The Ministers discussed a wide range of issues including regional and international security, the situation in Afghanistan, the Syrian crisis and the problems surrounding Iran's nuclear program. Transit, logistics, air travel, rail transport and international road transport were highlighted as priority areas for cooperation, given the strategic importance to both countries of the "West Europe – West China" transport corridor.

Two areas of particular focus were trade and education, where Kazakhstan and Germany have long shared close ties. Kazakhstan accounts for 85% of Germany's trade with Central Asia and is the fourth largest supplier of oil to Germany. The Kazakh-German Intergovernmental Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation, along with the joint Business Council on Strategic Cooperation, have been highly successful in fostering economic cooperation between the two countries, with the result that mutual trade reached 6.2 billion Euros in 2011.

The Kazakh-German University in Almaty provides a focal point for educational exchange between the two nations, while several hundred Kazakhstani students are studying in German universities. They are among over 1 million Kazakhstanis resident in Germany, while the German community in Kazakhstan numbers almost 190,000. Cultural ties and friendship between the two countries were further strengthened by the Year of Kazakhstan in Germany (2009) and the Year of Germany in Kazakhstan (2010). Mr Kazykhanov stated that, in light of this strong relationship, the Ministers also discussed the possibility of relaxing visa regulations between Germany and Kazakhstan.

For his part, Mr Westerwelle (in an interview after the meeting) underlined the interest taken by Germany in the political and economic development of Central Asia. It was under Germany's Council Presidency in 2007 that the European Union adopted "The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership," while in 2012, a German diplomat has taken on the role of EU Special Representative for Central Asia. Mr Westerwelle confirmed that negotiations are well underway with Kazakhstan on a new, broader agreement to continue the partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU. He also stressed the importance of cooperation in higher education and welcomed the doubling of the EU educational budget for Central Asia.

After the discussions, the Ministers signed a Joint Statement on the 20th Anniversary of Kazakh-German diplomatic relations.

Kazakhstan Cheers On its Paralympics Team

Kazakhstan is pleased to be fielding a team of seven athletes to compete in the 2012 Paralympic Games in London. Five of the seven have previously won medals at international Paralympics events. At the 2010 Asian Paralympic Games, in which 5,500 athletes represented 45 Asian member nations, swimmer Anduar Akhmetov won the gold medal and set an Asian record, while powerlifter Kabira Askarova also took home gold. Islam Salimov won athletics medals in both the 2006 and 2010 Asian Paralympic Games, while Aynur Bayduldayeva took an athletics medal in the 2011 World Championships and Aybek Abzhan won a medal for powerlifting in the 2009 Asian Championships.



Logo of Kazakhstan's Paralympic Committee

The five are joined at the London 2012 Paralympics by teammates Sergey Kharlamov in athletics and Zulfiya Gabidullina in swimming. Acknowledging that Kazakhstan is a relative newcomer to the Paralympic movement and that the athletes will face tough competition from more established teams, Yelsiyar Kanagatov, Deputy Chairman of Kazakh Agency for Sports and Physical Education, congratulated Team Kazakhstan on their achievement in participating in the 2012 Paralympic Games. He wished the team well at a ceremony prior to their departure for London, at which it was also announced that there would be substantial cash awards to medal winners.

Team Kazakhstan will be among over four thousand athletes competing across twenty sports at the London Paralympic Games from August 29 - September 9.



In 2011, Kazakhstan had a record harvest of nearly 27 million tonnes of grain in net weight

Growing Grain Exports

Kazakhstan has steadily increased grain production and export capacity in recent years to become one of the main global centres of grain export. While the record harvests of 2009 and 2011 have not been repeated this year, exports are nonetheless on track to meet the 2012 target of 13 million tonnes.

Record harvests and increasing exports of grain in recent years, however, have highlighted problems which must be resolved if growth is to continue: chief among these is the dearth of transport options and open ports. The effort to address this issue gained momentum in 2009, when five billion tenge of state funding was allocated to improve rail transport services for exports through Russia, followed by a similar drive on facilitating exports to China. These measures have borne fruit in export growth and the 2012 allocation of state funds includes 10 billion tenge to further improve export routes.

The efficiency of exporting through the two ports of Kuryk and Bautino has also been improved by the construction of state-of-the-art grain terminals, equipped with cutting-edge technology - which means they can operate around the clock. The Baku Grain Terminal, a joint venture between Azerbaijan's "Planeta L" and Kazakhstan's "AkBiday Terminal" which began construction in 2006, now supplies grain to Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and North Africa. The terminal has a capacity of 600,000 tons per year and can hold 22,500 tons at any one time. In 2012 to date, 16,702,342 tons of grain has been sold through the Baku Terminal.

Another terminal, AkBiday, is one of the first facilities to be created as part of the program "Developing Kazakhstan's grain export infrastructure on the Caspian Sea and Black Sea." Built by JSC "National Company Prodkorporatsiya," this terminal has created a stable export base to broaden the scope of Kazakhstan's grain exports: while its main market is Iran, it also serves Turkey, Greece, Albania, Cyprus, Italy and Georgia. The AkBiday terminal is also a key element of the Aktau-Baku-Poti transport corridor which is currently under construction and which, on completion, will further enhance

"With the ability to produce between 14-22 million tons of wheat and internal demand of just 7-8 million tons, Kazakhstan has the potential to export from 7 to 14 million tons of high-quality wheat each year"

Kazakhstan's position as grain exporter to Azerbaijan and adjoining Georgia and Turkey.

In the six years since the AkBiday terminal opened, a total of 1.9 million tons of grain has been processed for export. The annual figure has grown from 36,200 tons in 2005 to 500,000 tons in 2012. Kazakhstan legislation ensures that any grain exporter can gain access to the terminal; grain transfer agreements are currently in place with five companies, four of them freight forwarders, which in 2011 were used by 20 different companies.

In 2008 Kazakhstan and Iran joined forces to build the Kish Grain Terminal at Amirabad in northern Iran, on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Joint shareholders are Iran's LLC 'BekhdizTedzheratAlborz' and Kazakhstan's JSC "AkBiday Terminal." The terminal loads up to 4,000 tons of grain from sea vessels to railway and other transport each day and can store up to 53,000 tons in 14 silos. Kazakhstan now aims to export up to 700,000 tons of grain per year to Iran.

With the ability to produce between 14-22 million tons of wheat and internal demand of just 7-8 million tons, Kazakhstan has the potential to export from 7 to 14 million tons of high-quality wheat each year. The "National Company Prodkorporatsiya" is planning a railway grain terminal in Gorgon, on the border with Turkmenistan and Iran, in order to increase exports to Iran and the Caspian area. Plans are also well underway to increase the Aktau grain terminal's capacity to 1 million tonnes, which will further underpin Kazakhstan's ability to maintain its position as a major global exporter of grain.

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Also in The News...

- President Nazarbayev held a series of bilateral talks during the Anti-Nuclear Conference in Astana. He discussed US – Kazakhstan cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation with US Congressman Eni Faleomavaega. With Douglas Roche, founder of the Middle Powers Initiative, President Nazarbayev discussed initiatives to raise international awareness of issues related to the elimination of nuclear weapons.
- In a telephone conversation with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin on August 29, Nursultan Nazarbayev discussed joint participation in multilateral economic projects in Central Asia and preparations for the Ninth Forum of International Cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan in September 2012 in Pavlodar.
- Nursultan Nazarbayev received letters of credence from the ambassadors of Austria, Georgia, Spain, Vietnam, Romania, Turkey and the Netherlands on August 28. This is an important year in Kazakhstan’s foreign policy as it marks the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations with these countries.
- On August 27, Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov met with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Chile, Fernando Schmidt. Kazykhanov said that Astana aimed to develop economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Chile and was particularly interested in attracting Chilean capital to Kazakhstan’s non-energy sector through the ‘Program for Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development in Kazakhstan for 2010-2014.’
- On August 28, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tleuberdin read a special report on the International Day against Nuclear Tests, which has been held every August 29 since 2009 in accordance with a UN General Assembly Resolution. He informed listeners that on August 27-29, a large international forum ‘From a Nuclear Test Ban to a Nuclear Weapons Free World’ was being held in Astana and Semey and gave them a detailed description of the agenda and issues at hand.
- Kazakhstan’s Commissioner for Human Rights Askar Shakirov met with Coskun Coruz, Head of Delegation of the Netherlands to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Dutch MP, on 27 August. They exchanged views on their experience in human rights and discussed how ombudsman institutions worked in their countries.
- On August 28, Nurlan Nigmatulin, speaker of the Parliament, and Valentina Matviyenko, Chairwoman of the Russian Council of the Federal Assembly, discussed inter-parliamentary cooperation on anti-nuclear initiatives. Valentina Matviyenko said that Russia was also supporting President Nazarbayev’s antinuclear initiatives and his efforts to construct a safe future. She said that “the Astana Conference is another step towards peace and progress.”
- The Mayor of the Norwegian city of Frogn Thore Vestby and the Director of the international movement ‘2020 Vision Campaign’ Aaron Tovish presented Astana’s mayor, Imangali Tasamagambetov, with a ‘Mayors for Peace’ certificate on August 27. The ‘Mayors for Peace’ conference was set up in 1982 on the initiative of the mayors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. It aims to develop solidarity between nations standing for a non-nuclear world by strengthening links between cities.
- Figures from the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade show that Kazakhstan’s GDP is projected to grow by 6 % in 2013, 6.1 % in 2014, 7.6 % in 2015, 6.6 % in 2016 and 6.9 % in 2017. Nominal GDP will grow from 36.6 trillion tenge in 2013 to 65.3 trillion tenge in 2017. Annual inflation in Kazakhstan will stand at 6 – 8 % until 2017. Exports will increase from 96.1 billion dollars in 2013 to 166.7 billion dollars in 2017; imports from 56.3 billion dollars in 2013 to 92.3 million dollars in 2017.
- Life expectancy in Kazakhstan has risen from 68.4 years (in 2010) to 69.1 years. The birth rate has increased by 2 % this year and the death rate has gone down by 4.3 %. In the first half of 2012 maternal mortality decreased by 13 % and youth mortality went down by 5 %.
- Andrey Kivilev from Kazakhstan will receive a posthumous bronze medal for the Tour de France in 2001. The cyclist died in March 2003 from a fall at the Paris-Nice cycling race. After his death, the International Cycling Union (UCI) decreed that all cyclists taking part in UCI competitions would have to wear helmets.
- Students from the Kyzylorda and Almaty music schools became laureates of the XI International Music Festival ‘River Notes’ held from August 23-25 in Tutrakan, Bulgaria. Beybarys Alish won first place, and Aruzhan Telepbergen and Zhadyra Abuzar second place. Dilnaz Tolegen won a special prize for the best rendition of a Bulgarian song. The soloist from the group ‘Senim’, Aruzhan Toktagan, was awarded first place and Dana Ali, the student of Maksat Zhautikov from Almaty won third place.

Things to Watch...

- This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Conference of Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, an initiative of President Nazarbayev. As the founding country of the Forum, Kazakhstan is planning to hold a jubilee celebration on September 12 in Astana. The event will include a special session with the President’s participation and the Fourth CICA Conference of Foreign Ministers.
- From September 12-14 the Fourth Meeting of Trade Ministers of Land-Locked Developing Countries will take place in Almaty, as will the Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation. Ministers from 30 land-locked countries, all UN Member States (including transit developing countries) and representatives of international organizations will take part in the events.

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