



Monthly News Bulletin April 2013

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AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijani investors invited to buy shares of Iranian companies

April 1 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijani investors are invited to buy the shares of the Iranian Khuzestan Steel Company and Javin Electrical Machines Industries Company. According to the Azerbaijan Export and Investment Promotion Foundation (AZPROMO), the Iranian companies are going to sell their shares through a sale on a stock exchange.

Azerbaijani President receives OSCE Minsk group co-chairs and Personal Representative of OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

April 2 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received OSCE Minsk group co-chairs Igor Popov of Russia, Ian Kelly of the United States and Jacques Faure of France, as well as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk. The meeting focused on current state of and prospects for the peace talks on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Deputy Speaker of Canadian House of Commons

April 3 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received a Canadian delegation led by Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, chairman of the Canada-Azerbaijan Friendship Group Barry Devolin. Barry Devolin said it was his second visit to Azerbaijan. The Deputy Speaker added he had eye-witnessed big development processes in Baku since his last visit. During the meeting, they noted there was big potential for expansion of relations on different fronts, including in the fields of economy, politics and interparliamentary cooperation. The Azerbaijani President and the Canadian Deputy Speaker stressed the importance of reciprocal visits in terms of strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries. They also discussed prospects for Azerbaijan-Canada cooperation.

Iowa legislators recognize Azerbaijani Remembrance Day of Soyqırım

April 4 (AzerTAc). On March 31, 2013, the Iowa state legislators, Representative David Jacoby and Senator Robert Dvorsky issued a certificate of recognition commemorating the 95th anniversary of Soyqırım, also known as the Azerbaijani Genocide. The proclamation signed by both legislators was presented to the representative of Azerbaijani-American Council (AAC) in Iowa, Dr. Agshin Taghiyev. From March 30 to April 3, 1918, armed groups of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak Party) with support of Soviet Bolsheviks massacred Azerbaijanis and other Muslims in the city of Baku and its surroundings. March Days were part of a larger campaign of extermination carried out by Armenian nationalists seeking to create a mono-ethnic state in Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus. These atrocities resulted in deaths and deportations of over 2.5 million Turks, Azeris, Kurds and other Muslims in early 20th century. In March 2012, New York became the first state ever to recognize Azerbaijani Genocide at a legislative level by Senate Resolution 3784 that designated March 31 as the Azerbaijani Remembrance Day.

On March 22, 2013, New Jersey General Assembly recognized the Azerbaijani Genocide by another commemorative resolution.

The Business Year names Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev the Person of the Year

April 4 (AzerTAc). British The Business Year magazine has named Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev the Person of the Year. President Ilham Aliyev was honored for his role in ensuring Azerbaijan's rapid development in the last five years; in turning the country into an important actor on the global geopolitical scene; in ensuring Azerbaijan's tremendous contribution to maintaining global peace and security as a UN Security Council member and to developing the ICT sector both in Azerbaijan, in the region and in the world through launching Azerspace, the country's first communications satellite; as well as in making Azerbaijan the center for high-profile international social, political, economic forums, conferences and sport tournaments.

US West Virginia State adopts resolution on Khojaly Massacre

April 4 (AzerTAc). House of Representatives of the US State of West Virginia has adopted a resolution on the 21st anniversary of Khojaly tragedy. The resolution commemorates the victims of the crime perpetrated by the Armenian armed forces in Azerbaijan's Khojaly town and also says that Khojaly tragedy was a part of the military aggression and ethnic cleansing carried out by Armenian military units in Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region since 1988. The legislative bodies of other states of the US as Mississippi, Maine, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Tennessee, Pennsylvania had also passed the resolutions on Khojaly tragedy.

Khalaf Khalafov: "Work within framework of commissions on handover process of Gabala RS has been completed"

April 6 (AzerTAc). "The work within the framework of commissions on the handover process of Gabala Radar Station has been completed", Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov told the journalists. According to him, handover process of Gabala RS consists of two phases: "Firstly, we were to realize inventory check, we've completed this phase. The second phase comprises full handover process, withdrawal of the property belonging to Russia, solution of the issues connected with departure of the staff and their family members. The Azerbaijani side has carried out all the appropriate activities and officialised all the documents related to the handover process. The station has already suspended its operation; the property to be sent to Russia has already been placed in the storage facilities and the Russian side is taking steps for withdrawal of this property".

Khalafov said that the contacts and negotiations with the Russian side on the handover process of Gabala RS are conducted in the atmosphere of full mutual understanding. "The negotiations were held in accordance with the spirit of the Azerbaijani-Russian relations, there is no disagreement, all issues have been resolved promptly. We are currently realizing the withdrawal by the planes sent by Russia and taking all the necessary measures", Mr. Khalafov emphasized.

Azerbaijan's President receives founder and Executive Chairman of World Economic Forum

April 7 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has received today founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum Klaus Schwab. During the meeting they stressed the importance of Baku`s hosting the World Economic Forum and touched upon the ongoing rapid economic development process in Azerbaijan. They also expressed confidence that the World Economic Forum would successfully be held in Baku and serve expansion of economic cooperation.

World Economic Forum Strategic Dialogue on the Future of the South Caucasus and Central Asia starts in Baku Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev attends the event

April 8 (AzerTAc). The World Economic Forum Strategic Dialogue on the Future of the South Caucasus and Central Asia has kicked off in Baku. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev attended the event. Agreement to hold the forum in Baku was reached on January 23 when President Ilham Aliyev met Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum Klaus Schwab. Opening the first session of the forum, Mr. Schwab stressed the importance of the event. He praised Azerbaijan`s economic achievements. Mr. Schwab said Azerbaijan`s favorable geographical position and highly educated workforce created ample opportunities for cooperation with the country. Klaus Schwab thanked the Azerbaijani President for friendly treatment and cooperation. The event then featured the demonstration of a short film about economic development of the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Frederick Starr, Chairman, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University, highlighted prospects for cooperation among the regional countries. President Ilham Aliyev made a speech at the event. The President drew the participants` attention to Azerbaijan`s economic development. "In the last ten years our primary goal has been to diversify the national economy," said the Azerbaijani leader, adding the country`s economy has seen a three-fold growth. The President spoke of Azerbaijan`s prospering space industry, referring to the launch of the country`s first communications satellite in February. Other speakers at the first session included Bakytzhan Sagintayev, First Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, Andrey Kostin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, VTB Bank, Russian Federation, Djoomart Otorbaev, First Vice-Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, and Taner Yildiz, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey.

US, Turkey discuss liberation of Azerbaijan`s occupied territories

April 8 (AzerTAc). US Secretary of State John Kerry and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu have discussed the strengthening of the OSCE Minsk Group activity and liberation of Azerbaijan`s occupied territories. They also discussed regional security issues, situation in the South Caucasus, as well as normalizing Turkey-Armenia relations. "The Turkish and Armenian relations are of crucial importance, which need a much more comprehensive approach to be initiated. The Minsk process should be provided with an ever-increasing momentum and the invaded territory of Azerbaijan is an issue that we need certain advancement within," Davutoglu stated after the meeting. Davutoglu and Kerry said they had discussed the two-year-old civil war in Syria, including the shared goal for a peaceful transition there. They said a meeting of a core group of the Friends of Syria would take place soon. Kerry praised Turkey for its "generosity" toward refugees and commitment to keeping its borders open. The Iraq and the Cyprus issues were also on the agenda during their meeting. The US Secretary of State also met with Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

4th Azerbaijan International Insurance Forum to take place in June

April 8 (AzerTAc). The 4th Azerbaijan International Insurance Forum (AIIF) will take place on 20-21 June, the Azerbaijan Insurers Association (ASA) has announced. The forum will bring together 250 representatives of insurance and broker agencies from the South Caucasus, Central Asian, South Asian regions, as well as CIS countries. The forum will feature several sessions, including on prospects of the insurance market and new business opportunities in the South Caucasus, reinsurance in the South Caucasus, agricultural, medical and car insurance.

Azerbaijan`s President receives members of EBRD Board of Directors

April 9 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received members of the Board of Directors of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). They said the visit of members of Board of Directors would be important in terms of drawing up a strategy between Azerbaijan and EBRD. They also discussed issues on how to develop Azerbaijan-EBRD cooperation in various spheres, including in transport infrastructure, social projects, information and communication technologies, tourism, education, and healthcare.

Azerbaijan`s new seaport to become largest on Caspian

April 9 (AzerTAc). The new seaport in Azerbaijan will become the largest project for transportation of goods between the regions of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, according to a story on CNN TV channel. The International Sea Trade Port in Azerbaijan will become the largest port on the Caspian Sea, CNN reported. It will be receiving loads from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and even China, further to be transported to Georgia, Turkey and Western Europe. Currently, many investors are backing improvements in the transport infrastructure passing through the region, according to the story. According to the World Bank representative in Azerbaijan Larisa Leshchenko, the port will not only become a transit corridor, but also a cross-border point with implementation of customs procedures. In the coming years, the construction of the International Sea Trade Port in Alat will be completed, navy updated and expanded, a transport and logistics center built, the Baku-Boyuk Kesik and the Baku-Yalama railways rebuilt and modernized in accordance with the policy of diversification of the railway network, as well as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway put into operation. The necessary reconstruction of the main railway lines will also be undertaken and wagons and locomotives upgraded.

Azerbaijan, Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States discuss expansion of relations

April 10 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov has today met Secretary General of Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (CCTSS) Halil Akinci. During the meeting, Secretary General Halil Akinci highlighted issues on the agenda of the organization. They also discussed prospects for the Azerbaijan-CCTSS cooperation and exchanged opinions about the activities of the Cooperation Council.

President Ilham Aliyev visits 1st Caspian International Aqua Technologies Exhibition and Forum “CATEF-2013”

April 11 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today viewed the 1st Caspian International Aqua Technologies Exhibition and Forum “CATEF-2013”. Chairman of Azersu company Gorkhmaz Huseynov informed the Head of State that CATEF 2013 is the only event in the Caspian region dedicated to showcasing achievements in water technology. It is organised on the initiative of and supported by Azersu. The organisational partner is Iteca Caspian LLC. The water supply and sewerage systems for all cities and towns, as well as for hundreds of villages and other residential areas have been established or refurbished, state-of-the-art water intake and water treatment plants have been built, and main pipelines and water distribution networks have been laid in the recent years. CATEF is a three-day opportunity to make business contacts, share experience and sign long-term contracts in water supply and water management. The event combines presentation of advanced technology with discussion of current industry issues. Some 79 companies from 23 countries will offer their services in the following areas: water supply, wastewater and storm water, micro tunneling, measuring and control technologies for analysis of water, pumps, pumping systems, protection of drinking water sources, construction machinery and equipment, drilling rigs, information and communication technology, geothermal technology, seawater desalination technology and other products, technologies and services. Over 50% of participants are foreign companies, including Awas (Germany), DOW (USA), Duktus (Austria), Ekoton (Russia), Grundfos (Denmark), Herrenknecht AG (Germany), Hyundai (South Korea), Hungarian Water Cluster (Hungary), Krohne (Germany), Nippon Koei (Japan), Nordic Water-EMO (Switzerland), PWT (Germany), Samsun Makina (Turkish), Suez Environment (France), Xylem (Sweden) and others. Local stakeholders are companies Akkord Azerbaijan, Sumgait Technology Park and others. The President also viewed the pavilions of different countries.

Azerbaijan`s President receives Turkish minister of forestry and water

April 11 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received Veysel Eroğlu, minister of forestry and water of Turkey. The Turkish minister delivered greetings of President Abdullah Gul and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Eroğlu noted Turkey had always stood by Azerbaijan and would do so. He stressed the importance of expansion of relationship between the two countries. The minister praised the development process in Azerbaijan and congratulated President Ilham Aliyev for these accomplishments. President Ilham Aliyev said relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey were developing successfully in all spheres. The head of state also hailed relations between the two countries` bodies associated with environment and ecology. The President pointed out huge progress had been done in Azerbaijan regarding environmental issues. President Ilham Aliyev underscored the importance of Turkish minister`s visit to Azerbaijan for expansion of cooperation and exchange of experience in this sphere. The head of state asked Eroğlu to pass on his

Azerbaijani and Kazakh Centers for Strategic Studies hold joint round table

April 11 (AzerTAc). The Center for Strategic Studies under the President of Azerbaijan (SAM) and the Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan

have jointly held a round table on “Economic cooperation and transit routes in the Caspian region”. The representatives of both countries` think tanks held discussions on “The importance of the Caspian Sea for Azerbaijan and national prospects of regional cooperation”, “Potential threats the security in Kazakhstan and the Caspian region”, “The Caspian Corridor: Increasing importance for trade and energy export between East and West”, “Development of economic cooperation in the Caspian region: The vision of Kazakhstan”. SAM director Farhad Mammadov said that ensuring security in the Caspian Sea is one of the main topics between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan: “The Caspian Sea ensures Azerbaijan`s access to Central Asia and unites the people with a common history. But there are common threats. For example: the threat of smuggling”. Speaking about the importance and problems of the Caspian Sea, head of the Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan Bulat Sultanov said that the two countries have common roots and have already achieved some successes: “The world is rapidly developing and changing. Our goal is to identify these changes in advance and prepare forecasts. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, as developing countries, can prepare a common approach to the processes in the world. The Caspian-related problems are the common problems of the Caspian littoral countries and they can solve these problems in accordance with their interests.

Baku hosts 1st World Forum of Graduates of Moscow State Institute of International Relations

April 12 (AzerTAc). The 1st World Forum of Graduates of Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) has kicked off in Baku. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva are attending the event. The forum, initiated by the Azerbaijan Association of MGIMO Graduates, brings together more than 400 people, including officials, representatives of leading international organizations, businessmen and financiers from many countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia, Cuba, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Vietnam, as well as Azerbaijani graduates living and working abroad. President Ilham Aliyev delivered opening remarks at the forum held under the motto “Together towards future”. MGIMO rector, academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences Anatoly Torkunov read out Russian President Vladimir Putin`s message to the forum participants. Director of the Russian Cooperation Agency (Rossotrudnichestvo), special presidential representative for CIS Affairs, member of the Board of Trustees of MGIMO, Konstantin Kosachev read out a message of greetings of Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. The forum then continued in sessions, with the agenda topped by the issues of education, energy and environmental factors in global economic development, as well as the role of civil institutes, media community and business in settling international problems.

Azerbaijani President chairs Cabinet meeting to discuss results of socio-economic development in 1st quarter of 2013

April 14 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today presided over a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers to discuss the results of the country`s socio-economic development in the first quarter of 2013.

Azerbaijani President receives Speaker of Indonesian House of Representatives

April 16 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received an Indonesian delegation led by Speaker of the House of Representatives Marzuki Alie. The Head of State said relations between Azerbaijan and Indonesia were developing successfully in the bilateral format. The Azerbaijani President noted political, economic ties and interparliamentary cooperation between the two countries were expanded. President Ilham Aliyev said political relations between the countries had been intensifying recently. The President stressed the importance of reciprocal visits in terms of development of this cooperation. The Head of State said Azerbaijan and Indonesia mutually supported each other within international organizations, expressing confidence this support will be continued in the future. President Ilham Aliyev expressed hope Marzuki Alie's visit to Azerbaijan would contribute to expanding bilateral relationship even more. The Speaker of the House of Representatives noted there were big opportunities for enhancing the bilateral ties in the fields of education, tourism, trade and construction. Touching upon the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Marzuki Alie said Indonesia supported Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. He said the dispute should be settled on the basis of the norms and principles of international law.

Azerbaijan- EU reaches progress in talks on association agreement

April 16 (AzerTAc). A progress in various fields between Azerbaijan and the European Union has been made at the plenary session on Association Agreement in Brussels, Head of the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan, Ambassador Roland Kobia said on Monday.

According to Kobia, progress has been made especially in legal issues. These negotiations will be completed by the Vilnius summit. "We have also made progress in the economic field, and some questions have been closed," Kobia added. He stressed that negotiations on foreign policy and security still continue.

President Ilham Aliyev inaugurates building of Azerbaijan State Musical Theatre after major overhaul

April 18 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today opened the building of the Azerbaijan State Musical Theatre after major overhaul. The Head of State was informed about reconstruction work in the building. President Ilham Aliyev met foreign experts, who were involved the reconstruction work. It was noted that the first theatre building was constructed in Baku in 1883 initiated by Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev. The first performance of Leyli and Majnun opera of Uzeyir Hajibeyov took place in this theater. National leader Heydar Aliyev attended the official opening of the Theatre's building in October, 1998. President Ilham Aliyev viewed a 460-seat hall.

Imam of Bordeaux Mosque calls Azerbaijan excellent example of secularism

April 18 (AzerTAc). Imam of Bordeaux Mosque Tareq Oubrou has described Azerbaijan as an excellent example of secularism as he met the country's Foreign Minister

Elmar Mammadyarov. Oubrou hailed tolerance in Azerbaijan, stressing the importance of learning the country's experience in this regard. He expressed readiness to help make Azerbaijan's just voice heard in France and expand the relations between the two countries.

FM Mammadyarov said representatives of different religious communities had co-existed peacefully in Azerbaijan throughout history. He emphasized that efforts to associate the peaceful religion of Islam with terror was a completely wrong approach.

International Bank of Azerbaijan and Microsoft enter into agreement

April 18 (AzerTAc). The International Bank of Azerbaijan signed an agreement on long-term cooperation with Microsoft as part of Microsoft Enterprise Agreement. By its terms the International Bank has an opportunity to transition to the Microsoft platform for all of the computers used in the organization. Agreement Enterprise Agreement is designed for organizations with 250 computers and over who have chosen the Microsoft platform as corporate standard. The signing of the document opens broad prospects for cooperation between the International Bank of Azerbaijan and Microsoft, promotes the introduction of innovative technologies and the optimization of bank processes. The operator of the project is SoftlineInternational. Agreement Enterprise Agreement has a number of advantages. One of the most important is to reduce total cost of ownership that allows you to pay more in annual instalments rather than one lump sum. Enterprise Agreement also allows you to use the latest versions of products Microsoft (Software Assurance). During the term of an Enterprise Agreement company may use the licensed product on all computers included in the contract, and to add new computers during the term of the agreement. Full control of the cost of purchasing the software ensures that the license cost per one PC remains constant throughout the term of the agreement, and the dim Software Assurance coverage can insure against a possible rise in prices due to the release of new versions.

Azerbaijani President receives Macedonian Prime Minister

April 19 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received a delegation led by Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. The Head of State expressed confidence that Nikola Gruevski's visit would be a good chance to discuss the Azerbaijan-Macedonia relations. The Macedonian Prime Minister hailed the political relations between the two countries. Nikola Gruevski said that Macedonia was interested in enhancing the bilateral ties in different fields. They stressed the importance of a cooperation agreement to be signed between the two countries. The Azerbaijani President and the Macedonian PM exchanged views on expansion of the cooperation in the fields of energy, tourism and investment making.

Azerbaijan, Poland discuss defense cooperation

April 19 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan and Poland have discussed prospects for developing defense cooperation as defense minister Safar Abiyev met Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski in Warsaw. The Defense Minister informed the Polish President of the military and political situation in the region, particularly the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Minister Abiyev noted that Armenia had continued to refuse to withdraw its armed forces from the occupied lands of Azerbaijan for more than 20 years. "Four resolutions adopted

by the UN Security Council have not yet been fulfilled,” the Azerbaijani Minister added. In Poland, Abiyev also met his counterpart Tomasz Siemoniak to explore ways of developing the bilateral military cooperation.

Yildiz: Turkey to hold on to TANAP, Nabucco pipeline shares

April 19 (AzerTAc). Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz on Wednesday stressed the importance of Ankara's stake in two Caspian gas pipelines, telling the press that it would ensure the country's role as an energy corridor for Europe. The Minister said that Turkey's state oil firms, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) and the Turkish Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS), would maintain their existing 20 percent stake in the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline project (TANAP), words which come amid a selloff of some of the remaining 80 percent of shares by the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR). Various international news outlets this month reported that SOCAR would sell a 29 percent stake in the field to Norwegian oil firm Statoil, as well as international oil giants BP and Total.

“We plan to keep the second largest stake in the TANAP project,” Yildiz said during the press conference. The shakeup in ownership in the TANAP pipeline also comes as a major stakeholder dropped out of the parallel Nabucco pipeline on Sunday. This week German utility company RWE sold its stake in Nabucco, turning over its 17 percent share of the project to Austrian energy company OMV. Yildiz said that Ankara's oil companies would also maintain their existing stakes in that project, which is shared with firms in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. The two pipelines, which link Turkey and Europe to large reserves of natural gas in the Caucasus, are considered essential for reducing the dominance of Russia in Turkey and Europe's gas trade. The Minister has also said the pipelines will make energy-poor Turkey into an energy hub for greater Europe. “Turkey will be both the country benefitting the most from this and the country helping other nations the most,” he said.

TANAP, which is expected to be completed in 2018, is projected to have a capacity of around 16 billion cubic meters a year. Ankara says around 6 billion will be consumed by Turkey, while the rest will be sent to Europe. Yildiz also said more domestic energy reserves might be tapped in Turkey's Southeast should Ankara successfully conclude its three-decade-long conflict with Kurdish terrorists. “Energy investment will be one of the things most radically changed by the settlement process,” the Minister told a gathering of journalists on Wednesday, highlighting the reserves of natural gas and shale gas revealed by government-funded surveys of the country's far Southeast. “Hopefully these reserves will be better explored if, God willing, the settlement process is successful,” he added, referring to talks aimed at a disarmament and withdrawal of the terrorist PKK group.

U.S. Department of State accuses Armenia of backing separatists and occupying Nagorno-Karabakh

April 20 (AzerTAc). The U.S. Department of State has accused Armenia of supporting separatists and occupying Nagorno-Karabakh region. In its Human Rights Report 2012, the U.S. Department of State said separatists, with Armenia's support, continued to control most of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other Azerbaijani territories. “The final status of Nagorno-Karabakh remained the subject of international mediation by the OSCE Minsk Group, cochaired by Russia, France, and the United States.”

AZAL launches direct flights to Lviv

April 20 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan Airlines, AZAL, has launched direct flights from Baku to Lviv, Ukraine. According to AZAL, starting from June 16 to September 15 “Airbus A-319” and “Airbus A-320” will fly on the Baku-Lviv-Baku route two times per week on Fridays and Saturdays. The normal time of the flights is scheduled to be 3 hours 30 minutes.

Baku to host Crans Montana Forum annual session

April 21 (AzerTAc). The 24th annual session of Crans Montana Forum will take place in Baku from June 27 to 30. The yearly Forum offers a one of its kind and world-renowned platform of networking, gathering nearly 600 high-caliber personalities from around the world, representing governments, international organizations and businesses. The event will feature a number of sessions, including “The destructive impact of sea-level rise and climate change on small islands countries. How to protect populations from sea-level rise and the effect of ocean degradation?”; “When survival is at stake: the implementation of concrete action plans is a matter of urgency for small island states”; and “Promoting an inclusive and sustainable approach to small islands states’ development”. The forum will also include a special event “Azerbaijan and its international connections: towards International and Regional Transportation Strategies” in cooperation with Club of Ports. “The new leaders for tomorrow” special meeting will also take place as part of the Forum.

Azerbaijan, Georgia trade turnover increasing year by year

April 22 (AzerTAc). Trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Georgia exceeded \$700 mln in 2012, while it was \$450 mln in 2009, said the Chairman of State Customs Committee Aydin Aliyev at the meeting with the delegation led by head of Customs Service of Georgian Ministry of Finance Lasha Khutsishvili. “The trade turnover reached \$ 300 mln during the first three months of 2013”, he added. SCC Chairman noted that increase of trade turnover was caused by extension of economic relations and joint projects between two countries. In turn, Lasha Khutsishvili said that economic relations and humane treatment between two countries are at high level.

Azerbaijani President receives participants of “CIS Muslims for peace and sustainable development” conference

April 23 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received participants of a conference titled “CIS Muslims for peace and sustainable development” in Baku. President Ilham Aliyev made a speech at the meeting. Other speakers at the event included chairman of the Caucasus Muslims Office, Sheikhulislam Allahshukur Pashazade, muftis of the Karachay–Cherkess Republic of the Russian Federation, Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Serbia, and President of the International Islamic Mission Shafiq Pshikhachev.

Azerbaijani deputy FM attends 32nd meeting of Caspian Sea littoral states` Working Group

April 23 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s deputy minister of foreign affairs Khalaf Khalafov has attended the 32nd meeting of the Caspian Sea littoral states` Working Group on determination of the legal status of the Caspian Sea held in Tehran. Khalafov addressed the event to stress the importance of realization of a protocol, which was adopted at the Baku Summit of the Caspian Sea littoral states` in 2010. He said ensuring security in the Caspian Sea, protection of environment and development of international cooperation was “of great importance to the littoral states”. Deputy FM Khalafov reiterated Azerbaijan`s position on transport and communication projects. He expressed confidence the agreement “On Security Cooperation in the Caspian Sea” would have a positive impact on development of relations between the government bodies of the Caspian Sea littoral states.

Azerbaijani company awarded in Shanghai Auto Show

April 23 (AzerTAc). Automotive Company ‘Auto Azerbaijan’ was named the ‘Distributor of the Year’ for successful cooperation with the Chinese automotive manufacturing company Geely, in the 2013 Shanghai Auto Show. Geely is also known as producer of the London black cabs in other words ‘London Taxi.’ Auto Shanghai is a biennial international automobile show that alternates with the Beijing Auto Show and dates to its inception in 1985. Auto Shanghai became the first UFI approved Chinese auto show in June 2004. Auto Shanghai is held every two years in the neighborhood of Pudong in Shanghai, China, since the 9th show in 2001, the exhibition has taken place at the Shanghai New International Expo Center.

Presidents of Azerbaijan and Latvia meet one-on-one

April 24 (AzerTAc). Following the official welcoming ceremony, presidents Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Andris Berzins of Latvia met in private. The presidents praised development of bilateral ties between Azerbaijan and Latvia in a variety of fields, particularly in political and economic spheres. They stressed importance of mutual visits in terms of expansion of cooperation between the two countries. The presidents expressed confidence the visit would contribute to developing the Azerbaijan-Latvia relations. The Heads of State also exchanged views on the strengthening of relations with Latvia in the context of the Azerbaijan-EU cooperation.

Azeri FM meets Knesset chairman

April 24 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s minister of foreign affairs Elmar Mammadyarov has met with chairman of the Knesset Yuli Edelstein, as part of his visit to Israel. According to the press service of the Ministry, Edelstein noted Azerbaijani foreign minister`s visit to Israel is important for development of relations between the two countries.

Knesset chairman said Azerbaijan is a tolerant country, adding “Israel is keen on cooperation with Azerbaijan”. Members of Jewish organizations working in Azerbaijan, who accompanied Mammadyarov, said “they are historically living in Azerbaijan in peaceful coexistence”. Touching upon the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-

Karabakh, the members of Jewish organizations expressed hope for soonest settlement of the problem within territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan, Israel discuss prospects for cooperation

April 24 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan and Israel have explored ways of developing the bilateral cooperation as Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel-Aviv. They praised development of the Azerbaijan-Israel relations. The Azerbaijani FM and the Israeli Premier stressed the current visit would make its contribution to boosting the cooperation between the two countries. The two also exchanged views on various issues of mutual interest, including ongoing processes in the Middle East.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev`s speech circulated as UN document

April 24 (AzerTAc). According to Azerbaijan`s Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev`s speech at the international conference on "International Conference on Strengthening Cooperation in Preventing Terrorism" in Baku on March 18-19 has been circulated as UN`s official document. The Azerbaijani Head of State`s speech is available at <http://daccess-dds-un.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/287/44/PDF/N1328744.pdf?OpenElement>.

SOFAZ planning to purchase real estate in Asian countries

April 24 (AzerTAc). Representatives of the Azerbaijani State Oil Fund (SOFAZ) will visit China, South Korea and Australia in the second half of 2013 to study the opportunities for investing in real estate, SOFAZ executive director Shahmar Movsumov told journalists. "Our representatives visited six countries in 2012. This year we plan to visit three more countries. After this visit, we will make a decision about the investments in real estate. The matter rests in the commercial real estate for leasing offices. We can invest in real estate both in one country and in a few countries."

Azerbaijani President receives OIC Secretary General

April 25 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu. Mr. Ihsanoglu said he had eye-witnessed big development processes every time he visited Baku. He described the holding of a conference of Labor Ministers of the OIC member countries in Baku as a good example of cooperation. The Secretary General hailed Azerbaijan`s role in development of cooperation among the OIC member countries. Touching upon rapid development processes in Azerbaijan, President Ilham Aliyev stressed the fact that the volume of investment made in Baku and the country`s other regions had grown in recent years. The Head of State underlined the importance of the country`s achievements in the non-oil sector. The President expressed confidence that the conference of Labor Ministers of the OIC member countries in Baku would contribute to expanding cooperation among the organization`s member countries. They hailed development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the OIC on all fronts. They noted the significance of Azerbaijan`s active cooperation with all organizations under the OIC. The

Azerbaijani President and the OIC Secretary General also discussed the issue of expansion of the bilateral relations.

Azerbaijani delegation attends Ministerial Conference of Istanbul Process

April 26 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijani delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov has today attended the third meeting of foreign ministers of the 'Istanbul Process' aiming at security and stability in Afghanistan held in Almaty. An Almaty declaration was adopted at the conference which brought together 30 countries' FMs, officials, as well as, representatives of several regional and international organizations. The conference featured discussions on confidence building in the 'Heart of Asia' region which included Afghanistan's direct and regional neighbors, development of regional cooperation, etc. Acting plans of the confidence building in Afghanistan also were adopted at the conference. 'Azerbaijan will make invaluable contributions to 'Istanbul Process' as an active and responsible participant of international community,' said Araz Azimov. The next conference of 'Istanbul Process' will be held in China.

Azerbaijani people`s 92 percent trust its government, poll

April 26 (AzerTAc). The Azerbaijani people`s 92 percent trust its government, according to a poll conducted within the European Neighbourhood Barometer on Azerbaijan as of late 2012. The poll was conducted in November-December 2012 among 1000 respondents as part of the EU-funded project on examining public opinion in the countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The European Neighbourhood Barometer (examining the public opinion and media monitoring) is part of the EU-funded regional information program aimed at assessing the level of awareness and perception of the neighbourhood policy, activities and programmes of EU cooperation, the European Neighbourhood Information Centre said. The poll says around 53 percent of 1000 respondents, surveyed in November-December 2012 believe that the EU and Azerbaijan have good relations. This indicator is better than the average index for the East Region of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) (45 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively).

The poll says Azerbaijanis participating in the poll are satisfied with their lives and 65 percent of respondents like the way they live. The level of satisfaction is higher among young people and more educated respondents. The vast majority of respondents trust the government (92 percent) and the parliament (68 percent). The respondents are optimistic about their country`s development with 48 per cent believing that Azerbaijan is moving in the right direction and only 17 per cent disagree. The economic sentiment indicator is also high as 69 percent of respondents believe that the economy is at a good level. Some 60 per cent are satisfied with the results of the democratic process in the country. According to the poll, 37 per cent of respondents believe that the EU is an important partner of the country, while 51 per cent believe that the EU and Azerbaijan have enough common values for fruitful cooperation. The publication of statistics data and conclusions of the European Neighbourhood Barometer was timed to the promulgation of a package of reports

OIC Labour ministers gather in Baku

April 26 (AzerTAc). The second conference of Labour ministers from the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has been organized here by the Azerbaijan's Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population. The aim of the conference is to lay a solid foundation for cooperation in social security field among OIC courtiers. Presiding over the first conference Undersecretary of Labour Ministry for Planning and Development Affairs of Saudi Arabia Moffarej Al Hogubani said that after the first conference much progress was achieved in Islamic countries in development of the labour market, reduction of jobless rate, establishment of relations between private and state sectors.

Chairman of the second conference, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan Fuzuli Alakbarov noted that strengthening of cooperation on labour and employment can play an important role in solving the problems getting in the way of socio-economic development. Alakbarov underlined that building the single cooperation network in order to reduce the effects on employment environment is the right step. He noted that development of cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is the part of the wise policy of national leader Heydar Aliyev. Secretary General of the OIC Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu noted that Azerbaijan takes an active part in various training programs and oil and education along with other members of the organization. He noted that the main aim of the organization was to reduce the impact of the financial crisis on member countries.

He noted the main objective in the member countries was to increase productivity, open jobs and speed up socio-economic development. The participants of the two-day conference are expected to adopt the Baku Framework Document and resolution, as well as the Baku declaration.

Tunnel construction to be resumed within regional railway project

April 28 (AzerTAc). Tunnel construction that will connect Georgia and Turkey within the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars regional railway project will resume in May, Georgian Economic Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili said. "As far as I know, tunnel construction must resume in May," he said. "The problems that existed in relation to the protected areas were resolved during the construction process." He stressed that construction is under way now on the remaining sections of the road. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is being built in accordance with an inter-governmental agreement reached by Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. The railway will increase the flow of containers and other types of cargo from Asia to Europe. Its throughput capacity will peak at 17 million tons of cargo per year. Initially, the capacity will be 6.5 million tons of consignments and 1 million passengers. Azerbaijan has allocated a loan worth \$775 million for the construction of the Georgian section of the railway. Funding for the project from the State Oil Fund is carried out in accord with the 2007 presidential decree on taking measures within the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project. In the future, with the completion of the Marmaray project (construction of a tunnel under the Bosphorus), a way to Europe will be ensured through the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Atletico Madrid squad

April 29 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received the squad of Spanish football club Atletico Madrid.

Head of Azerbaijan`s Presidential Administration meets Iranian President in Tehran

April 29 (AzerTAc). Head of the Presidential Administration of Azerbaijan, academician Ramiz Mehdiyev has today met Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Tehran. Ramiz Mehdiyev conveyed greetings of Azerbaijan`s President Ilham Aliyev to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and thanked him for the high hospitality. The Head of the Presidential Administration praised development of historical, cultural and religious relations between the two countries and peoples. He said there was good potential for strengthening the Azerbaijan-Iran ties. They noted reciprocal visits played an important role in rapid development of the bilateral relationship. The Iranian leader asked Ramiz Mehdiyev to pass on his greetings to President Ilham Aliyev. They also noted that the two countries` presidents showed high political will for expansion of relations between the two countries. They exchanged views on a range of issues of mutual interest.

Baku to host 7th Azerbaijan International Agriculture Exhibition “Agrihort Azerbaijan-2013”

April 29 (AzerTAc). Baku will host the 7th International Agriculture Exhibition “Agrihort Azerbaijan-2013” organized by the Iteca Caspian and ITE Group plc next month. The exhibition will bring together agricultural producers and suppliers from Ukraine, Germany, Russia, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. The event`s exhibition space has increased 30% in comparison with 2012. Agrihort Azerbaijan 2013 will demonstrate agricultural and poultry farming equipment, irrigation systems, greenhouse equipment, seeds, fertilisers and more. Agricultural machinery will also be on display outside the pavilion.

Azerbaijan`s President receives Director General and CEO of International Air Transport Association

April 30 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the International Air Transport Association, Tony Tyler. Mr. Tyler stressed the role of air transport in rapid development of economy. He underscored the necessity of development of this sphere globally. Mr. Tyler highly appreciated the Azerbaijani state`s attention to development of air transport. President Ilham Aliyev said the Azerbaijani government always paid special attention to development of air transport. According to the President, modern airports are built in various regions of the country and new planes are bought with government funding. The Head of State underlined the importance of air transport in increasing business and tourism opportunities of the country. They exchanged views on how to expand cooperation between International Air Transport Association and Azerbaijan Airlines, and establishment of new partnership relations in air transport sphere.

Bishkek-Baku-Istanbul flight to be launched

April 30 (AzerTAc). The Bishkek–Baku–Istanbul and Istanbul-Baku–Bishkek (return) flights are to be launched soon. The flights will be realized due to the business Forum in Baku in summer and the forthcoming session of the Azerbaijani-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission in autumn. The matter will be discussed just in these events. Also the Days of Kyrgyz Culture in Azerbaijan and Days of Azerbaijani Culture in Bishkek are expected in 2014.

KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstani Kseniya Palkina wins International Tennis Tournament

01/04-2013 07:46, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Ivan MARCHENKO

Kseniya Palkina, a tennis player from Kyrgyzstan, won the International Tennis Tournament, International Tennis Federation website reported.

As noted, the Kyrgyzstani played in doubles with Oksana Kalashnikova (Georgia). They defeated Basak Eraydin (Turkey) and Abby Myers (Australia) in a final match, scoring 6:4, 4:6, and 10:8.

Kyrgyzstan plans to institute Chingiz Aitmatov medal

02/04-2013 15:28, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

Parliamentary Committee of Kyrgyzstan for Human Rights, Constitutional Legislature and State Structure supported institution of Chingiz Aitmatov medal.

The medal does not provide any money reward and will be given to writers only as an encouragement. The Finance Minister Olga Lavrova explained that initially, the government has negatively assessed the initiative, referring to the lack of funds. "The state awards production is expensive. But if the Parliament decides to institute the medal, we will have to raise funds," she said.

Recall, CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly established a special award with a cash bonus of \$ 30,000 in honor of the Issyk-Kul Forum, devoted to Chingiz Aitmatov, which will be held in summer. This award is timed to anniversary of the writer.

Over 150 documents signed between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey

03/04-2013 13:04, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Kaliya DUISHEBAYEVA

"Over 150 documents have been signed between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey," Daniyar Mukashev, Director of the Western Countries Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said at a press conference today.

According to him, during the upcoming visit of the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Kyrgyzstan, the parties plan to sign a number of documents in agriculture, tourism, health care, aviation, water and other spheres.

As it was earlier reported, the Turkish Prime Minister's official visit to Kyrgyzstan is scheduled for

Children's Iv Fashion theatre wins Grand Prix at international festival-contest in Astana

03/04-2013 09:37, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Kanykei MANASOVA

Children's Iv Fashion theatre from Bishkek won the Best Fashion Theatre nomination at the 7th Ak Kogershin international festival-contest of children's art in Astana, Kazakhstan, the theatre's leader and art designer Ivan Kornilov told 24.kg news agency

According to him, his group has presented three collections at the contest "Radiance of Tien Shan", "Dream in a summer night", and a new "Khan Tengri" with choreographic elements by Christina Kornilova. "It was a difficult contest: the jury judged every part of the performance, including the fashion show, choreographic part, background music and collection design," Ivan Kornilov said.

Kyrgyz, Kazakh MPs discuss bilateral relations problems

08/04-2013 14:37, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency, by Shavkat TURGAYEV

Kyrgyz and Kazakh MPs discussed the problems of bilateral relations behind closed for the press doors.

Today, representatives of the Committee for Foreign Affairs Defense and Security of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Foreign Affairs Committee held a meeting in Kordai village (Zhambyl province, Kazakhstan).

The Kyrgyz party was represented by Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee Kanybek Imanaliyev, Chairwoman of the Committee for Social Policy Damira Niyazaliyeva, Deputy Chairmen of the Committee for Foreign Affairs Bakhtiyar Kadyrov and Nurlan Torobekov, and MPs Galina Skripkina, Gulnara Zhamgyrchieva, Bakhadyr Suleimanov and Esengul Isakov.

According to Ikram Adyrbekov, Chairman of Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security of Kazakhstan, the Kazakh party thanks the Kyrgyz delegation for the visit. "We are ready to discuss all questions, solve all the problems between our countries. In particular, due to approach of summer season, we would like to know about Issyk-Kul situation and the whole political situation in Kyrgyzstan," Ikram Adyrbekov said.

As Kanybek Imanaliyev said, relations between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are developing "progressively and positively". "Visit of President Almazbek Atambayev to Astana will expectedly take place in the nearest future. This is the first such visit. It's a positive point in our relations. Trade turnover between the countries increased by 41 percent last year and reached \$1.58 billion," Kanybek Imanaliyev said.

He noted problems of Kyrgyz migrants in Kazakhstan should be solved. "We need to solve the issue of resuming dairy and meat supply from Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan. We are going

to enter into the Customs Union. You have a large experience in this sphere and we are going to consult with you on this issue,” he added.

The meeting of two parliament members was held behind closed doors.

Kyrgyzstan gets time dissemination system from Turkey

09/04-2013 13:36, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia MOKRENKO

Kyrgyzstan has obtained time dissemination system from Turkey, press service of the Economy Ministry of Kyrgyzstan reported.

According to it, the equipment (signal transmission system- time standard) was granted as a part of cooperation between the Center for Standardization and Metrology under the Economy Ministry of the Kyrgyz Republic and the National Institute of Metrology of the Council for Scientific and Technological Research of Turkey.

As Sultan Akhmatov, Director of the Center for Standardization and Metrology said, time standard is for the first time introduced in independent Kyrgyzstan.

As it was reported, the time standard signal transmission system will check and calibrate means for measuring the connection time of mobile operators and other telecommunications companies and will provide one time work of the e-government, air navigation, transport, communications, energy and financial institutions.

Prime Minister tells about Kyrgyzstan’s economic potential at World Economic Forum

09/04-2013 08:25, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia MOKRENKO

Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Dzhoormart Otorbayev told about Kyrgyzstan’s economic potential at the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of South Caucasus and Central Asia World Economic Forum held on April 7 -8 in Baku (Azerbaijan), Information Policy Department of the Government Office reported.

According to its information, the Prime Minister spoke about importance of strengthening of regional cooperation of Central Asian countries and the South Caucasus and suggested jointly to work out mechanisms for it.

In particular, Dzhoormart Otorbayev outlined presence of large rare-earth metals and gold reserves, told about Kyrgyzstan’s business relations with other countries, stating Kyrgyzstan’s willingness to create a favorable investment climate, including introduction of visa-free regime for many countries.

Trade turnover between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan may reach \$1B – Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

10/04-2013 15:10, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya SYTENKOVA

“Trade turnover between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan may reach \$1 billion. We could invest in all branches: mining industry, tourism, production and education. We are leaders in education investments,” Turkish Prime Minister said at the Kyrgyz-Turkish business forum today.

According to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkish investors work in 100 countries all around the world, investing about \$246 billion. “We are second after China on volumes of construction. Our businessmen can boost this branch in Kyrgyzstan together with Kyrgyz entrepreneurs,” he noted.

According to the Turkish Prime Minister, Kyrgyzstan takes the leading place in the region with its geological and water resources. “This business forum will give rise to relations between our countries,” Recep Erdoğan said.

Besides, he noted that Kyrgyzstan, like Turkey, has no oil but has water. “We have a large experience in hydropower plants’ construction. And we as fraternal country are ready to support Kyrgyzstan in this sphere,” Recep Erdoğan noted.

Trade turnover between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan amounts to \$ 230M in 2012

10/04-2013 14:26, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya SYTENKOVA

“Trade turnover between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan amounted to \$ 230 million in 2012. Turkey is one of the main trade partners of the Kyrgyz Republic,” Temir Sariyev, the Minister of Economy of Kyrgyzstan said.

According to the Minister, more than 300 joint ventures operate in Kyrgyzstan at the time. Moreover, over \$300 million have been invested in Kyrgyzstan since 1995.

Speaking about reforms, the Minister outlined that Kyrgyzstan has created the most liberal tax regime. Income tax rate, tax on profits and VAT favorably differ from those in the neighboring countries. According to the World Bank Doing Business report, Kyrgyzstan takes the 71st place, while Turkey is 70th in the list.

"Taking into account the fact, that the region is becoming more solvent, it will turn into a strong trade area in future. A system of free air travel Open Skies is being actively disused and introduced. It is also planned to launch an international hub on the basis of Manas airport," Temir Sariyev said.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan arrived on a visit to Kyrgyzstan.

10/04-2013 13:35, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Shavkat TURGAYEV

An extended meeting of Ministers’ Cabinets of Turkey and Kyrgyzstan with participation of the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Zhantoro Satybaldiyev, the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan, takes place at Ala-Archa state residence today.

The Kyrgyz Prime Minister Zhantoro Satybaldiyev thanked his Turkish colleague for the visit and assistance. "We should develop our continuous cooperation. And our interrelations can be even better: we have to increase trade turnover between our countries. We are going to create favorable conditions for Turkish investors. We will hold an international conference of donors in June, 2013 and I hope you will take part in it and render assistance to Kyrgyzstan. Our countries make a good work in education sphere. This year we will celebrate the 85th anniversary of a famous writer Chyngyz Aitmatov, who had a great impact on Turkic nations. In honor of the writer we will hold a forum at Issyk-Kul lake in 2013," Zhantoro Satybaldiyev said.

Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Erdoğan in his turn thanked the Kyrgyz government for a warm welcome and noted Kyrgyzstan success in state building.

"I am delighted to see democratic processes in Kyrgyzstan. The government has achieved high results for a short period of time. Trade turnover between our states had increased by \$90 million last year. But this figure could reach \$1 billion. Today 104 Turkish entrepreneurs have arrived in Kyrgyzstan. They are going to invest in various branches. I hope you will assist us in it," Recep Erdoğan said.

"Osh-Istanbul and Bishkek-Istanbul flights by Pegasus Company have been opened this year. Flights competition leads to fall in ticket prices. Also, we are ready to assist you in creation of a new international hub at Manas airport and could share our experience. Besides, we need closer cooperation in economy and agriculture as well," head of Turkish government said.

The negotiations were followed by signing of bilateral agreements. In particular, Protocol on amendments to the agreement between the governments of Kyrgyz Republic and Turkey on air traffic signed on October 14, 1994; Tourism Cooperation Agreement; memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Economy of Kyrgyzstan and the Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey and cooperation agreement on forestry have been signed today.

Sultan Rayev: Kyrgyzstan and Turkey will sign agreement on tourism cooperation

10/04-2013 12:35, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Zhazgul MASALIYEVA

Kyrgyzstan and Turkey will for the first time sign an agreement on cooperation in tourism sphere, Sultan Rayev, the Culture, Information Policy and Tourism Minister of Kyrgyzstan said to 24.kg news agency .

As the Minister said, "the agreement has been drawn up for 5 years with subsequent prolongation." "According to it, the Turkish side bound itself to training of personnel on providing the service. Communications with the Turkish tour operators, who will share their experience in the field of tourism, will be established," the minister said.

Nowadays, few Turkish tourists visit Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, according to Sultan Rayev, we should develop trans-tourism. "We have a lot of places related to the Turkish history. For example, Burana Tower, which dates to Karakhanid period," he said.

Afghanistan- China transit corridor to appear in southern Kyrgyzstan

15/04-2013 11:19, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

Corridor for transit of cargoes from Afghanistan to China will appear in the southern Kyrgyzstan. A relevant protocol was submitted to the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee for discussion by the State Secretary of the Transport and Communications Ministry Maksat Dyikanov.

According to Dyikanov, funds for the construction of Sary-Tash – Karamyk road in Alai and Chon-Alai districts of Osh province have been allocated by China under the Central Asian regional economic cooperation. "Transit of goods from Afghanistan to China means that they will not arrive in Kyrgyzstan," Maksat Dyikanov said.

Deputy Galina Skripkina asked whether representatives of the relevant agencies can ensure safety of the state and prevent import of smuggled goods to the Kyrgyz Republic. After some debates, the relevant committee approved the draft protocol.

CSTO Permanent Council to hold visiting session in Kyrgyzstan

15/04-2013 08:30, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Shavkat TURGAYEV

The first visiting session of the Permanent Council of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) will be held in Kyrgyzstan on April 15-16.

Secretary General of the CSTO Nikolay Bordyuzha, Military Chief of the CSTO Joint Staff Lieutenant-General Alexander Studenikin and plenipotentiary representatives of CSTO member countries will participate in the event.

Nikolay Bordyuzha will meet with the Secretary of the Defense Council of Kyrgyzstan Busurmankul Tabaldiyev, Vice Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Shamil Atakhanov, Defense Minister of Kyrgyzstan Taalaybek Omuraliyev and the Foreign Affairs Minister Erlan Abdyldayev.

The session will review the status of implementation of the CSTO Collective Security Council decisions concerning the development of CSTO's military dimension and collective measures aimed at the improvement of the border security system of the CSTO member states. It is planned to visit airbase in Kant and military contingent of Kyrgyzstan in Koi-Tash, included into the Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF) of the CSTO.

CSTO to hold number of military exercises in 2013

16/04-2013 14:17, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Shavkat TURGAYEV

Collective Security Treaty Organization will hold a number of military exercises in 2013, CSTO Deputy Secretary General Valery Semerikov said at meeting of CSTO Permanent Council in Koi-Tash village today.

According to him, Interaction-2013 exercises will be held in Belarus with participation of military units from CSTO country-members. Kyrgyzstan will hold anti-drug exercises called Thunder-2013. All organizational issues are being discussed now," Valery Semerikov said.

"During Kobalt-2013 exercises in Rostov oblast of Russia we will assess strength and possibilities of our peace keeping forces , and the World Fraternity-2013 large-scale exercises on the territory of Russia with participation of representatives of various international organizations, including OSCE and UNO, will complete them," he noted.

CSTO plans to create collective air forces

16/04-2013 12:55, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Shavkat TURGAYEV

Collective Security Treaty Organization plans to create collective air forces. It was voiced today by the Deputy Secretary General of the CSTO Valery Semerikov at a session of CSTO Permanent Council at a military unit in Koi-Tash village.

According to Mr Semerikov, the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces program stipulates for creation of CSTO air units. "This will be a new kind of joint air forces, aircrafts of which will ensure operation of the coalition forces, military operations, shipping and transportation, intelligence service," Valery Semerikov said.

"To implement the project, we are preparing the necessary legal documents, and agree it with all the members of CSTO," he added.

Kyrgyz Parliament asks to check foreign funders of NGOs

17/04-2013 13:48, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

Members of Kyrgyzstan's Parliament asked to check foreign funders of NGOs. Such initiative was suggested by MP Tursunbay Bakir uulu, member of Ar-Namys faction.

According to him, the State Financial Intelligence Service should check all NGOs and track out their source of financing. "What's their purpose here? What ideologies they have? They might be financed by terrorists. Their members get several thousands of dollars cash not through banks but in the U.S. Embassy," he said, calling the financial intelligence upon control over "western mass media offices, accredited in Kyrgyzstan,".

In their turn, representatives of the State Financial Intelligence Service asked MPs to approve the draft law on fight against laundering of criminal proceeds, as it is recommended by Financial Action Task Force (FATF), otherwise, the country risks to be blacklisted. According to FATF, as of today Kyrgyzstan is in the dark-grey list.

Kyrgyz Prime Minister to discuss strategic partnership with Dmitry Medvedev

19/04-2013 11:26, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

The Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan will go for a working trip to Russia on April 22-23, Information Policy Department of the Government's Office reported.

According to its data, Zhantoro Satybaldiyev plans to meet with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev. The Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan will take part in the 15th session of Intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Russian Commission on trade economic, scientific technical and humanitarian cooperation.

As it was noted, "in view of favorable relations with Russia, the forthcoming session of the Intergovernmental Commission will serve as a platform for the strengthening of the Kyrgyz-Russian strategic partnership."

Kyrgyzstan gets €5M for implementation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding program

23/04-2013 14:01, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

Kyrgyzstan got €5 million for implementation of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding program from international organizations. The information was voiced at press conference today.

According to the head of the European Union's delegation to Kyrgyzstan Chantal Hebberecht, work in this area will continue. "This is especially important today to engage partners, including all interested parties, in particular, the authorities of the republic, in the process," Chantal Hebberecht said.

Program Coordinator Darikha Erketaeva added that 4.5 million euro have been received from the European Union.

EBRD to grant Kyrgyzstan \$20 million for power supply improvement

23/04-2013 14:07, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will grant Kyrgyzstan \$20 million for power supply improvement. EBRD credit tranche is expected to come on April 25, 2013.

It was noted, the loans may vary from several hundred dollars up to \$1 million, depending on type of investments. Owners of a housing, power supplying companies, property developers or management firms can get grants amounting to 20-35 percent of the credit sum.

Turkish grant to be spent on new military uniform plant in Kyrgyzstan

25/04-2013 15:49, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Shavkat TURGAYEV

In Kyrgyzstan, the Turkish grant will be spent on construction of new military uniform plant, Chief of Logistics Department at the Defense Ministry Nurbek Tanabaev said at a press conference today.

According to him, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan reached an agreement. "According to the document, Pexan Turkish firm is granting us necessary modern and automated equipment". All procedures have been settled already. The equipment will be delivered to our country in May," Nurbek Tanaev said.

"In April, Minister of Defense Taalaibek Omuraliyev signed an order about construction of a military uniform plant. Construction is expected to end in August, 2013. And in September, on the minister's order, we will start outfitting of all soldiers. They have to be provided with necessary fatigues and ceremonial dresses within a year," he added.

Switzerland allots \$ 950,000 for development of Kyrgyzstan-Kazakhstan cooperation on transboundary rivers

25/04-2013 10:59, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya SYTENKOVA

Switzerland allots \$950,000 for development of cooperation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on transboundary rivers Chu and Talas. Agreement on the project was signed by representatives of the Swiss government and the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The project will allow to automate the monitoring system for real time control over water flows in Chu and Talas rivers.

Automated monitoring system has been created and installed in the basin of Chu river during the first phase of the project. The second phase will expand operation of the system over all key irrigation facilities of the two rivers on both sides of the border.

ADB predicts Kyrgyzstan's economic growth and increase in Russian and Chinese investments

25/04-2013 09:47, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency, by Irina DUDKA

The Asian Development Bank predicts economic growth revival and increase in Russian and Chinese investments in Kyrgyzstan for 2013.

According to ADB experts, after the 2012 slump, the economic growth will revive up to 5.5 percent in 2013 and 4.5 per cent - in 2014. This will take place at the time of increase in gold production and investments from Russia and China into the energy facilities and transport infrastructure.

However, production of gold may fail to meet the expectations in case of possible deterioration of the political situation, ADB noted.

The main source of economic growth will be the service sector, which will show 5 percent increase annually. Industry will grow by 10 percent while metallurgy sector will become the main driving force.

EU to grant Kyrgyzstan €20 million for technical and vocational education development

25/04-2013 09:13, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya SYTENKOVA

“European Union will grant Kyrgyzstan €20 million for technical and vocational education development. These funds will be spent on budget support and education programs. We decided to start supporting lyceums and technical schools this year,” Ambassador Chantal Hebberecht, the Head of European Union's Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic , said in the course of her trip around Chui province.

This year the country’s budget will get the first tranche. The total sum is granted for three years. Now, as part of the technical and vocational education development program, over €1 million were spent on renewal of 21 training facilities around 7 provinces. The money is allocated as grant.

To implement this, professions that are needed have been chosen at places. So, Belovodskiy lyceum 28 has chosen the following trades: electric and gas welder, tractor driver, seamstress, and cook.

According to some entrepreneurs of Moscow district, “the market is glutted with new technologies, and we have to retrain graduates of lyceums. We keep on teaching them in the old way while it’s computer management everywhere”.

Part of the EU’s grant was spent on purchase of a modern tractor. However, according to Sagynbek Chagarbayev, head of the lyceum 28, they still lack techniques for efficient training.

As part of the project, the lyceum initiated short-term courses for 75 people. Scholarship is 80 soms a day.

EU to grant Kyrgyzstan €20 million for technical and vocational education development

25/04-2013 09:13, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya SYTENKOVA

“European Union will grant Kyrgyzstan €20 million for technical and vocational education development. These funds will be spent on budget support and education programs. We decided to start supporting lyceums and technical schools this year,” Ambassador Chantal Hebberecht, the Head of European Union's Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic , said in the course of her trip around Chui province.

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ADB to support Kyrgyzstan in development of transport corridor

26/04-2013 10:25, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia MOKRENKO

Asian Development Bank will allocate funds for Kyrgyzstan to assist in improvement of economic competitiveness through faster, predictable and efficient border crossing conditions, press service of the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic reported. According to it, the project will support development of the transport corridor and facilitate trade in the region.

The project will consist of three components: improvement of infrastructure of Karamyk crossing point on the border with Tajikistan, the development of a national "single window" in foreign trade sphere, strengthening of potential in governance and supervision over the project.

The Economy Ministry of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Single Window in Trade" State Enterprise with support of the State Customs Service will implement the project.

Sanzhar Mukanbetov: It is planned to launch 15 social projects on basis of state-private partnership in Kyrgyzstan

26/04-2013 08:53, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

"It is planned to launch 15 social projects on the basis of the state-private partnership in Kyrgyzstan," Deputy Economy Minister Sanzhar Mukanbetov said today at a session of SDPK parliamentary faction.

According to him, construction of social and medical facilities is planned. "For example, there is a proposal to renovate part of Bishkek – Osh road. It's a kind of an alternative road, which will allow shortening the way. It is proposed to renovate 130-150 kilometers, it costs \$ 80-90 million, construction period is 4-5 years while the payback period is 10-12 years. Or, for example, there are medical projects –ensuring computer tomography. The device costs \$ 700-800 and its price can be returned in 3-4 years if patients will pay for the services. Thus we can ensure those services, which can not be provided by the state," official said.

Members of SDPK supported the initiative.

Manas epos to appear in Yakut language

27/04-2013 10:47, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Zhazgul MASALIYEVA

Manas epos will be translated into Yakut language, Deputy Chairman of the Il Tumen (the highest legislative body) of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) of the Russian Federation Alexander Zhirkov told 24.kg news agency .

According to Mr Zhirkov, a special group of scientists and translators is working on the translation of Manas epos into the Yakut language. And Yakut epos Olonkho will be translated into Kyrgyz.

The group of experts from Kyrgyzstan is headed by a national writer Beksultan Zhakiyev.

"Epos is a unique folk art. Only our peoples have managed to preserve and pass from generation to generation this piece of oral art," Alexander Zhirkov said.

He added that the Kyrgyz and the Yakut people, despite the large distances, should not get out of touch.

"We have the same origins. We have to be closer to each other, to develop cultural, educational, and economic cooperation," he said.

Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to take another attempt to resolve border issues

27/04-2013 09:33, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan will take another attempt to resolve border issues. Heads of border services will hold a meeting in late April.

Chairman of the State Border Service Tokon Mamytov believes that border relations between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have noticeably improved.

"This year, we have not recorded any incidents with use of firearms on the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border. It is the result of our negotiations with representatives of the Uzbek border service. We will meet with the Uzbek border guard command in the nearest future, where we will also discuss some of the issues," he said.

Recall, meeting of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission on delimitation and demarcation of the border has taken place on March 25-28 in Tashkent. Uzbekistan was represented by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Rustam Azimov and the Kyrgyz side – by the Deputy Prime Minister for Security, Law order and Borders Shamil Atakhanov. During the meetings, the parties planned to consider the border security issues related to customs procedures, passport and visa control, development of border areas, demarcation and delimitation of borders. The next meeting of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz Joint Commission for the delimitation and demarcation of the state border will be held in Kyrgyzstan.

Since 1991, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have held 8 sessions on delimitation of the border between the two countries, but have not come to a consensus on any of the disputed areas.

It should be noted that the head of the Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic Tokon Mamytov misinformed, saying that there was not a single incident in 2013.

The new-year began with the conflict on the border. On January 5, 2013 the military servicemen of Charbak frontier outpost of Batken border detachment, as Uzbekistan stated, “violating international law and inter-governmental agreements independently and without notice, began works on the installation of electric poles on the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the area of Hushyar village, Sokh district of Fergana province, to provide energy supply of the frontier outpost.” As a result Kyrgyz border guards, using weapons, wounded five citizens of Uzbekistan, whose health condition was assessed as extremely grave.

Anti-drug policy meeting of SCO countries starts in Bishkek

30/04-2013 08:28, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Makhinur NIYAZOVA

Meeting of leaders of the competent agencies of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization authorized to combat illegal drug trafficking started in Bishkek. Participants of the meeting are heads of ministries and departments of Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and SCO Secretariat led by Dmitry Mezentsev.

In course of the meeting, it's planned to discuss cooperation in fight against illegal trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances, precursors; and fight against production and trafficking of Afghan drugs taking into account the changing situation in neighboring to SCO regions.

The parties will discuss changes in working groups and approve the plan of measures for 2013-2014 on implementation of SCO Anti-drug Strategy 2011-2016 action program.

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan launches construction of Astana-Almaty high-speed railway

Tengrinews, Apr 1, 2013 by Renat Tashkinbayev

Construction of a high-speed Astana-Almaty railroad has started in Kazakhstan, Tengrinews.kz reports citing Kazakhstan Transport and Communications Minister Askar Zhumagaliyev.

"Construction of the high-speed Astana-Almaty railroad has started this year," Zhumagaliyev said in the Majilis (lower chamber of the parliament).

This railroad line will decrease the traveling time between the two cities from 12 to 5 hours.

The new route will be around 1,011 km long, 400km shorter than the existing one.

Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev made an instruction to build this high-speed railroad branch in the beginning of 2013. He said that the line had to be constructed in 5-6 years.

Kazakhstan, UN Getting Involved In Rogun Mediation

Eurasianet, Apr 2, 2013 by Joshua Kucera

Kazakhstan's new foreign minister did some traveling in the region last week, visiting Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in an apparent effort to get the two sides to talk about their dispute over the massive, controversial Rogun dam project. The United Nations has been trying to get Kazakhstan to play a leading role in resolving the issue between its neighbors to the south and when the foreign minister, Erlan Idrissov, spoke to the press in Dushanbe, he highlighted the Rogun issue:

"It's no secret that the construction of the Rogun hydroelectric power plant is one of the important issues on the agenda. The Tajik president spoke during the meeting about his vision and approach to the construction of this facility. He suggested the importance of working together with the World Bank to conduct an independent examination of the construction of the power station," Idrisov said.

"The states in the upper waters should not violate the rights and economic interests of the states located in the lower waters and vice versa. There are international conventions according to which the two sides should sit at the negotiating table and work out a mutually acceptable scheme for the usage of water resources," Idrisov said.

Rogun, recall, is the hydroelectric project on which Tajikistan's president, Emomali Rahmon, has staked his country's future, believing it to be the key to solving the country's energy problems and giving it a valuable export commodity. But Rahmon's counterpart in Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, just as strongly opposes the project, as it would disturb the water flow into his country, which needs the water for its cotton crops. Karimov has even gone as far as to threaten war over the dam. It's a tricky bit of diplomacy: not only are key strategic issues at play, but the two men reportedly also share a strong personal antipathy.

At a conference last week in Washington, Jan Harfst of the UN Development Project's Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS gave a presentation on water and conflict in Central Asia, and gave some insight into the international diplomacy being conducted in

order to reduce tensions around Rogun. He noted that Uzbekistan's preferred mode of conducting its diplomacy bilaterally, rather than via multinational organizations, complicates the resolution of Central Asia's water conflicts, in which several countries are involved and which calls for a comprehensive solution. As a result, the UN is doing "shuttle diplomacy" between Uzbekistan and the other countries involved and is trying to get Kazakhstan to play a mediating role.

"Uzbekistan very much has its own agenda and its own approach, including dealing with its neighbors on a strictly bilateral basis, definitely not in a multilateral setting, which of course complicates the resolution of an issue that affects all the countries and needs a comprehensive solution. That's why the discussion very much gets concentrated on Rogun, whereas of course that is only one aspect of the whole situation," Harfst said at the conference.

Noting that the long-awaited World Bank feasibility study on the dam is scheduled to be released at the end of this year, Harfst said "this can really increase tensions in the region very quickly. So what's going on right now is shuttle diplomacy, with the UN and the World Bank working closely together not just with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan but with all the countries of the region, as well as China, as well as Russia, in order to try to decrease these tensions. One of the things that we've tried is to convince Kazakhstan to play a much more active role in mediating between the other countries." Harfst also noted that the UN is working on a new legal framework for water usage in the region, and has been able to bring Uzbekistan into that process. Will all this work to keep tensions over the dam in check?

05.04.2013,

Kazakhstan planning to boost oil production output to 120 million tons a year by 2020: PM Serik Akhmetov

Tengrinews, A Novosti

Kazakhstan plans to boost oil production output to 120 million tons a year by 2020, *Newskaz.ru* reports, citing the country's PM Serik Akhmetov.

"In June this year we are launching production at the giant Kashagan oilfield and plans are there to expand production at Tengiz oil field. These two measures will enable Kazakhstan to boost oil production output up to 120 million tons a year from the current 82 million tons", Mr. Akhmetov said at the talks with Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovich.

In 2012 Kazakhstan produced a total of 79.211 million tons, including condensed gas, 1.1% down as compared to 2011.

The Kashagan field, named after a 19th century Kazakh poet from Mangistau, is located in the Kazakhstan sector of the Caspian Sea and extends over a surface area of approximately 75 kilometers by 45 kilometers. The reservoir lies some 4,200 meters below the shallow waters of the northern part of the Caspian Sea and is highly pressured (770 bar of initial pressure). The crude oil that it contains has high 'sour gas' content.

According to Kazakhstan geologists, geological reserves of Kashagan are estimated at 4.8 billion tons of oil. According to the project's operator, the oilfield's reserves are estimated at 38 billion barrels, with 10 billion barrels being recoverable. Besides, natural gas

reserves are estimated at over 1 trillion cubic meters. The consortium developing the field comprises Eni, Shell, ExxonMobil, Total and KazMunaiGaz (all with a 16.81% stake) as well as ConocoPhillips (8.4%) and Japan's Inpex (7.56%).

Tengrinews.kz reported late May 2012 that Kazakhstan and NCOC companies had signed an agreement to start commercial production at the giant Kashagan oilfield in the period from December 2012 to June 2013.

NCOC, a consortium developing the giant Kashagan oilfield, plans to produce 75 000 barrels of oil per day at the initial production stage, Tengrinews.kz reported mid-May 2012, citing NCOC Vice Managing Director Zhakyp Marabayev as saying on the sidelines of a CIS summit on oil and gas.

According to him, plans are there to bring the production figure up to 350 000 barrels a day or even up to 450 000 barrels a day at the first stage of the oilfield development.

Tengiz is the world's deepest operating super-giant oil field, with the top of the reservoir at about 12,000 feet deep (3,657 m). Chevron holds a 50 percent interest in Tengizchevroil (TCO), which operates the field.

Tengiz is located on the 2,500 square kilometer (1,600 square mile) project license area which includes the super-giant Tengiz field, the smaller but sizable Korolev field and several exploratory prospects.

The Tengiz and Korolev fields have potential for an estimated 750 million to 1.1 billion metric tonnes (6 billion to 9 billion barrels) of recoverable oil.

Kazakhstan's Eurasian University takes the 369th place out of 17,000 world universities

April 5, 2013, BNews.kz

Eurasian National University entered into a top of 400 leading universities of the world according to results of the international rating of QS World University Rankings, having taken the 369th place out of 17,000 higher education institutions participating in the rating, the university press service reports.

"The Eurasian National University named after L.N.Gumilev corresponded to all qualifying standards. The higher education institution was included into a top of 400 leading universities of the world according to results of the international rating of QS World University Rankings, having taken the 369th place out of 17,000 higher education institutions participating in the rating, having risen by 69 positions in comparison with last year that allowed to enter into number of five best universities of CIS countries," the message read.

It is known that Eurasian National University named after L.N. Gumilev won the nomination "Services" of a national award for achievement in the field of quality of an award of the Kazakhstan President "Altyn Sapa". University became the first nominee in this area among the higher education institutions of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan positioned 69th place in human development ranking

April 8, 2013, BNews.kz

Kazakhstan was positioned the 69th place in the ranking of human development, Amie Gaye, representative of the UNDP Human Development said during the presentation of the Global Human Development Report 2013 for the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, [BNews.kz](#) correspondent reports.

"From the point of view of human development, Kazakhstan has shown amazing results over the past ten years. Kazakhstan is ranked 17 out of 152 countries with data in terms of the absolute change in HDI values between 2000 and 2012. It is shifted from the 68th place to 69th. It is not necessary to emphasize, because that ratings are provided in comparison with other countries," Amie Gaye says.

UNDP representative noted that Kazakhstan is to improve such indicators as life expectancy and fertility.

Kazakhstan To Lift Ban on New Oil Contracts to Boost Investments

Apr 9, 2013

This year, the moratorium on development of new oil fields in Kazakhstan will be lifted under the umbrella of the national development strategy, "Kazakhstan 2050". The lift on the suspension on extraction of certain minerals will make the country even more attractive for investors and provide additional opportunities in the country's booming extractive sector. The move would not yet apply to offshore fields in the Caspian Sea, but that new investments there should be made through technology transfer. In February this year, the Kazakhstan Sovereign Wealth Fund, Samruk-Kazyna, began preparing a list of fields for which licenses for development will be issued to potential investors, following the lift of the moratorium on the development of hydrocarbon fields. Around 20 fields are expected to be included on the list, which will be given over for development. Concurrently, proposals are being prepared that will see procedures for issuing simplified. We hope that these actions will see the level of investor interest stabilizing over a longer period of time than it does currently. With nearly 40 billion barrels in reserve and two percent of total global production, Kazakhstan has the world's ninth largest proven reserves and is among the world's 20 largest oil producers. The mineral-rich country holds the world's most explored reserves of zinc, tungsten and barite, ranks second among uranium, silver, lead and chromites, third in copper and fluorite, fourth in molybdenum, sixth in gold and eighth in coal. The moratorium on the issuance of subsoil licenses was introduced in 2008, when the Government was developing a new tax law abolishing Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs). The moratorium was designed to increase subsoil use efficiency as a large number of subsoil users were more interested in reselling deposit contracts than developing the sites. The two-year ban on selling purchased subsoil use contracts was introduced to prevent undue market manipulations.

Kazakhstan gross external debt is 137 billion dollars

April 9, 2013 - BNews.kz

The gross external debt of Kazakhstan for December 31, 2012 made 137 billion dollars, BNews.kz reports with reference to organizational work, external and public relations department of the Kazakhstan National Bank.

"5,5 billion dollars, or 4% is the external debt of a public sector (the obligation of the government and National Bank), to the share of intercompany debt falls 66,5 billion dollars, or 49%, the banking sector - 13,6 billion dollars, or 10%," the message read.

For 2012 the gross external debt increased by 11.9 billion dollars, mainly, at the expense of external debt of other sectors, of which it falls 12.5 billion dollars of a gain whereas the external debt of a public sector increased only by 0,4 billion dollars, and external obligations of banks (banks of the second level and JSC Development Bank of Kazakhstan) for the period showed decrease on 1,0 billion dollars.

About 3 million visitors expected at EXPO 2017 in Astana, official said

April 9, 2013, 17:37. BNews.kz Photo resource sportinfo.kz

It is expected that about 2 to 3 million visitors will come to Astana to attend the International Exhibition EXPO 2017, President of JSC National Company EXPO-2017 Astana Talgat Yermegiyayev said in an exclusive interview for [Primeminister.kz](#).

According to him, the average number of visitors was calculated on the basis of such parameters as the climate of Kazakhstan, capacity of airports in Astana, Almaty and the surrounding towns, railway transport, events coinciding with the time of the exhibition. "According to preliminary estimates, we expect 2 to 3 million people," Yermegiyayev said.

As he noted, market research and study of the experience of previous international exhibitions – Zaragoza-2008, Shanghai-2010, Yeosu-2012, Milan-2015 was held during the bidding period.

"According to our expectations, the exhibition in Astana will gather over 100 participating countries, including 10 major international organizations. About 2 to 3 million people will visit the pavilions during the three months of EXPO 2017," Yermegiyayev emphasized.

Zulfiya Chinshanlo presented 2012 best world weightlifter award

April 10, 2013, BNews.kz

Tamas Ajan, president of the International Weightlifting Federation has presented Jeno Boskovic award to Zulfiya Chinshanlo of Kazakhstan during the congress in Tashkent, [Vesti.kz](#) reports.

"This trophy is awarded to the best weightlifters by year-end. The fans from all over the world vote. This year Zulfiya Chinshanlo of Kazakhstan and Iranian Behdad Salimikordashiabi have become the winners of the vote. This was announced in early February, but the prizes have been presented to the athletes just now," the statement said.

As part of the FIFA World Weightlifting Championship in Tashkent, the International

Federation held its regular congress and Zulfiya Chinshanlo was invited to it. In a solemn ceremony, in the presence of dozens of the world delegates the awards have been presented to the winners.

Iranian Salimikordashiabi could not arrive in Tashkent, the president of the Weightlifting Federation of Iran got the award on behalf of the athlete.

"It's nice to finally get this award in hand. It is my first visit to Tashkent and I will stay here for a couple of days to cheer on our guys at the World Cup," Z.Chinshanlo said.

The world championship in weightlifting among young people will be held in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan on April 8-11,2013. Kazakhstan athletes will also compete in it.

Aral Sea Rescue fund celebrates 20th anniversary

April 12, 2013, BNews.kz

The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) is celebrating its 20th anniversary. The anniversary marks two decades of mixed success in restoring ecological life and prosperity to the sea and its surrounding regions after decades of catastrophic misuse during the Soviet era, BNews.kz reports citing the Astana Times.

The Aral Sea Fund works to improve current situation of the Aral ecosystem, restore livelihoods.

The fund, set up by the leaders of Central Asia at the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, brought the plight of the Aral Sea to the global stage. It worked with ecologists from around the world to introduce new clean and safe alternative technologies and establish high standards of environmental protection. The fund has sought to play an important role in fostering international cooperation among the different governments of Central Asia to coordinate and organise the joint management of water resources in the Aral Sea basin.

The Aral Sea used to be one of the four largest lakes in the world with an area of 68,000 square kilometres (26,255 square miles), but it has been steadily shrinking for half a century since the rivers that fed it were diverted by Soviet irrigation projects beginning in the 1960's.

The shrinking of the Aral Sea has been called one of the planet's worst environmental disasters. The region has once a prosperous fishing industry but it was totally destroyed, bringing unemployment and economic hardship to the region. The Aral Sea region was also heavily polluted causing serious public health problems. The retreat of the sea also caused local climate change, with summers becoming hotter and drier, and winters colder and longer.

On March 26, 1993 the five heads of states of Central Asia created the Aral Sea Fund at a summit in Kyzylorda, in the south west of Kazakhstan, and agreed to work together to restore the environment and revive the socio-economic development of the Aral Sea region.

IFAS has played a coordinating role in overcoming the Aral Sea crisis. It has worked with

the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNESCO, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, TACIS and the governments of donor countries including Denmark, Germany, Israel, Canada, the Netherlands, the United States, Switzerland and Sweden.

From 1995 to 2010, the fund implemented two Aral Sea Basin Programmes: ASBP-1 and ASBP-2. These programmes, carried out with the support of the government of Kazakhstan, managed the water resources of the Aral Sea, rehabilitated zones of ecological disaster and provided clean drinking water. They improved the health levels of the inhabitants of the region, and reduced poverty and unemployment.

“In Kazakhstan’s region of the Aral Sea, we carried out a major project to regulate the bed of the Syr-Darya River and to preserve the northern part of the sea at a cost of \$85.8 million. We also succeeded in raising the water level in the sea from 39.90 metres (139.9 feet) to 42 metres (137.8 feet),” IFAS Director Medet Ospanov said.

IFAS built or repaired 195 km (121 miles) of water mains built and repaired in the Aral Sea region in its 2002-2010 programme to improve the supply of drinking water. It constructed the Aral-Sarybulak, Zhidelinsk, and Kentau-Turkestan major water pipelines. It rebuilt the Aral-Sarybulak group water line by laying 22 km (13.67 miles) of new cast iron pipes.

Working with the State Programme for Development of Education in Kazakhstan, the fund built 21 educational facilities in the region from 2005 to 2011. And working with Kazakhstan’s State Programme of Public Health Reform and Development, it built 16 healthcare facilities in the region from 2004 to 2008.

In April 2010, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited the Aral Sea region. In meetings with the leaders of the Aral states, he paid special attention to the problems of safety and ecology of the region. Ban has supported IFAS in its efforts to boost the social and economic development of all the countries of Central Asia and he continues to provide extensive assistance to the region through UN agencies.

The fund received another boost at a special summit of the five leaders of the Central Asian nations dedicated to it held in Almaty in April 2009. In May 2012, the board of IFAS approved a new ASBP-3 action programme for 2011 to 2015.

An international conference on “Ecology of the Aral Sea: Sustainable Development and International Cooperation” was held in Dashoguz, Turkmenistan on March 27-28.

IFAS Chairman Sagit Ibatullin hosted the conference which included delegations from all five Central Asian nations, UNDP, UNEP, the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation, the European Union and the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

The agenda included regional environmental policy, the changing ecology of the sea, halting the spread of deserts in the region, protecting its biodiversity, reforesting it and sustaining its water resources.

"The main goal of the conference was to draw international attention to the state of the ecosystem of the Aral Sea. It also developed new approaches to improve the current situation," Ospanov said.

April 12, 2013,

Water deficit in Kazakhstan can increase threefold by 2050: Environment Minister
BNews.kz

The deficit of water in Kazakhstan can increase significantly by 2050, Minister of Environmental Protection Nurlan Kapparov stated at the conference "Building a green economy in Kazakhstan."

"The shortage of water in Kazakhstan will grow. Our country is already dependent on transboundary waters. Today, more than half of our water comes from neighboring states ... Without action, in case of a negative scenario, the demand for water resources in the country will exceed the supply threefold," N.Kapparov said.

The minister said that one of the main reasons for the negative scenario would be the increasing demand for water of the states bordering rivers, and the domestic water demand in Kazakhstan, the official [website](#) of Prime Minister reports.

However, he said that the Government will take all necessary measures to prevent such a negative scenario.

According to Kapparov, it is planned to introduce water conservation technology, hold training sessions with the public, build new artificial water reservoirs and artificial lakes.

April 15, 2013, BNews.kz

The number of population of the country has increased by 236 thousand people and made about 17 million this year.

"As of March 1, 2013, the number of population made 16 953 900 people including 9 291 500 urban residents (54.8%) and 7 662 400 rural residents (45.2%). In January-February 2013, the population number increased by 42 thousand people (0.2%) or by 1.4% compared to March 1, 2012," Chairman of the Statistics Agency Alikhan Smailov said at today's [CCS](#) media briefing.

According to the Chair of the Agency, the Civil Registration Offices registered 66.4 thousand births in January-February 2013. This is 0.8% more than in January-February 2012. The number of died people made 25 thousand in January-February 2013 or 2.3% less against the corresponding period of 2012.

"The Civil Registration Offices registered 21.6 thousand marriages over the first two months of this year. The number of marriages decreased by 0.9% against the corresponding period of 2012. 8.2 thousand divorces were registered as well. This is 8.3% more compared to the last year," Alikhan Smailov said.

According to the head of the Agency, the number of people arrived in Kazakhstan in

January-February 2013 decreased by 50% and made 3209 people. The number of people departed from the country was reduced by 23.9% reaching 2650 people. The basic migration exchange is with the CIS member states. The number of people migrating within the country decreased by 21.1% and made 46.9 thousand people. In the context of interregional migration, the positive migration balance is registered in 6 regions: Astana city (2378 people), Almaty city (834 people), Almaty region (989 people), Mangystau region (391 people), Atyrau region (85 people) and Pavlodar region (27 people).

Almaty Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan



On April 26, Kazakhstan hosted the 3rd Ministerial Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan. More than 50 delegations led by the foreign ministers of the participating states and others, gathered in Almaty for the Conference. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev inaugurated the event. It was co-chaired by Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov and Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Zalmai Rassoul. The group endorsed six implementation plans of confidence building measures to consolidate the regional countries' efforts to promote trust, security and result-oriented cooperation on Afghanistan and reaffirmed its commitment to expand collaboration based on the principles of friendship, respect and mutual benefit.

In his welcoming remarks, President Nazarbayev highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and outlined Kazakhstan's contribution and consistent role in the international community's plans on Afghanistan. He noted that Kazakhstan had been providing political, economic and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan starting in the 1990s.

The participants adopted a declaration of continued support of Afghanistan, reconfirming their resolve to build greater confidence, trust and cooperation within the region. The participants highlighted the importance of demonstrating their solidarity through ongoing commitment to assist Afghan nation in its process of transition and at the time of withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Forces from Afghanistan. They adopted specific action plans for each of the six packages of the confidence-building measures of the Istanbul Process.

The event has allowed countries in the region to harmonize their approaches toward Afghanistan and to identify concrete measures of cooperation in the fields of education, economic development, anti- terrorism, anti-drug trafficking, and relief from natural disasters. The participants recognized their shared responsibility and common interest to work together for the sake of stable and prosperous Afghanistan and the entire region. They emphasized the convergence of interests in "The Heart of Asia" region and their willingness to work closely with international and regional organizations such as the UN,

SCO, CICA, OSCE, CSTO, ECO and Turkic Council, since it is essential for the success of shared effort.

In accordance with the adopted Declaration, the next Conference of the foreign ministers of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan will be held in China in 2014.

MAIN POINTS OF President Nursultan Nazarbayev's Speech at the Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference (Almaty, April 26, 2013)

Ministerial Meeting

- The decisions of the Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference will be important to the long-awaited peace in that country.

Political Future of Afghanistan

- Afghanistan is entering a historic stage. The exit of the ISAF should not be construed as a sign of weakened international focus on Afghanistan. It should signal the transition to a new, peaceful stage.
- The future is in the hands of the Afghans and the international community should fully encourage intra-Afghan dialogue. In this context, the 2014 presidential elections are important and it is hoped that the newly elected head of state would get maximum support from Afghan society.

Assistance to Economic Rehabilitation

- The main element of international assistance program is about economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan.
- We need to speed up regional economic cooperation and integrate Afghanistan in this process.
- Kazakhstan firmly supports regional integration and invests in regional infrastructure projects including transit corridor "Western Europe - Western China", railway route "Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran", Northern Distribution Network, the New Silk Road initiative.
- Kazakhstan also backs large regional projects such as TAPI, CASA-1000 and railways around and within Afghanistan.

Almaty as a Regional Hub for International Efforts on Afghanistan

- Almaty's capabilities can be useful for Afghanistan's development.
- Almaty is a close, efficient transport hub with large capacity.
- It also hosts the offices of many international agencies, including the U.N. Therefore, the UN's international center should be set up in Almaty and should be focused on the rehabilitation of Afghanistan. Such a hub would be necessary to coordinate financial and economic assistance to Afghanistan through regional and sub-regional representatives of the U.N. and other international and regional organizations in the post-conflict period.

Kazakhstan's Role in Afghanistan

- In 1996, Almaty hosted an emergency summit of Central Asia and Russia, when the situation in northern Afghanistan deteriorated rapidly, which led to the UN SC meeting and adoption of UN SC resolution on Afghanistan No. 1076, the first one during 1990-1996.
- Kazakhstan also helped Afghanistan during its chairmanships of the OSCE and the OIC ministerial conference. It actively takes part in discussions on Afghanistan within the SCO and CSTO.

- Afghanistan is also a important issue in our cooperation with the NATO. Kazakhstan has been providing logistical support to NATO, U.S. and other countries (Germany, France, Spain, UK) bilaterally.
- Transit potential for NATO cargo will be enhanced through use of Aktau port on the Caspian sea.
- Kazakhstan is part of international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Kazakhstan has been implementing a special assistance plan for Afghanistan since 2007. Under the plan, 1,000 Afghan specialists are being trained in Kazakhstan. Our country also provides technical and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. For the funds provided by Kazakhstan, highway Talukan-Kunduz-Shirkhan-Bandar has been reconstructed. Under Kazakhstan's assistance program, a school and hospital have been constructed.
- Kazakhstan is also setting up a national agency for development and technical assistance called "KazAID", which will mostly focus on Afghanistan.
- Kazakhstan is prepared to supply more grain, flour and other foodstuffs to Afghanistan through the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Program. We call upon international donors to actively use Kazakhstan's potential in Afghanistan's rehabilitation.

New Threats and Challenges

- We should jointly combat drug production and drug trafficking. Without it, it would be difficult to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan after 2014.
- An important role should be played by CARICC (Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors), which, created under the UN aegis, proved to be an efficient mechanism in the region.
- Afghanistan is still a source for terrorist and extremist activities. This should be kept in mind while we plan our efforts in Afghanistan.

Platform of Regional Interests/Almaty Declaration

- Clear approaches, constructive policy, rejecting geopolitical strategies damaging stable development of the region are main the parts of our thesis about the "platform of the regional interests." Eurasian countries should speak with one voice about their intentions with regard to Afghanistan for the sake of peace in the region. It is hoped that this approach will be supported by the countries outside the region.
- The outcome document - Almaty Declaration - should contain clear signals to the Afghan society, political forces in the country and beyond that international society will not change its the course for continued support for Afghanistan.
- We are confident that all states participating in Istanbul process in various statuses will continue a constructive dialogue and cooperate.

EXPO 2017 Planning Has Begun

By Nadezhda Khamitova



ASTANA – Kazakhstan has started extensive preparations for EXPO 2017, Talgat Yermegiyayev, the head of the Astana EXPO 2017 national company, told the Central Communication Service briefing.

Work has already started on drawing up the master plan and landscape designs for the EXPO site and they will be presented to the International Bureau of Expositions (BIE) in

Paris, Yermegiyaev said. The other important task is to prepare registration files to monitor progress on the planning, he said.

“The first report on progress will be presented in May and the progress reports will be assessed in October,” Yermegiyaev said.

“Our consultants have developed three master plans and the first one has priority. Finally, President Nursultan Nazarbayev will assess progress and decide which plan will be used,” he said.

Yermegiyaev said planners will use existing buildings as well as the new pavilions and display centres for the exposition.

“First we will complete the master plan which will include the architectural designs, technical support and costs of the construction programme. It will take until the end of this year to prepare all these,” he said. “Next year, we will complete the final planning the EXPO complex. We may divide this process into steps. By the beginning of May 2014, we will begin the construction work.”

On January 18, President Nazarbayev invited international companies to cooperate in building the EXPO 2017 complex when he addressed the diplomatic corps in Astana. “This is a triumph for the international standing of Kazakhstan,” he said.

“In 2012, our economy attracted more than \$20 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI). That result has been achieved by no other state in the world,” he added.

Yermegiyaev said the government will recruit the talents of young people in its preparations for the exposition. “This will involve a lot more than volunteer work. What we are looking for is new ideas,” he said. “Since the project is truly national, all of the society should be involved in it, especially young people.”

Kazakhstan expects to welcome at least 2 million tourists during the EXPO. “We will design a tourists’ kit which will include information on essential destinations to visit in our country and information to facilitate travelers. Special transportation fares will be introduced to cut the costs of travel and living,” Yermegiyaev said.

On April 22, at the meeting on the development of Astana held in the Palace of Independence, President Nazarbayev criticized the lack of progress in government preparations, however, ordering the dismissal of the EXPO 2017 organization committee.

“Analysis of the first three months of the current year showed that we have started to make the same mistakes our predecessors did. I have defined the body responsible for the organization of EXPO, the Astana EXPO 2017 national company,” President Nazarbayev said at the meeting.

The president noted the duplication of functions in connection with growing number of superiors.

"I believe the organizational committee has to be dismissed, let the company do it on its own," he emphasized.

On December 6, 2012 the President tasked the Government with ensuring the transparency of financial support provided within EXPO preparations.

"With the substantial allocation of funds, the mechanism of the funding should be considered. The use of money both from the budget and beyond budgetary sources should be as transparent as possible," Nursultan Nazarbayev noted.

In January, the President appointed Talgat Yermegiyaev as chairman of the specially created JSC "National Company Astana EXPO 2017".

April 29, 2013,

Caspian Pipeline Consortium increases annual capacity to 67 mln tons:KazMunayGas
BNews.kz

Today Chairman of the Board of "National Company" KazMunayGas " JSC Lyazzat Kiinov told about the planned expansion of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), [BNews.kz](#) correspondent reports.

"Now we are expanding the CPC, the capacity of which is 30 -32,000,000 tons. After the expansion we will be able to transport 67 million tons, more than half of which will be the share of Kazakhstan," L. Kiinov said.

According to the chairman of the board, the company will increase the volume of production in the future.

"Perhaps a small part of the volume (of Kashagan oil) will go through pipeline " Aktau-Baku-Batumi ", because we also have interests there, our company" Rompetrol " is working there, which processes crude oil into the center of Europe. We are also studying the possibility of delivery of light crude oil via Kashagan-Karachaganak-Tengiz to the East, namely China, because it is also very interesting market and our colleagues also are studying this option. In this regard, we are working together to expand the oil pipeline from western Kazakhstan via Atasu-Alashankou pipeline to China. Today, this system has a capacity of 12 million tons and will be increased up to 20 million tons," L. Kiinov said.

April 29, 2013,

KazMunayGas to increase oil and condensate reserves up to 1.4 billion tons by 2022



BNews.kz

NC "KazMunayGas" JSC plans to increase crude oil and condensate reserves up to 1.4 billion tons by 2022, Chairman of the Board of NC "KazMunayGas" JSC Lyazzat Kiinov

said today during a weekly briefing in the Central Communications Service, BNews.kz correspondent reports.

"KazMunayGas intends to ensure the growth of oil and condensate reserves up to 1.4 billion tons by improving the efficiency of exploration and use of new technologies. KazMunayGas will continue to explore new areas and further exploration of existing onshore fields. According to an independent audit of the Gaffney, Cline & Associates company, the resource potential of the Kazakhstan sector of the Caspian Sea is 2.37 billion tons of oil reserves, excluding the North-Caspian project," L.Kiinov said.

L.Kiinov emphasized that KazMunayGas supervises the implementation of the investment projects in the reconstruction and modernization of the major Kazakhstan oil refineries. Upon completion in 2016, it is planned to increase recycling by 19 million tons a year. At the same time it is planned to increase oil processing up to 90% and produce of motor fuel such as gasoline - up to 6.75 million tons, aviation fuel - up to 950 thousand tons, diesel - up to 5.9 million tons.

30.04.2013

**Eurasian Development Bank to finance the first wind power plant in Kazakhstan
Tengrinews English**

Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) has signed an agreement with the First Wind Power Plant (part of Samruk-Energo) a loan agreement to grant a loan of \$94 million for a 10-year period to construct a 45 megawatt wind power plant, newskaz.ru reports, citing the Bank's Press Service.

The wind power plant is to be constructed in Ereimentau in Akmolinsk oblast. The project will enable to produce 172.2 kilowatt-hours a year.

"This is the first ever industrial project in Kazakhstan of this kind (...) The project will facilitate development of alternative sources of energy. The project is of special importance at the threshold of EXPO-2017 that will be focused on sources of energy for the future", the statement quotes Kanat Dosmukametov, EDB Chairman of the Board.

Eurasian Development Bank is an international financial organisation established to promote economic growth in its member states, extend trade and economic ties between them and to support integration in Eurasia.

The Bank was established by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2006, following the signing of an international agreement by the Presidents of the two countries.

TURKEY

Over 190,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey

A total of 191,993 Syrian refugees are currently taking shelter in Turkey, according to official figures announced on 2 April 2013.

In a written statement, Turkish Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate (AFAD) said Turkey has set up five tent cities in Hatay, two in Sanliurfa, three in Gaziantep and one each in Osmaniye, Kahramanmaras, Adana and Adiyaman, and also container cities in Kilis, Sanliurfa and Gaziantep.

The Syrian refugees staying in Turkey are provided with lodging, food, health services, security, education and religious services, said the AFAD.

The statement said a total of 285,984 Syrians have so far fled to Turkey after their unrest-ridden home country sank into domestic conflict, and 93,991 of them returned to Syria later. 2/4/2013

Turkey increases number of wind power stations

Around 23 wind power stations are being constructed in Turkey, the Turkish Wind Energy Association said on 5 April 2013.

According to the report, the wind power stations are being constructed in 12 cities around the country. Currently, over 60 wind power stations with a total capacity of 2,300 megawatts operate in Turkey.

After new wind power stations are used, their total installed capacity in the country will hit 3,000 megawatts.

The largest number of wind power stations fall to Izmir - 23 percent, Balikesir - 14.5 percent, Tekirdag - 8 percent.

According to the report, Turkey intends to increase the number of wind power stations in the coming years. International tenders will be held.

Earlier, the Turkish government said that private sector projects aimed at generating electricity from renewable energy sources will be supported and partially funded by the state. 5/4/2013

US Secretary of State John Kerry arrives in Turkey on April 7 for talks on Israel and Syria

US Secretary of State John Kerry has arrived in Turkey, where he held talks to address

relations with Israel and the conflict in Syria.

After helping broker a reconciliation between Turkey and Israel, Mr Kerry is expected to urge them to "fully normalise" relations, US officials said.

He would also stress the importance of Turkey keeping its border open to those fleeing the war in Syria, they said.

Turkey is Mr Kerry's first stop of a 10-day trip to Europe and Asia.

He is due to meet Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.

Officials travelling with Mr Kerry said he would "encourage Turkey to expeditiously implement its agreement with Israel and fully normalise their relationship" ahead of forthcoming talks between the two states.

Mr Kerry would also encourage Turkey to continue admitting civilians fleeing the conflict in Syria, following reports - denied by Turkey - that some Syrians had recently been deported after unrest at a border camp.

More than 1.2 million people have fled to neighbouring countries since the unrest in Syria began two years ago, according to UN figures.

More than 250,000 are in Turkey.

After Turkey, Mr Kerry is due to visit Israel, the West Bank, the UK, South Korea, China and Japan. 7/4/2013

Turkey can play key role in Mideast peace - Kerry

US Secretary of State John Kerry said on 7 April that Turkey can play a major role in the Middle East peace process, calling it a "vibrant and energised" country.

"Turkey can be a key, an important contribution to the process of peace in so many ways," Kerry told reporters. "A country as vibrant and energised as Turkey can have a profound impact on the peace process"

Kerry urges Turkey, Israel to fully normalise ties.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said on 7 April it was not up to Washington to set a deadline for Turkey and Israel to normalise ties but stressed the importance of restoring a full relationship between the two.

"It is not for the United States to be setting conditions or terms with respect to what the prime minister's (Tayyip Erdogan) schedule ought to be or what the requirements of Turkey are with respect to that process," Kerry said after arriving in Istanbul, his first stop on a 10-day trip to the Middle East, Europe and Asia.

"... It is imperative that the compensation component ... of the arrangement be fulfilled, that the ambassadors be returned and that full relationship be embraced but it's not up to us to discuss the timing," Kerry told a news conference. 8/4/2013

Door still open on Iran nuclear talks - Kerry

US Secretary of State John Kerry said on 7 April major powers would continue talks with Iran to resolve a decade-old dispute over Tehran's nuclear programme, but stressed the process could not continue for ever.

"This is not an interminable process," said Kerry as he arrived in Istanbul on 7 April on the first leg of a 10-day trip to the Middle East, Europe and Asia.

He said US President Barack Obama was committed to continuing the diplomatic process despite what he called the complicating factor of Iranian elections in June.

"Diplomacy is a painful task," he said. "And a task for the patient."

Talks between Iran and the powers ended in Kazakhstan on Saturday (6 April) after failing to break a deadlock. No new talks were scheduled. 8/4/2013

Irish foreign minister visits Syrian refugee camp

Ireland willing to extend 1 million euro to Syrian refugees.

Ireland's Foreign Minister Eamon Gilmore on 8 April visited a refugee camp in southern Turkey that shelters Syrians who fled the civil war in their country.

"The Turkish government shows an example of solidarity and generosity by making great sacrifices to help these people. In addition to a previous Irish contribution, we have allocated an extra eight million euros to continue to help Syrians. When I return home, I will tell the prime minister and officials of the Foreign Ministry about the things I have seen here," Gilmore told journalists.

Suphi Atan, a senior Turkish diplomat for Syrian camps in Turkey, and Turkey's Ambassador to Ireland Necip Eguz accompanied Gilmore on his visit in the camp in the Nizip town which shelters some 11 thousand Syrians.

Irish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore on 8 April said that they were "here to provide 1 million euro to the Syrian refugees staying in Turkey".

Gilmore's comments came as he and his delegation visited the camps of Syrians after meeting with the Governor of the southeastern province of Gaziantep, Erdal Ata.

"The camps for the Syrians were designed well. Turkey is under a great burden as the number of Syrian refugees constantly rises. We are here to provide 1 million euro to the

Syrian refugees. We are aware that this figure is not so big," Gilmore stressed.

Governor Ata, in his part, said that there were 30,777 Syrian refugees living in the camps and around 50,000 at the city center.

Ata said that "to date, Saudi Arabia provided 50 million USD while the United Nations provided 30 million USD to Turkey for the Syrian refugees". 9/4/2013

Turkey upset at new Greek Cypriot president's attitude to North

Newly elected Greek Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades should have met with his Turkish Cypriot counterpart, Derviş Eroğlu, after winning recent elections, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said April 7 criticizing the new leader's actions in office so far.

"The attitude [Anastasiades] adopted after the elections has created disappointment. Mr. Eroğlu made a call for a meeting at the earliest [opportunity] and sent a letter. We were all expecting that both could have at least come together [by now], but the information that we have obtained lends the impression that this won't be possible in the near future," Davutoğlu said during a press conference in Istanbul with his Irish counterpart, Eamon Gilmore.

Davutoğlu said the economic depression in Greek Cyprus could not serve as a pretext for not starting talks.

"We are facing a dilemma. When we say 'Participate in the negotiations seriously,' if they are strong and in a good situation, they take a distant attitude; and if they are weak, they say, 'Wait until we become stronger.' If there is an opportunity for a solution to a crisis that has been frozen for such a long time, you should not wait even a minute," he said.

The Turkish foreign minister also said the steps to be taken for a solution would ease Greek Cyprus' economic woes. "If in 2004 the Greek Cypriots had not said no to a [U.N.-backed reunification] plan that Turkish Cypriots [agreed to], today such a crisis would not have happened."

One chapter 'not enough'

Following his meeting with his counterpart from Ireland, which is the current rotating president of the European Union, Davutoğlu also talked about the prospective opening of a first accession chapter in 2.5 years. If France lifts its veto on four chapters and the Cyprus issue begins proceeding toward a resolution, all chapters will be open and Turkey will be able to quickly conclude its accession talks, Davutoğlu said.

"One chapter is better than nothing, but if we want to move forward, it's not a giant step at all. It's like the blossoming of one flower in winter; it doesn't mean that spring is going to come. It's just half-opening the door," he said.

Regarding the ongoing peace process between The Turkish government and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Davutoğlu called on the EU for a contribution. A solution will also have a positive effect on the Turkish diaspora in Europe, he added.
9/4/2013

16th Eurasian Economic Summit begins in Istanbul

The 16th Eurasian Economic Summit organised by the 'Marmara Group Foundation of Turkey started in Istanbul.

Azerbaijan was represented by the Head of the Department of Public and Political Issues of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ali Hasanov and the Minister of Education Misir Mardanov.

A letter from the President of Turkey Abdullah Gul to the participants was read out at the opening ceremony. It emphasises the position of the Eurasian region in the world arena and its role in the processes taking place in the world.

'Against the background of the processes taking place in the region and all over the world today, it is most necessary to strengthen cooperation and coordination in all regional issues', the president wrote in the letter.

The summit, which lasted until April 11, was attended by representatives of 42 countries.
10/4/2013

Railway network to reach 26,000 kilometers by 2023

Turkish railway network to reach 26,000 kilometers by 2023, said Turkish transport minister.

Turkish Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications Binali Yildirim has said that the Turkish railway network would reach 26,000 kilometers by 2023, when the Republic of Turkey would celebrate the 100th anniversary of its foundation.

Speaking to the Hazar World periodical of the Hazar Strategy Institute, Yildirim indicated that "out of 26,000 kilometers of railway network in Turkey, 10,000 kilometers of railway would be used for high speed trains."

Touching on logistics centers, Yildirim underlined that such centers would make contributions worth 40 billion USD to the Turkish logistics sector.

On the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku Railway, Binali Yildirim stated that the railway would become the most economic and reliable option of transportation in the Asia-Europe corridor.
10/4/2013

Preliminary infrastructure planning for 'Canal Istanbul'

A higher planning agency in Turkey has approved preliminary infrastructure plans for

the construction of a waterway that would link the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara, said Ali Babacan, the country's deputy premier in charge of economy.

Those plans include construction a network of roads and bridges before the actual construction could begin for the Canal Istanbul project, Babacan told reporters on 12 April in a panel discussion in Ankara.

"Once a canal gets built under the Kanal Istanbul Project, some of the roads would have to be changed. There will be need for bridges. And the High Planning Board's relevant decision on Kanal Istanbul Project was completed this week," Babacan said.

'Canal Istanbul,' proposed in 2011 by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan as "a crazy and magnificent project," would dissect the current European side of Istanbul into two and bypass the Istanbul Strait, the only water passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

The proposed channel will be around 30 miles long, 25 metres deep and 150 metres wide and it aims to minimize shipping traffic in the Istanbul Strait, overwhelmed by tanker traffic.

The project is intended for 2023, the centenary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey.
12/4/2013

Turkey and Egypt nix NATO meet with Israel

Turkey and Egypt oppose NATO's plans to revive the Mediterranean Dialogue group and bring together Israel and six Arab countries, as Turkish officials say the move is 'not because of Israel'.

An initiative to bring Israel and six Arab countries' ministers together under NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue group for the first time since 2008 has been nixed by Turkey and Egypt, who said "it was not the right time" for such a meeting.

"The general-secretary was planning to invite the foreign ministers of the Mediterranean Dialogue countries on the sidelines of the NATO foreign ministers meeting scheduled for April 23 but Turkey objected to the idea," a Western diplomatic source told the Hürriyet Daily News on the condition of anonymity.

Established in 2004, the Mediterranean Dialogue brings Israel, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, Algeria and Jordan together with the purpose of contributing to regional security and stability.

However, the last time the group met at the foreign ministerial level was 2008 – a reflection of the ongoing dispute between Israel and the Arab world.

Following Israel's recent apology to Turkey, which created a positive climate in the region and raised prospects for the launching of a new peace process between Palestine

and Israel, Western powers wanted to resume the Mediterranean Dialogue meetings at the ministerial level.

"It's not right that we have objected. This sort of meeting was not held since 2008 because of the political problems between Israel and Arab countries. At this stage, such a meeting would not be useful," a Turkish official told the Daily News.

In addition, the diplomat underlined that Egypt and Tunisia, two members of the Mediterranean Dialogue, did not want to hold such meeting at this stage either.
13/4/2013

Not because of Israel

But the same official dismissed claims that Turkey objected to the idea because of Israel's presence in the group, recalling that the government started to allow Israeli participation in NATO's political meetings in December 2012.

Turkey vetoed Israeli participation in NATO's Chicago Summit in May 2012, as well as an Israeli demand to have a permanent office at NATO, in reaction to the Israeli military operation in 2010 against the activists on board the Mavi Marmara vessel that was aiming to break the Israeli embargo against Gaza.

Israel apologized to Turkey on March 22 after nearly three years, kick-starting a normalization process between the two countries.

Although the Turkish objection is not directly related to its cool relations with Israel, nixing the meeting is mostly to the disadvantage of Tel Aviv, which is the most eager member of the dialogue group, out of a desire to build good relations with NATO.

The alliance does not have a good reputation among the Muslim world, and Muslim members of the dialogue group prefer to remain distanced from NATO's projects.
13/4/2013

Turkey, Russia hold talks to boost bilateral relations

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held a meeting with his Turkish counterpart in Istanbul on 17 April to discuss ways of boosting bilateral relations and ending the Syrian crisis.

The closed-door meeting took place in Ciragan Palace and the two ministers will hold a press conference around 1 p.m. local time shortly after their meeting.

"The meeting is expected to be an opportunity to review the preparations for the fourth meeting to be held in Russia in the second half of the year," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Wide range of bilateral and international issues were discussed at the meeting. The sides

discussed the situation in the Middle East, North Africa, Balkans, South Caucasus, Central Asia, Black Sea region and exchanged views on the Iranian nuclear program.

The meeting is third of its kind of the Joint Strategic Planning Group (JSPG), which is a sub-organ of the Turkish-Russian High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC). 17/4/2013

Turkey Spends \$700 Mln Aiding Syrian Refugees - Minister

Turkey has already spent \$700 million helping Syrian refugees, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on 17 April, calling on international organizations to stop turning a blind eye to Syria's problems.

Speaking to reporters after a Russian-Turkish Joint Strategic Planning Group in Istanbul, the minister said about 200,000 Syrians were living in refugee camps in Turkey.

"The number of refugees in camps in Turkey exceeds 200,000. In other countries there are over 100,000 more. We have already allocated \$700 million in aid to the refugees," the minister said.

About 70,000 people have died in Syria since the start of the uprising against President Assad in March 2011, according to UN estimates.

The UN Refugee Agency estimates the number of persons displaced by the conflict at 1.3 million people, with almost 1.1 million officially registered and some 250,000 awaiting registration.

According to the agency, Jordan and Lebanon house the largest number of Syrian refugees with more than 400,000 registered in each country. Turkey is the third-largest recipient with almost 300,000 refugees. 17/4/2013

Turkey wants to get involved in US-EU free trade

Babacan said they would like to have a Turkey-US process that would be complementary to the US-EU free trade agreement process.

Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan has said Turkey considered the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership process between the US and the EU a historical step and supported it but did not want to get excluded.

Speaking at dinner held on 17 April by the US Chamber of Commerce in his honor in Washington, the last stop of his US visit, Babacan said Turkey had been passing through a very critical transformation process. He said the reforms that had been undertaken by Turkey became a source of inspiration for the region.

He said Turkish Lira was currently the most stable currency among the developing countries adding that public debt and banking system that were the most fragile fields for most countries were a strength for Turkey and because of that the impacts of latest

global crisis on Turkish economy was very limited.

Babacan stated that Turkey had become a center for foreign investors who would like to invest not only in Turkey but also in a broader neighborhood.

Babacan said that Turkish-American relations were very strong in politics and defense but their commercial and economic ties seemed weak. 18/4/2013

Turkish universities among best 500 universities of world

Turkish universities were included among the best 500 universities of the world in a listing made by the Dutch Leiden University.

Turkey's Hacettepe, METU, Ankara, Aegean, Istanbul and Gazi universities were included in the list of world's best universities.

The Turkish universities entered the list based on the number of articles written and studies made between 2008 and 2011. 20/4/2013

Palestinian leader Abbas to visit Turkey on 20 April

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas visited Turkey at the weekend for talks with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Abbas also met Turkish President Abdullah Gul and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu during the Saturday-Sunday trip.

Erdogan on Sunday announced his intention to visit the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip next month, after a trip to the United States.

Abbas's West Bank-based nationalist Fatah movement, a long-time rival to the Islamist Hamas, has criticised Erdogan's planned Gaza trip as fostering intra-Palestinian divisions.

"Any official, Arab, Muslim or foreign, who visits Gaza without reference to the legitimate Palestinian leadership is blessing and consolidating the division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," Fatah official Azzam al-Ahmad told the official Voice of Palestine radio.

Abbas must address this issue with Erdogan, he said.

Erdogan, a staunch advocate of the Palestinian cause, had previously said he would visit Gaza in April "to help the process" of lifting an Israeli blockade on the coastal enclave.

That announcement came a day after a breakthrough apology on March 22 from Israel for the deaths of nine Turks during a 2010 raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla which had wrecked ties between the former allies.

Aides pointed to scheduling conflicts for the scrapping of the April visit, but Israeli and Turkish media speculated that US Secretary of State John Kerry had warned Ankara over the trip's "potentially adverse effects" on the new thaw in bilateral ties facilitated by Washington.

Erdogan plans to visit Washington on May 16.

In Gaza City, Hamas deputy prime minister Ziyad al-Zaza told reporters that he hoped Erdogan's visit would present "new possibilities for ending the (Israeli) siege" which he said was costing the economy \$250 million per month. 21/4/2013

Turkey launches e-Visa system

The Republic of Turkey launched its new online-based visa system on April 17. This visa system is available in Turkish and English languages and can be accessed via the website, www.evisa.gov.tr.

According to a press release, "e-Visa system replaces 'sticker' and 'stamp-type' visas formerly issued at the borders. The citizens of the countries mentioned in the box are eligible for e-Visa.

The citizens of some countries also mentioned in the box are also eligible, should they comply with the conditions as per their citizenship. The applicants can obtain their visas electronically after completing all the required steps online.

The applicants are required to print out their e-Visa, show it to airport officials and customs officials, and keep it with them throughout their stay.

e-Visa is valid only for tourism or trade purposes. For other purposes such as work or study, 'regular visa' system will be applied. All the detailed information, the application conditions and the amount of fees are available on the website.

On the other hand, regular visa system will be continued by the embassies and consulates of the Republic of Turkey. 24/4/2013

Turkish FM's visit to Kazakhstan starts

Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visited Kazakhstan on April 26 to take part in a conference of the member countries of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan.

During the visit to Kazakhstan, Davutoğlu met with his Kazakh counterpart Erlan Idrisov and other officials of the country. Alongside, the Turkish Foreign Minister met with the Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Dmitry Mezentsev.

Conference of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan started its work on April 25 in Almaty.

The key objective of the meeting is to agree on the text of the Almaty Declaration and other documents of the main ministerial-level meeting scheduled for April 26.
26/4/2013

Genel Energy confirms major Iraqi oil discovery

A rapid oil appraisal program is under way in the Kurdish region of Iraq following a successful test of a second well, Genel Energy said.

Anglo-Turkish company Genel Energy announced its second test in the Chia Surkh 10 well yielded a sustained preliminary flow rate of 3,200 barrels of oil per day and 8.4 million cubic feet of natural gas.

The test confirms that Chia Surkh is a "significant oil discovery," Genel said. Early this month, the company said it reached a test rate of 11,950 barrels of oil per day from its first of five exploration wells in the Chia Surkh discovery area.

Genel Director of Exploration John Hurst said the second test in the Chia Surkh region gives the company reason for optimism.

"We will continue with our rapid appraisal and development program, including the first appraisal well now under way and will be evaluating and drilling a number of other prospects we have in the Chia Surkh license," he said in a statement.

The semiautonomous Kurdish government gave Genel permission in January to export crude oil to Turkey by road shipments. Genel is working to convert a natural gas pipeline to facilitate additional oil deliveries.

Oil flow through the 600-mile Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline was disrupted this week when militants attacked the pipeline in Iraq.

Export restrictions had been in place as a sign of growing frustration with the central Iraqi government over oil laws in the country. 26/4/2013

Turkey creates electronic system for F-16 military fighters

The Turkish Ministry of Defence along with the country's Air Force intends to establish a military electronic system for F-16 fighters, the Hürriyet newspaper reported.

Today this type of system is being created in only five countries in the world. The electronic combat system which is the foundation of military electronic systems for fighters will protect the aircraft during a flight from threats detected by radar and an air

defence system.

The system warns the pilot of danger of imminent radar detection in time and automatically neutralises the radar locked on to it.

According to the newspaper, today Turkey is importing this electronic system.

After the development of the system by the Turkish defence industry, the country plans to export it to other countries.

Establishment of military electronic systems for fighter aircraft is part of a government programme aimed at providing the Turkish military with weapons, equipment and an outfit built in the country. Turkey has achieved 54 per cent self-sufficiency in this area.
27/4/2013

Turkey's first national "mini satellite" launched to space

Turkey's first national mini communications test satellite "TURKSAT-3USAT" has been launched to space from China on 26 April. In a statement posted on their web site, Turksat said that the test satellite was launched to space from China at 07.13 a.m. (Turkish local time).

"TURKSAT-3USAT" will serve wireless operators some 645 kilometers from the surface of earth. The test satellite has a dimension of 34 centimeters and is a joint production of Turksat Corporation and Istanbul Technical University (ITU). "TURKSAT-3USAT" is expected to serve for a period of three years. 27/4/2013

Turkey to finalise nuclear plant deal: minister

Turkey is close to deciding who will win a \$22 billion-deal to build its second nuclear power station, its energy minister said on 29 April.

"We are set to finalise this weekend the second nuclear power plant," Taner Yildiz was quoted as saying by the Anatolia news agency.

The Turkish energy minister reiterated that Japan and China were "leading the race," without giving any clues about the likely winner.

A consortium of Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and France's Areva are believed to be the best placed to win the Turkish contract to build pressurised water reactors in Sinop, on the Black Sea coast.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is to visit Turkey on Friday (3 May) as part of a regional tour, would sign the deal with Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Japanese media reported last week.

Japan is increasingly looking abroad to boost its nuclear power industry after domestic

demand collapsed in the wake of the Fukushima crisis two years ago.

Turkey, which relies heavily on gas and oil imports from Russia and Iran, is planning to build three nuclear power plants to reduce its dependence on foreign energy sources.

Ankara struck a deal with Russia in 2010 to build the country's first power plant at Akkuyu in southern Turkey. 29/4/2013

Georgia, Turkey and Azerbaijan are lobbying NATO to use Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway-FM of Georgia

Turkey and Azerbaijan with Georgia are lobbying NATO to use the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway for the transport from Afghanistan, said the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Maia Panjikidze at a meeting with journalists.

"The Georgian side offers the ISAF and NATO two things. First - Georgia's participation in operations in Afghanistan after 2014, although the mission has not been determined. Apart from this, we have the willingness to make a financial contribution to the development of Afghan security forces. Second - we offer the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, which is the shortest, and cheapest way out of Afghanistan after 2014, "- said Panjikidze.

She stressed that it is a project of the three countries.

"Turkey and Azerbaijan are very interested in this road was used, and they are also lobbying for it.

First we said about it for a long time. We just try to push this question at every meeting. We do this during bilateral meetings, and it is possible that Some countries themselves will take out their loads. We already know the similar interests of some countries, "- said Maya Panjikidze. 29/4/2013

Kuwait's Emir paid an official visit to Turkey

Turkish President Abdullah Gul on 29 April hosted a dinner in the honor of Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah who pays a formal visit in the Turkish capital, Ankara.

Speaking at the dinner at the Cankaya Presidential Palace, Gul said Turkey and Kuwait had the potential to improve their cooperation in all fields but especially in technology, industry and development projects.

The Turkish president urged Turkish and Kuwaiti businesspeople and investors to "take maximum advantage of intense relations" between the two countries.

Gul praised what he said Kuwait's "pioneering political vision to enhance freedom press and rights of women," adding that Turkey and Kuwait "are on the same side as our region experiences far-reaching changes."

The Kuwaiti emir, on his part, said that Turkey had made significant progress in technology, industry and economy, adding that Turkish government had recently introduced measures for a more friendly environment in Turkey.

"These legal arrangements that encourages private sector will be a driving force in increasing our cooperation," the emir said. 30/4/2013

Turkey, Kuwait switch to visa-free regime

Turkey and Kuwait signed an agreement to abolish the visa regime on 29 April, the Sabah newspaper reported.

The agreement was signed during the visit of Kuwaiti Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Turkey.

At the first stage holders of diplomatic passports, science and culture figures and sportsmen will be exempted from visa requirement.

The two sides also signed a number of agreements in the fields of economy, tourism and culture.

Earlier, on April 28, Turkey signed an agreement on visa-free regime with Moldova. 30/4/2013

Turkey to Continue Oil Imports from Iran despite Sanctions

Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said Turkey will continue importing natural gas from Iran despite the US-led western sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Yildiz made the remarks at a press conference after a meeting with a delegation from the US House of Representatives and the Senate in Ankara on 29 April.

"Turkey's oil-purchase contract with Iran expires in August. This contract will definitely be extended, because Iran covers about 45 to 40 percent of Turkey's oil needs," the Turkish energy minister said.

The Turkish energy minister noted that there is no alternative for the Iranian gas.

The United States in November expanded sanctions on global trade with Iran's energy and shipping sectors to ratchet up economic pressure on Tehran over its civilian nuclear program.

The package kept in place exemptions for countries including Turkey that made significant cuts to their purchases of Iranian crude, but new sanctions are due to take effect this year.

Yildiz said Tupras, which is controlled by Turkey's biggest company Koc Holding, will

continue to buy the same amount it has been under the exemption.

The United States and many of its allies accuse Iran of enriching uranium to levels used in nuclear weapons. Iran says its atomic program is for peaceful purposes.

Turkey imports more than 90 percent of its oil and gas.

Iran and Turkey are determined to boost their trade exchanges to \$35 billion in the near future.

Iran and Turkey have increased their cooperation in various fields of economy, security, trade, education, energy and culture in the recent years.

The two sides have exchanged several politico-economic delegations during the last few months. 30/4/2013

S. Korea-Turkey FTA takes effect on May 1

The free trade agreement (FTA) between South Korea and Turkey will take effect on May 1, the trade ministry said on 30 April.

With the bilateral free trade deal coming into force, industry protection tariffs ranging from 20 to 30 percent will not be imposed on South Korean products exported to Turkey starting from 1 May, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE) of S. Korea.

Turkey will abolish tariffs on all industrial products imported from South Korea within next seven years. It is expected to help South Korea take the lead in the Turkish market compared with Japan that has been carrying out a joint research with Turkey for a bilateral free trade pact.

Seoul and Ankara planned to negotiate over the service and investment sectors, targeting the signing of the free trade deal in those sectors within one year. The FTA that will take effect the next day is limited to the goods sector.

Turkey was South Korea's 25th-largest trading partner as of 2012, with South Korean exports to Ankara reaching 4.55 billion U. S. dollars last year. South Korea's major export items to Turkey included synthetic resin, automobiles, auto parts, ships and construction equipment.