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Azerbaijan

“No one favors current status-quo in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict”

May 16 (AzerTAc). No one favored the current status-quo in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the chairperson of US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Ileana Ros-Lehtinen said. Ros-Lehtinen underlined that Azerbaijan`s role is increasing in exploration, development and transportation of energy resources. She welcomed diversification of energy transportation, and stressed that Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline has become a main transportation route which supplies the world with fuel. “It creates opportunity for the country to diversify the energy sources and our allies to avoid some dependence. New routes such as Nabucco will contribute to increase the strategic importance of Azerbaijan”, Ros-Lehtinen stated. Ros-Lehtinen pointed out importance of expansion of economic and trade ties between the countries, and said that the third meeting within the framework of the US-Azerbaijan partnership held in Washington brought new initiatives to civil aviation. The Committee chairperson described Azerbaijan as a `significant` partner of the US in the fight against force and extremism, and highlighted that there is a close cooperation between the US and Azerbaijan not only in the fields of prevention of terrorist attacks, but also proliferation of biological and nuclear weapons. “We are satisfied particularly with the exercises conducted for the security of the Caspian Sea”. Ros-Lehtinen also expressed concern over the incidents occurred in the border areas with Nagorno-Karabakh. “Two Azerbaijani soldiers were killed tragically in the shooting. Use of force remains this prolonged conflict unsettled”, added Ros-Lehtinen.

European Commission releases annual report on Azerbaijan`s development

May 16 (AzerTAc). The European Commission has published an annual report on Azerbaijan`s development within the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). The main aspects of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the EU in 2011 and the recommendations of the European Union regarding the different fields were reflected in the document.

The document says: “Azerbaijan is rapidly developing. It broadly maintained macroeconomic stability, reduced poverty and encouraged the diversification of the economy. Negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the Minsk Group led to no tangible results in 2011. Amidst

increasing tension along the Line of Contact, mediation efforts resulted in marginal progress on the investigation of the violation of the ceasefire agreement.

Investment of Turkish companies increasing in Azerbaijan

May 16 (AzerTAc). “The capacity of mutual investments between two brotherly countries, Azerbaijan and Turkey has been increasing year after year” said the trade advisor of the Turkish embassy to Azerbaijan Huseyn Yavuz Necip in the meeting that brought together the trade advisors of the neighboring countries’ embassies. “It is pleasant that the capacity of the imports from Turkey takes second place after Russia” added Turkish trade advisor.

Huseyn Yavuz underlined currently 1266 Turkish companies have been operating in Azerbaijan. These companies have invested \$6.5 billion and employed over 25 thousand people. The volume of trade between the two countries has also reached \$3, 5 billion. “The sympathy of the Azerbaijanis to Turkey, the geographical closeness and mutual profits in the international arena are the factors of affecting the growth of trade between the two brotherly countries” Huseyn Yavuz stressed.

Foreign ministry spokesman: Azerbaijan attaches particular importance to relations with neighboring states

May 17 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan’s foreign ministry spokesman has reaffirmed that the country puts a special emphasis on its relationship with neighboring states. Elman Abdullayev’s statement came in response to a protest held in front of Azerbaijan’s Consulate in Tabriz. He said Azerbaijan took into consideration the interests of neighboring countries, including Iran, in its foreign policy. Abdullayev underlined that Azerbaijan and Iran relations have had deep roots. The spokesman stressed threats, sabotages against democratic, secular Azerbaijan are ‘unacceptable’. “The forces who speak of Islamic solidarity, religious fanaticism will not be able to undermines our country’s increasing prestige with their lies and slanders.” Abdullayev underlined that the protests held in front of Azerbaijan’s diplomatic representations in Iran had been organized by the groups who try to derail the relations between the two countries. “The Azerbaijani side expresses deep concern over the increasing number of protests, and states that it is impossible to impact on Azerbaijan or achieve changes in the country’s political course through this.” “The most important problem for Azerbaijan is the continuing occupation of its territories by Armenia. The Muslim world and

several international organizations recognized Armenia as an aggressor, and condemned the Khojaly genocide committed by Armenians against Azerbaijanis. Unfortunately, our neighbor has not expressed its attitude towards these events”.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said: “Staging anti-Azerbaijani protests in Tabriz to make groundless claims against our country and make radical calls despite the fact that the Azerbaijani side has repeatedly reiterated that its territory can never be used for any aggression against Iran is nothing but hostility and craftiness. The activity of some forces in Iran who speak of Islamic solidarity, brotherhood is aimed at shattering stability in Azerbaijan.” “What Islamic solidarity are they talking about if over a million of their religious brothers have been left homeless for more than 20 years by the aggressor Armenia, which Iran has been continuously supporting both materially and morally, if hundreds of Islamic temples were destroyed and robbed by the Armenian vandals?” Abdulalyev added: “All this proves that what is going on in Iran against Azerbaijan is not a religious sympathy, instead, this campaign serves only to hostility, incitement and disrespect towards our national and cultural values.”

Azerbaijani President meets Prime Minister of Montenegro

May 20 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, who is in Chicago for a working visit, has met Prime Minister of Montenegro Igor Luksic. They praised the development of the bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Montenegro. They said the strengthening of political relations was boosting the bilateral cooperation in other areas, in particular in the economic one. President Ilham Aliyev and Igor Luksic said there were good prospects for cooperation in many fields, including energy, tourism and transport infrastructure. They expressed confidence the Azerbaijan-Montenegro relations would further expand.

Azerbaijani President meets Slovenian Premier in Chicago

May 20 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, who is in Chicago to attend a NATO summit, has today met Slovenia`s Prime Minister Janez Jansa. They praised recent development of the relations between Azerbaijan and Slovenia. They stressed the importance of the Azerbaijan-Slovenia ties in different fields, in particular economy, energy and mutual investment. They also emphasized the importance of the bilateral relations in terms of joint participation in different projects. The Azerbaijani President and the

Slovenian Premier pointed out there was good potential to expand the two countries` cooperation within the European Union.

Azerbaijani President meets Chairman of Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

May 20 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, who is on a working visit in Chicago, has met Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegovic. They praised the relations between the two countries, and pointed out the bilateral cooperation was giving good results. They stressed the importance of developing the bilateral ties even more. The Azerbaijani leader and the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina also had an exchange of views on a range of other issues of mutual concern.

President Ilham Aliyev meets Turkish leader Abdullah Gul in Chicago

May 20 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, who is visiting Chicago, the US, where he will attend a NATO summit, has today met Turkish leader Abdullah Gul.

The two presidents hailed the development of the brotherly and friendly Azerbaijan-Turkey relations in all areas. They expressed confidence the two countries` relations would further expand. The Azerbaijani and Turkish presidents had a broad exchange of views on prospects for expanding the bilateral cooperation.

Azerbaijani President meets Georgian counterpart in Chicago

May 20 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, who is in Chicago, the USA, to attend a NATO summit, has met Georgian leader Mikheil Saakashvili. The two presidents praised the development of the Azerbaijan-Georgia relations in a variety of fields. They exchanged views on prospects for developing the cooperation between the two countries.

Dutch Queen Beatrix thanks Benelux Azerbaijanis Congress for Queen`s Day gift

May 20 (AzerTAc). Queen of the Netherlands Beatrix has expressed her gratitude to the Benelux Azerbaijanis Congress for a Queen`s Day gift. In a letter to the Congress chairman Sahil Gasimov, the Queen`s personal secretary said Her Majesty was pleased to receive a congratulatory message

and "Painting of Azerbaijan: Anthology" book from the Benelux Azerbaijanis Congress on the occasion of the Queen's Day.

Report and draft resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh to be presented at OSCE PA summer session

May 20 (AzerTAc). A report on the Nagorno-Karabakh and a resulting draft resolution will be presented at OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's summer session in Monaco in July, said vice-speaker of Azerbaijan's Parliament and head of the country's delegation to OSCE PA Bahar Muradova. "Work is underway on the report and the draft resolution." She said a meeting with the Secretary General of OSCE PA, Spencer Oliver, which was held during the spring session, considered the issues that caused the Azerbaijani side's objections.

A report on the fulfillment of the Belgrade Declaration and OSCE PA resolutions will be heard at the session. The Monaco Declaration is also expected to be adopted.

The session will also discuss violations in the parliamentary elections in Armenia. The OSCE observation mission's report reflects a number of shortcomings that occurred during the parliamentary elections in Armenia. "The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will consider not only the violations, but will assess them. Probably, this issue will be also considered during the session," Muradova added.

President of Azerbaijan meets Premier of Great Britain

21 May (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev being on a working visit in Chicago met here with the Prime Minister of the Great Britain David Cameron. Azerbaijani President and British Premier praised the development of bilateral relations between the two countries, expressed confidence for strengthening of relations and cooperation. Noting the fruitful results in energy cooperation between Azerbaijan and the Great Britain, the sides stressed joint efforts of Azerbaijani and British oil companies, in particular BP, to develop the "South" energy corridor. President Aliyev and Premier Cameron also discussed the state in Afghanistan, further cooperation to establish peace and safety in this country. A number of regional questions also were focused on in the meeting.

Azerbaijan's President attends meeting of heads of state and government on Afghanistan in Chicago

May 21 (AzerTAc). World leaders convened in Chicago on Monday after completing some of the most intensive negotiations of the year on issues ranging from eradicating hunger to resolution of the eurozone crisis and ending the Afghanistan war. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev participated in the meeting. The Azerbaijani President addressed the event. In the NATO communiqué, the heads of state and government claimed the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan was on track and "irreversible", and would provide a new non-combat NATO mission in Afghanistan after 2014 "to train, advise and assist" the Afghan army. Opening the meeting, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said here today discussed the future of the Afghan government and people. Speaking on the activities of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, NATO Secretary General pointed out that these forces have played an active role in the fight against terrorism. There is an ongoing process of devolution of NATO powers in Afghanistan to the country's police and military authorities. President Obama, after meeting Afghanistan president Hamid Karzai in Chicago on Sunday, insisted that within the next two years the war in Afghanistan as we know it would be over. President Barack Obama praised the operation in Afghanistan carried out by International Security Assistance Force, and noted that 75 percent of Afghanistan is controlled by the Afghans. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev addressed the meeting. The Head of Azerbaijani State said since the early years Azerbaijan has made every effort to ensure peace and security in Afghanistan. President Ilham Aliyev stressed Azerbaijan continues its mission and Azerbaijani servicemen are actively involved in peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan. In addition, Azerbaijan has also contributed to Afghanistan by carrying out various trainings for the Afghan militaries. President Ilham Aliyev said Azerbaijan will continue its assistance to Afghanistan until 2014, and if necessary will spare no effort in the future.

Azerbaijani delegation takes part in 5th Astana Economic Forum

May 22 (AzerTAc). A delegation led by Samir Sharifov, Finance Minister of Azerbaijan, has participated in the fifth Astana Economic Forum (AEF) dedicated to the challenges and prospects of world economic development in terms of global transformation. The event is co-organized by the support of the "Eurasian Economic Club of Scientists" Association operating in Kazakhstan. Presidents, heads of transnational corporations, representatives of political and business communities, scientists in economics, Nobel Prize winners as well as Robert Mandell, Robert Aumann, Christopher Pissarides, the former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, British former Prime Minister Tony Blair and Wim Kok former Prime

Minister of the Netherlands and other officials are among the attendees of the forum.

This year's agenda of the 5th Astana Economic Forum includes three sections: financial capital and global economy, industrial-innovative development, sustainable development and global social situation. In total, the agenda of the forum consists of over 50 panel sessions of different formats with the participation of more than 8,000 delegates from 90 countries. President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan will attend the official opening ceremony.

Air Astana starts flights on Astana-Baku route

May 22 (AzerTAc). On May 21, Kazakh Air Astana Company launched new flight on Astana-Baku-Astana route, Company's Baku office reported. The flights will be implemented by Embraer 190 aircrafts and on Monday and Friday. Company has leased 4 Embraer 190 aircrafts to implement flights in Central Asia and CIS and signed contract to purchase such type of aircrafts. First aircraft will be delivered to the Company in July. Ticket for economy-class starts from AZN 200, for business-class – from AZN 450. The price includes airport charges and other taxes. The tickets for both directions cost AZN 376 and AZN 886. The flying time is 2 hours 55 minutes.

Elmar Mammadyarov: Azerbaijan's Achievement

May 23 (AzerTAc). "Hosting Eurovision in Baku this year helped Azerbaijan demonstrate its progress which the country managed to attain through the years of independence." The statement came from Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov in the article published in The Wall Street Journal. "As host of this year's Eurovision Song Contest, my country can showcase the progress it has made since independence," the minister says. "Azerbaijan's pride in hosting the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest, which has the largest television audience of any non-sporting event in the world, reflects far more than a love of music. It signals my country's re-emergence into the international community and enables us to showcase our achievements since independence," the minister explains.

In the article Mammadyarov speaks about a turning point in the history of the country during the USSR collapse and the restoration of national independence, war with its neighbour Armenia and implications of this war including millions of refugees and the occupation of Nagorno-

Karabakh region, the overcoming of political and economic crisis of that period by Azerbaijan which thus made its way to economic growth and prosperity.

"Today, in 20 years after gaining independence, Azerbaijan has become one of the fastest economies in the world where the average annual growth in GDP in 2003-2008 made 20%", Mammadyarov said noting the great role of the national Oil Fund and the reasonable economic management. "Azerbaijan has managed to combine the rapid economic growth, including the steady growth in non-energy sector, with economic and political stability", the minister says.

U.S. Congressman Gregory Meeks wished Azerbaijan success in Eurovision 2012 song contest

May 23 (AzerTAc). Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Gregory Meeks wished Azerbaijan success in the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest. The congressman said the international contest in Baku is an opportunity for a wider audience to become acquainted with Azerbaijan. U.S. congressman Gregory Meeks was one of the many speakers, representing the Congress at a two-day conference devoted to 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and the United States in Washington. Addressing the conference Meeks said, "There has to be a continued dialogue engagement for the next 20-30-40-50 years. One of the most serious cases, we face is a strong and knowledgeable U.S. ambassador in Baku. In addition, to prevent the existence of nuclear weapons in the region we need to develop our cooperation. The U.S. President has repeatedly said that the existence of nuclear weapons in the region is unacceptable. I express my gratitude to the organizers of a conference, American and Eurasian Council «Turquoise», U.S. Azeris Network (USAN), the Institute «Caspian Strategy» and the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. I can see that the conference is attended by many of my colleagues in the Congress. This indicates that we are always thinking about you. Regardless of political affiliation, the U.S. Congress members know and support the important role of Azerbaijan in the region. In order to live in a more stable world, our relations in the region should strengthen. I hope that in the framework of inter-parliamentary ties we should expand our dialogue with Azerbaijani colleagues and increase mutual visits of delegations. During these visits we gain new knowledge and new friends. We have planned these visits. In conclusion, I wish your country success in hosting the Eurovision Song Contest "Eurovision-2012". I know that it will be a good opportunity to

showcase the talents of not only Azerbaijan, but also throughout Europe. We also look forward meeting new talents during the competition. In general, the contest in Baku is an opportunity for a wider audience to get acquainted with Azerbaijan. The more we know about you, the more we talk about the importance of our relations with your country with our voters. Once again thank you for the invitation to the conference. As a member of the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia of the U.S. Congress, I hope, we will be working and talking closely and make a visit to the region soon.”

Light your fire!

INTERPOL Secretary General visits Seaside National Park in Baku

May 23 (AzerTAc). Secretary General of INTERPOL Ronald Noble has visited today here the Seaside National Park. Executive Director of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Anar Alakbarov told Ronald Noble that one of the priceless gems of Baku, the Seaside National Park, is a fine example of Azerbaijan’s material culture. It is also a special natural complex that forms the historical and modern appearance of the capital. The rapid socioeconomic development of the country under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev in recent years has significantly changed Baku, turning it into a metropolis. The changes have not bypassed the Seashore National Park. The urban planning, recreation and tourism infrastructure coupled with the environmental safety of the beautiful capital have enhanced the opportunities for implementing the Seaside National Park development strategy. The Secretary General was told that the available 450-meter pier has been extended into the sea by another 100 meters. In the future, the length of the boulevard will be increased to 25 kilometers. The expansion of the Seaside National Park was also intended to improve conditions for boat tours, for which three new boats have been brought to the capital. Then Noble became familiar with the Baku Crystal Hall, the venue of the Eurovision-2012 Song Contest. He was told the hall can seat 25,000 people and has an original architectural style that imparts special beauty to the capital. In the future, it can host other international events. One of the factors increasing the value of the Baku Crystal Hall is its proximity to the State Flag Square. The Secretary General of INTERPOL also visited the National Flag Square. He was told that President Ilham Aliyev signed an Order on establishment of National Flag Square in Baku on November 17, 2007. The same day, the President signed another order to declare November 9 as the National Flag Day.

The foundation stone for the National Flag Square was laid on December 30, 2007 with the participation of President Ilham Aliyev. The inauguration ceremony opening of the National Flag Square took place on September 1, 2010. Confirmed by the Guinness Book of Records, the flag flies on a pole 162 meters high and measures 70 by 35 meters. The upper part of the Square embraces three hectares and overall the square covers 60 hectares. The square features the state symbols of Azerbaijan (the coat of arms and the anthem) and the map of the country. Noble also became familiar with the National Flag Museum established on the initiative of President Ilham Aliyev. The museum features flags and emblems of states existed in the territory of Azerbaijan as well as khanates, constitutions of Azerbaijan adopted in past years, postal stamps, banknotes, orders, medals, flags kissed at the inauguration ceremonies by national leader Heydar Aliyev and President Ilham Aliyev, flag of Supreme Commander-in-chief and ceremonial costumes. The museum also showcases a Guinness World Records certificate for the tallest flagpole, books photographs and flag hung in the embassy of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in Turkey. The Secretary General told journalists the Azerbaijani President, Government and people can be proud of the high-level organization of the Eurovision-2012 song contest. He noted over a short period Azerbaijan had achieved great accomplishments. Noble also said those coming to the Baku Crystal Hall would feel themselves safe.

Light your Fire!

Azerbaijan shows off its culture to Europe

May 23 (AzerTAc). Europe has witnessed the greatness of Azerbaijan`s culture as the country has played host to a grandiose first semi-final of the Eurovision-2012 song contest. Millions of people across Europe along with audience at the Baku Crystal Hall watched Natig, an Azerbaijani national rhythm group, perform in the interval act of today`s show. The performance featured a tambourine stone (Gaval Dash), the oldest musical instrument ever discovered in Azerbaijan, as well as several other traditional instruments including a tar, a kamancha (both string instruments), a balaban and a zurna (wind instruments). They performed a yally, which is a traditional Azerbaijani round dance, and young drummers were conveying messages through drum beats.

Spanish Parliament rejects “Armenian genocide” recognition

May 24 (AzerTAc). The Foreign Affairs Committee of Spain's Parliament refused to recognize the so-called “Armenian genocide” by 36 votes against and 3 in favor. The two MPs from the Amaiur coalition from the Basque Country prepared draft proposals for the recognition of the 1915 events as genocide during the Ottoman Empire period. The proposal was supported only by the Basque Nationalist Party and United Left. The Spain's ruling centre-right People's Party, Socialist Workers' Party and others opposed the document. Speaking at the Commission's session Jose Maria Beneyto, MP from the People's Party, and Meritxell Batet, MP from the Socialist Workers' Party cited France as an example to claim that such steps can damage the Turkish-Armenian relations. MP from the Progress and Democracy party Irene Lozano has condemned those who proposed this document, adding it would be better to mourn terror act victims in the Basque country rather than to talk about the “heroism” of Armenians and shed crocodile tears for them. “I see these actions as duplicity. And the thing is that you protect Armenians,” Irene Lozano said. The role of the Embassy of Turkey in Spain in securing the refusal by the Parliament was noted.

The Telegraph: Baku, Azerbaijan: Dubai of the Caucasus

May 24 (AzerTAc). “The Telegraph” published an article entitled “Baku, Azerbaijan: Dubai of the Caucasus”. The article says that “The oil-rich city of Baku is a suitably surreal venue for this year's Eurovision contest”. The author underlines that “Oil-soaked earth had long been used as a fuel in Azerbaijan, but it was the drilling of the first commercial oil well in 1846 that led to a massive influx of opportunists. A new city, conceived in the grand European style, sprang up around the sleepy, walled old city of Baku – now a UNESCO-listed world heritage site. In 1991, Azerbaijan won its independence from a crumbling Soviet Union and the country's rebirth began. In 1994, Heydar Aliyev, father of the nation announced a contract with a European oil consortium, which he trumpeted as the “deal of the century”. This launched Azerbaijan's economy upwards, hauling the country headlong into the 21st century”. “Now, no fewer than five new international hotel brands are opening properties of predictably lofty proportions. Baku aspires to be the Dubai of the Caucasus. Baku is a city like no other. And there is so much more than the brash and glitzy glass towers. There's the grand Boulevard, mazelike Old City, stuffed with cafés and carpet shops. The Modern Art Museum is impressive – more so than the world's tallest flagpole. It has nine of the world's 11 possible climatic zones. There are significant prehistoric stone carvings; a vast new billion-dollar

(reputedly) ski resort; half the world's mud volcanoes, Day-Glo pink salt lakes, burning mountain sides, flaming rivers and springs”.

Azerbaijan assumes PABSEC presidency

May 24 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan took over the presidency of the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly from Armenia at the 39 plenary meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in Yerevan. Azerbaijan was represented by delegation led by BSEC Vice-President Asef Hajiyev, MPs Musa Guliyev and Jale Aliyeva. May 23 meeting discussed and unanimously adopted a statement on the 20th anniversary of the Organization. The statement in particular, confirmed that the main objective of cooperation within the BSEC is development of good neighborliness, friendship and partnership between the countries of the region, mutually beneficial cooperation in political, economic and humanitarian spheres. The Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC welcomes effective cooperation in the field of transport, trade, energy, communications, tourism, environment, health, agriculture, and fight against organized crime. The statement expressed readiness to strengthen cooperation for peaceful and stable development of the region. The 40th meeting of the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly will be held in Baku on November 21-22.

US Department of State: Armenian separatists continue to control most of the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan

May 25 (AzerTAc). The Armenian separatists with support of Armenia continue to control most of the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, US Department of State said in its annual report on violation of the human rights in different countries for 2011. The document says during a year the incidents along the frontline separating two parties of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict have continued with huge death toll on both sides.

Eurovision to allow Azerbaijan to become closer and more understandable to ordinary European citizens, Matthew Bryza

May 26 (AzerTAc). The Eurovision will allow Azerbaijan to become closer and more understandable to ordinary European citizens, who today have the wrong idea about this country, thinks Matthew Bryza, former US Ambassador to Azerbaijan. He said thousands of Europeans arrived this week in Azerbaijan to watch Eurovision song contest. He noted those who know Azerbaijan mainly from elegant commercials on CNN will see in the

capital, Baku, a developing city graced with a stunning promenade along a turquoise sea. According to him, for today most of the Europeans know about Azerbaijan only from the reports and articles by the Western media. As a person who served a one-year term as US Ambassador to Azerbaijan, I know that they often do not reflect the reality, he said. Bryza underlined that “Azerbaijan’s record on economic reform has been significantly better than is portrayed in the Western media. Economic reformers have followed prudent fiscal and monetary policies”. He said: “Azerbaijan’s society, government reformers invested much of the country’s energy revenue in an anti-poverty program that helped reduce the poverty rate from 49 percent to 9.1 percent from 2003 to 2009 (16 percent, according to the World Bank)”.

Nabucco consortium to make final decision on Shah Deniz project this summer

May 26 (AzerTAc). Shareholders of Nabucco and Shah Deniz consortium are currently negotiating together in order to find the most appropriate option for both sides. Nabucco consortium presented proposal for the basic version of the pipeline to Shah Deniz-II consortium in September, 2011. And an updated version on Nabucco West has been submitted in May, 2012. According to the Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH operator, the consortium is expected to make final decision on Nabucco-West project this summer. The Nabucco Consortium presented on May 17 a revised, smaller version of the gas pipeline project called Nabucco West to the consortium developing the Shah Deniz II gas field in Azerbaijan. The 1300-km pipeline Nabucco West is to carry Caspian gas from the Bulgarian-Turkish border to the Central European Gas Hub (CEGH) in Baumgarten and beyond. The Nabucco group said that the revised version of the project would benefit from the existing legal framework such as the Intergovernmental Agreement, Project Support Agreements and third party access exemptions, that have already been negotiated.

The original pipeline was 3,900 kilometers long and ran from the Eastern border of Turkey to Baumgarten in Austria. The Nabucco project aimed at lessening Europe’s energy dependence on Russian energy was supposed to achieve a gas transport capacity of 31 billion cubic metres (bcm) a year. Nabucco competes with a number of rival pipeline projects for Shah Deniz II gas. The Shah Deniz II Consortium is to announce a winning project in the summer, a final investment decision due in 2013. Nabucco’s shareholders are Austria’s OMV, Germany’s RWE, Hungary’s MOL, Turkey’s

Botas, Bulgaria's Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH) and Romania's Transgaz. MOL and RWE have questioned the feasibility of the original version of Nabucco, threatening to leave the project company.

Azerbaijani President watches grand final of Eurovision-2012 song contest

May 27 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva and family members have watched the grand final of the Eurovision-2012 song contest in Baku. A lavish firework display marked the opening of the Eurovision-2012 final show at the Baku Crystal Hall. The grand final broadcast live to 46 European countries. Twenty-six countries were competing for the title of winner of the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest. Prominent mugham singer Alim Gasimov was first to impress the audience with a mugham piece. Last year's winner duo Ell & Nikki opened the show with the Running Scared to the accompaniment of Azerbaijan's national musical instruments. Following the opening ceremony, the 26 acts competing in the grand final of the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest took the stage of the Baku Crystal Hall. Then, the voting started to decide the winner of the grand final. The result was determined by way of a 50/50 split between national expert juries and televoting. The combined scores created the final outcome. Countries awarded their votes in scores from 1 to 7 and then 8, 10 and 12 points with only the latter three being read out by the spokesperson. All 42 participating countries were able to vote. The televoting was held during the live show once the final performance took place. The viewers of the 26 competing nations had the opportunity to televote for their favourite song with the numbers being revealed by their respective national broadcaster during the live show. The lines were open for just 15 minutes after the last song was performed. Famous singer and songwriter Emin Agalarov presented an original and a spectacular show involving a 68-man group of back vocalists and dancers at the interval act of the grand final, definitely making the audience go crazy on the big night. Sweden was crowned the winner of this year's Eurovision song contest. Loreen was voted Europe's favorite, after scoring 372 points with her song Euphoria.

Russia's Buranovskiye Babushki ranked second, followed by Serbia's Zeljko Joksimovic. Azerbaijan's Sabina Babayeva came 4th scoring 150 points. Four countries – Ukraine, Malta, Turkey and Lithuania – gave maximum of 12 point votes to Azerbaijan.

The grand final culminated with a press conference of the contest's winner. Speaking to the press conference, Loreen said: "I loved the people of Azerbaijan, they are very friendly."

She thanked the host Azerbaijan for excellent organization of the contest.

94th anniversary of Azerbaijani Democratic Republic marked in Toronto

May 28 (AzerTAc). To celebrate the 94th anniversary since the establishment of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR) Azerbaijani Student Association at the University of Toronto (AzSA) and newly established Azerbaijani Youth of Canada Network (AYCN) co-organized "The Republic Day in Toronto" flag-raising event at the Toronto City Hall on May 27. The flag of the Republic of Azerbaijan was raised with the members of the Canadian-Azerbaijani community. In the speech addressed to the attendees the president of AYCN Iskandar Gadirzade talked about the history and achievements of ADR in the beginning of the last century. He also mentioned Mammad Amin Rasulzade, Fatali Khan Khoyski, Nasib Yusifbayli, Aliagha Shikhlinski, Samad bay Mehmandarov's role in establishment of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic.

President of Turkmenistan: "Azerbaijan is our friend and reliable partner"

May 30 (AzerTAc). "We consider Azerbaijan our sincere friend and reliable partner, our associate in solving many pressing issues of regional and global policy and attach great importance to the development of traditionally friendly Turkmen-Azerbaijani relations," President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov said at the meeting with First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Yagub Eyyubov. Yaqub Eyyubov conveyed warm greetings from the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to the President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and the people of Turkmenistan. President of Turkmenistan also conveyed best wishes to the Head of the Azerbaijani state, stressing that the two peoples enjoy friendly relations based on mutual respect, equality and a common desire for progress and development. "High level of trust and understanding are inherent in the Turkmen-Azerbaijani dialogue, and this is a solid foundation for steady development of bilateral cooperation and cooperation within international organizations," said Turkmen leader. During the meeting the sides discussed the priority aspects of bilateral

cooperation, which opens up most favourable opportunities to develop productive interaction in the bilateral format and within the framework of the authoritative international organizations, including the CIS. "For several years, Turkmenistan and its partners in the region are actively involved in implementation of major projects to optimize traffic flow in the Eurasian space. Their effective use can give a powerful impetus to economic and trade relations on a continental scale," said Berdymukhamedov, expressing hope that the development of the UN Special Programme for Transport Development, providing for the study of transit-transport capacity between the Caspian and the Black Sea, Central Asia and Middle East will be an important factor in achieving sustainable development throughout the region. The sides also discussed issues of interstate cooperation in the environmental field, in particular, in promotion of Turkmenistan's initiative on the establishment of a specialized structure – UN Interregional Center for to address climate change and the deployment of its headquarters in Ashgabat. The sides expressed confidence that relations between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan will continue to develop in the best traditions of friendship for common good. Azerbaijan can become an important transit country for rich in natural gas Turkmenistan.

Argentine`s University opens Azerbaijani studies department

June 1 (AzerTAc). An event has been held on the occasion of establishment of the Azerbaijani studies department under the Argentine`s National University of La Plata (UNLP) of Institute of International Relations. The event has brought together officials of the University, as well as members of the Argentinean Parliament, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentine, scientists and researchers engaged in Southern Caucasus region. Founding Director of the International Relations Institute of UNLP, head of the Azerbaijani studies department Norberto Consani provided information about Azerbaijan. He also noted that the department would serve for popularization of Azerbaijan in Latin America. Azerbaijani Ambassador Mammad Ahmadzade praised the opening of the Azerbaijani department in Argentine. Ambassador also said that the department which is the first centre in Latin America would contribute its efforts on educating the local people on Azerbaijan. Mammad Ahmadzade also highlighted the development relations and prospect of cooperation between the two countries. The National University of La Plata is one of the most important Argentine national universities and the biggest one situated in the city of La Plata, capital of Buenos Aires Province. It has over 90,000 regular students, 10,000 teaching staff, 16 departments and 106 available degrees.

Caspian Engineering Company awarded with International Certificate

June 2 (AzerTAc). The Caspian Engineering Company LTD has been awarded with international certificate of the TÜV AUSTRIA Group. An event on this occasion has been held in the Caspian Engineering Company. Addressing the event, representative of the TÜV AUSTRIA Group in Azerbaijan Shamo Muradov said that the activity of the Caspian Engineering Company in high-quality management system has been hailed by the Group and the company was presented with international ISO 9001-2008 certificate for the first time in Azerbaijan. Stressing the success in construction and design sphere, Shamo Muradov expressed hope for the company's future achievements. President of the Azerbaijan Methanol Company, which affiliates the Caspian Engineering Company (AzMeCo), Nizami Piriyeu congratulated the staff for the achievement in construction and industry sector. He also wished that the company actively participate and win in the country's future big tenders. Certificate of the TÜV AUSTRIA Group has been presented to Nizami Piriyeu at the event. Caspian Engineering Company was established in 2007. The Company engaged in engineering of oil producing complexes according to world standards, preparing of technical documents and provides other engineering-consulting services in Azerbaijan and internationally including Caspian Sea region. The company staff consists of professional engineers that have a long-term experience in the world's leading companies with high scientific technical potential. During previous years Caspian Engineering Company LTD with its high scientific-technical potential has gained high authority and has become one of the dynamic developing Engineering Companies not only in Azerbaijan and also out of the country including Central Asia and Afghanistan in oil refining sphere. Caspian Engineering Company LTD performing high quality services in and out of country and successfully complete outstanding tasks and objectives. The Company has been awarded a state license for designing, construction & modification and operation of oil and gas refining facilities and vessels and equipment working under high pressure. Caspian Engineering Company is committed to guarantee top quality benchmark with highly qualified teams, operate on a global basis, achieve an optimal, economical and flexible implementation of the project.

The company has experience with different standards (e.g.ANSI,API,BS,DIN,GOST-R,etc.) and is experienced in implementing client standards (e.g. pipe classes,HSE regulations,etc) with high HSE focus during all project phases (HAZID,HAZOP,SIL,etc.)

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Andorra visits Azerbaijan

June 3 (AzerTAc). Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Principality of Andorra Gilbert Saboya Sunyé on Sunday paid an official visit to Azerbaijan. During the visit, he will discuss development and prospects of economic and political relations between both countries. The Minister is accompanied by Andorran businessmen who will attend the Azerbaijani-Andorran business forum here.

Azerbaijan`s UN Security Council presidency ends

June 3 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s presidency of the UN Security Council has finished.

China`s permanent representative to the UN Li Baodong took over the presidency from his Azerbaijani counterpart Agshin Mehdiyev. Baodong said China would fulfill its duty as a rotating president of the Council in a fair, neutral way, so as to effectively maintain international peace. The Council is expected to review some 30 issues, including those related to Syria, Sudan, South Sudan and the Middle East, as per its provisional work plan for June.

Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in the world. The Council presidency rotates among its members in the English alphabetical order of their names. Each president holds office for one calendar month. China previously assumed the presidency in March 2011. The Security Council has 15 members, including five permanent members — China, Britain, France, Russia and the US. The 10 non-permanent members are elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms. Azerbaijan will take over the presidency of the Council for the next time in September, 2013.

Baku-Gabala-Baku flight launched

June 3 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan Airlines has opened a direct flight from capital Baku to Gabala and back. According to the company, the flights will be carried out on Fridays and Sundays. The flights will be operated by ATR-72 crafts.

The one-way ticket costs AZN48, the company said.

Azerbaijan`s President receives Foreign Minister of Principality of Andorra

June 4 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s President Ilham Aliyev has today received Foreign Minister of Principality of Andorra Gilbert Saboya Sunye. Gilbert Saboya Sunye said he was honoured to pay his first official visit to Azerbaijan on behalf of the Andorran government. The Minister underlined that the visit creates `good` opportunity in terms of becoming familiar with Azerbaijan, and for the Azerbaijani society to learn more about Andorra. Gilbert Saboya Sunye stressed that both nations have ancient history, adding Azerbaijan has `good` development prospects. President Ilham Aliyev underlined importance of continuation of such visits for bringing the two countries closer to each other. The Head of State expressed hope that relations in political, economic and other spheres would be discussed during the visit.

President Ilham Aliyev receives delegation led by Ukrainian Foreign Minister

June 4 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on June 4 received delegation led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Konstantin Grishenko. Ukrainian FM delivered greetings of and best wishes of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych to the Head of Azerbaijani State. The sides expressed satisfaction with successful development of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Ukraine in various areas, emphasized significance of cooperation between international organizations, exchanged views on further expansion of ties. President Ilham Aliyev expressed gratitude for the greetings of President Viktor Yanukovych and asked to extend his greetings to the Ukrainian leader.

Azerbaijan`s President receives Secretary General of Organization of Islamic Cooperation

June 4 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s President Ilham Aliyev has today received Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu. The OIC Secretary General congratulated President Ilham Aliyev on excellent organization of the Eurovision-2012 song contest. Ihsanoglu pointed out that OIC would continue to support fair settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. They praised successful development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and OIC, and exchanged views on prospects of these relations.

Ru-Energy Group interest to participate in exploration projects in Azerbaijan

June 4 (AzerTAc). Russia's holding Ru-Energy Group has announced plans on purchase service and production assets in Azerbaijan as part of its strategy aimed at becoming a vertically integrated company, first Vice-President of Ru-Energy Group Abdul Lezgiyev said. Lezgiyev noted that the company is currently considering options to participate in extracting projects in the CIS, particularly in Azerbaijan. The company has plans to participate in extracting projects, both independently and with partners in Azerbaijan

"In the future, we are ready to create joint ventures in Azerbaijan, acquire oil and gas production licenses, and will apply for service contracts, by participating in the tenders," Abdul Lezgiyev told. He said the Russian company is interested in attracting Azerbaijani specialists to work on a rotational basis. In particular, highly qualified Azeri personnel, specializing in drilling, process engineers, and others are great interest for the RU-ENERGY Group.

2nd Caspian International Power and Alternative Energy Exhibition opens in Baku

June 5 (AzerTAc). "Caspian Power 2012" 2nd Caspian International Power and Alternative Energy Exhibition has today kicked off at Expo Exhibition and Convention Center in Baku. This year's exhibition space has doubled reflecting the solid growth of this event. Participants from Germany, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, along with the State Agency on Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources, Goknur Baki, Schneider Electric and Azenco STP Sumgait Technology Park have confirmed their participation.

The exhibition is divided into thematic sections: power generation and electrical equipment, alternative sources of energy, cable and wire products, and lighting. This is just one of the ways in which the event promotes the establishing of important contacts, the expansion of markets, and the introduction of new investment and technology into the domestic market.

Visiting Caspian Power 2012 will enable you to meet market leading companies, get information on cutting-edge developments, and build valuable, long-term cooperation in the sector. Coaches are provided for non-stop travel to and from Baku Expo Centre, which is conveniently

located 10km from the centre on fast and accessible transport routes. For those driving to the event, there are also several car parks located around the venue.

Baku host 19th International Caspian Oil & Gas Exhibition and Conference

June 5 (AzerTAc). Today, the 19th Caspian Oil & Gas Exhibition and Conference, the Caspian Region's largest oil and gas exhibition, starts at the Baku Expo Centre in Azerbaijan. Over 304 companies from 35 countries have confirmed their participation. Exhibitors will showcase the latest developments in oil and gas equipment and innovative extraction, transportation technology and storage systems. Current and future local and international oil and gas projects will also be presented. Caspian Oil & Gas is officially supported by the Ministry of Industry and Energy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The event is organized by ITE Group plc and Iteca Caspian. The exhibition will last till June 8.

40th session of ministerial meeting of Organization for Cooperation of Railways kicks off in Baku

June 5 (AzerTAc). The 40th session of the ministerial meeting of the Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSJD) has today started in Azerbaijan's capital. According to the press service of Azerbaijan Railways CSC, the session, which last till Friday, discusses OSJD's activity in 2011, development strategy of the organization, activity program for further years and other issues. Plenipotentiary representatives of OSJD member states will primarily consider session projects and materials on June 5-6 and plenary meeting of OSJD will take place on June 7-8. Protocol will be signed to the effect. The Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSJD or OSShD) was established as the equivalent of the International Union of Railways (UIC) to create and improve the coordination of international rail transport. Concerning especially the transports between Europe and Asia, it has helped develop cooperation between railway companies and with other international organisations. The members of this organisation created an international transport law.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev meets U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

June 6 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on Wednesday, June 6, met with the United States Secretary of State Hillary

Clinton. During the meeting, President Ilham Aliyev said the visit testifies friendship and partnership between the two countries. President Aliyev dwelled on the economic, energy ties as well as the regional cooperation in the field of security between Azerbaijan and the United States. Mrs. Clinton said she is pleased to be visiting Azerbaijan again and holding discussions with Azerbaijani leader on bilateral relations between the two countries. Mrs. Clinton also emphasized the importance of the President Ilham Aliyev's participation in Chicago summit and strategic cooperation between the United States and Azerbaijan in many areas. The U.S. secretary of State also said Azerbaijan plays a crucial role in the region. The sides also discussed the Armenia - Azerbaijan Nagorno Karabakh dispute, prospects for energy cooperation and other issues.

After the meeting, on behalf of the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, a lunch was arranged in honour of Mrs. Hillary Clinton.

Azerbaijan`s FM meets head of Hungary-Azerbaijan inter-parliamentary friendship group

June 7 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov has today met a delegation led by vice-chairman of the Hungarian Parliament`s foreign affairs committee and head of Hungary-Azerbaijan interparliamentary friendship group Marton Gyongyosi. Azerbaijan`s FM praised the political relations between the two countries, adding they contribute to further developing the parliamentary diplomacy. Mammadyarov also informed the delegation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Gyongyosi hailed the development of intergovernmental relations between Hungary and Azerbaijan. Gyongyosi expressed hope the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would be soled peacefully.

Azerbaijan`s Premier meets members of Council of Elders of Turkic-speaking countries

June 7 (AzerTAc). Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Artur Rasizade met Thursday delegates who are in Baku to attend the next gathering of Council of Elders of Turkic-speaking countries. During the meeting they said relations between Azerbaijan and Turkic-speaking countries were developing successfully. The Prime Minister noted despite the financial crisis in European countries Azerbaijan`s economy is continuously developing. He also noted Azerbaijan`s military power was strengthening day-by-day. Rasizade also spoke of Azerbaijan`s increasing profile in the region. Touching upon the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Rasizade expressed hope that as a result of efforts by international organizations the problem

would be solved soon. Members of the Council of Elders of Turkic-speaking countries said Azerbaijan was developing rapidly. They expressed confidence that political, economic and cultural cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkic-speaking countries would further expand. They also thanked the Azerbaijani leadership for conditions created for holding the gathering.

We believe that occupied territories of Azerbaijan will be liberated, says Turkish President

June 8 (AzerTAc). Turkish President Abdullah Gul speaking on Friday in Igdyr said he believes the occupied Azerbaijani territories will be liberated. "Peace will be established in the Caucasus, Turkey is making every effort to create the atmosphere of stability in the region," Abdullah Gul said, according to Anadolu agency. Peace will be established in the Caucasus, and all problems will be forgotten after solving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, he added. "We are doing our best to establish stability in the Caucasus," he said.

The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. Armenian armed forces have occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan since 1992, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and 7 surrounding districts. Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a ceasefire agreement in 1994. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group - Russia, France, and the U.S. - are currently holding the peace negotiations.

Armenia has not yet implemented the U.N. Security Council's four resolutions on the liberation of the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding regions.

Speaker of Azerbaijani Parliament meets Chairman of Kazakh Senate

June 8 (AzerTAc). Speaker of Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov has today met with Chairman of Kazakhstan's Senate Kayrat Mami. The sides discussed development of relations between the two states, including expansion of the interparliamentary ties. Kayrat Mami noted that Kazakhstan feels proud with dynamic development of Azerbaijan. The Speaker of Milli Majlis said thanks to the efforts of Azerbaijani and Kazakh Presidents, relations were rapidly developing.

Germany recognizes Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, Horst Schnellhardt

June 9 (AzerTAc). "German Bundestag adopted a resolution on Azerbaijan's territorial integrity two years ago and expressed its positive position to the effect. I want to confirm once again that in this resolution Germany recognizes Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and supports its just position. This is an official political position, we absolutely maintain it," visiting German member of the European parliament Horst Schnellhardt said. The European MP said he would share his impressions on Azerbaijan, as well as all information with his colleagues. "Certainly, we will raise the issue again. It is important for both Azerbaijan and us. This problem is one of the moments impacting us". "The European MPs are concerned about the situation in Azerbaijan's frontline area, as well as Armenians' gunfire on Azerbaijani farmers, civilians working in the agricultural fields", he added.

Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey meet in Trabzon

June 9 (AzerTAc). Ministers of foreign affairs of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia got together over a tripartite meeting in city of Trabzon, Turkey, on Friday to assess bilateral and regional developments. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze discussed opportunities to improve cooperation between their countries during the meeting, Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry's press service said. "This tripartite dialogue mechanism, established between the foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia upon our country's initiative, is expected to provide a platform to discuss bilateral and regional issues and to develop an understanding of cooperation on various fields based on mutual benefits," the press service reported. As is stated, the mechanism also aims at contributing to regional stability and security by creating an atmosphere of sustainable regional cooperation in the South Caucasus.

Aerosvit Airlines starts flight on Odessa-Baku route

June 10 (AzerTAc). Ukrainian Aerosvit Airlines company has launched Odessa-Baku-Odessa flight. The flights will be carried out on Fridays at 18.00 from Odessa and at 23.50 from Baku. Price of plane tickets on both directions is AZN 420.

Georgian Foreign Ministry: Karabakh conflict threatens security of entire region

June 11, AzerTAc. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is not conducive to security in the region, deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Nino Kalandadze said at a news briefing in Tbilisi on Monday, answering a

question about the escalation of tensions on the border between Azerbaijani and Armenian troops. Kalandadze said the security situation in South Caucasus "is very fragile" due to existing conflicts in the region. "The international community knows it however and in the first place, leaders of the three South Caucasus countries know about it," the deputy minister noted. "I am confident that all parties fully understand how the Karabakh problem is complicated, how serious the consequences of armed conflict would be for the entire region and how difficult a situation in the region it can be in terms of the development of our countries," she said. Kalandadze noted that there is always a theoretical risk of an escalation of tensions under current conditions to which all must be sensitive. "I am convinced that the both states are sensitive to this issue," Kalandadze said, stressing that the Georgian authorities are in constant contact with Baku and Yerevan.

The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. Armenian armed forces have occupied 20 per cent of Azerbaijan since 1992, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts. Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a ceasefire agreement in 1994. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group - Russia, France, and the U.S. - are currently holding the peace negotiations. Armenia has not yet implemented the U.N. Security Council's four resolutions on the liberation of the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding regions.

Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia business-forum held in Kars

June 11 (AzerTAc). Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia Business-Forum was held in Turkish city Kars. The Forum was organized by Azerbaijani Ministry of Economic Development, AzPromo (Azerbaijani Export & Investment Promotion Foundation), Turkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliđi (TOBB) and Turkish Foreign Economic Relations, and Georgian Invest in Georgia National Investment Agency. As is stated, the Forum is being held trilaterally with the initiative of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. The Azerbaijani delegation headed by Minister of Economic Development Shahin Mustafayev and comprising officials, as well entrepreneurs engaging in industry, agriculture, construction, tourism, energy, bank, finance, information-communication technologies, logistics and other spheres attended the event.

Turkish Economic Minister Zafer Chaglayan noted this forum as an example of Azerbaijan-Turkey-Georgia friendship and informed about current economic links among the countries and development of

cooperation. Turkish Minister also noted that as long as Armenia does not withdraw from occupied territories in Azerbaijan, Turkey will not establish relations with Armenia: "Turkey always supported Azerbaijan and will support forever". Azerbaijani Minister of Economic Development Shahin Mustafayev noted that, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev attached importance to sustainable development of political and economic links with both Turkey and Georgia and stressed that Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey collaboration was a model in the world: "Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, East-West transport corridor, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars transnational projects, implemented for realization of our countries' economic potential, conditional geographical position, great transit opportunities, change the region to the important ring of profitable economic cooperation between Asia and Europe". Mustafayev noted that, during 4 months of 2012, Azerbaijan's trade turnover with Turkey rose 60%, with Georgia - 15% in comparison to a year earlier. At present, 1,106 Turkish investment-based companies operate in Azerbaijan and at the same time, 844 Azerbaijani investment-based companies operate in Turkey. Turkish investment in Azerbaijan makes \$ 1.9 bln, investments of SOCAR and other companies in Turkey are approximately \$ 4.5 bln. SOCAR's investments will make \$17 bln until 2018: "272 Azerbaijani investment-based companies operate in Georgia and \$ 454.5 mln were invested during 1996-2011". Business forum lasted with bilateral meetings among the businessmen.

Azerbaijan`s first lady honored with "First Lady of the Year" award

June 13 (AzerTAC). In accordance with the poll conducted by influential Turkish magazine "Ekovitrin", the first lady of Azerbaijan, President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva became the winner in the nomination "First lady of the year" for 2011. Welcoming the winners and guests, the owner of the magazine Kamran Abachioglu briefed the audience on poll conducted by the magazine. He stated that the poll has lasted for two months and 102 figures of politics, business, arts and science received 251,562 votes in 34 nominations. Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ekmaladdin Ihsanoglu and Kamran Abachioglu handed over a prize "First lady of the year" to Anar Alakbarov, the executive director of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, intended for President of the Foundation, UNESCO and ISESCO Goodwill ambassador Mehriban Aliyeva. Turkey's Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertogrul Gunay received "The Minister of the year" award, while OIC Secretary General Ekmaladdin Ihsanoglu was awarded in the "International diplomacy" nomination. The rectors of Turkey's influential universities Mustafa Aydin, Sezer Shener, owner of "Calik Inshaat" Company Ahmad

Calik, the mayor of Istanbul's Shishli district Mustafa Sarigul were among the laureates.

Azerbaijani parliament adopts law on ensuring security of ex-president and his family

June 12 (AzerTAc). The parliament of Azerbaijan adopted a Constitutional Law on ensuring security of ex-presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan and their families.

The law will be implemented in respect of the persons taking the office of the president in the past except the presidents ousted in accordance with Article 107 of the Constitution. Since there are no such cases in Azerbaijan, the law will be implemented in respect of all ex-presidents. The law gives some privileges to the ex-presidents and their families.

The law consists of 12 articles. According to the Constitution, ex-presidents are the persons taking the office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the past, the persons, who died during the office or ended the office in accordance with Article 104 of the Constitution. The law also has the articles concerning the ex-president's spouse and children, adopted or stepchildren under age of 18. According to the law, amount of the ex-president's pension is equal to 50 percent of his monthly salary during the presidency. The president impeached in accordance with Article 107 of the Constitution has no right to get this pension. The document also covers the allowance for the spouse of the deceased president and dependent family member. After the death of former president, allowance in the amount of 50 percent of the monthly pension is to be paid to the spouse or to the dependent child. If former president dies in office, the allowance equal to the president's pension is to be paid to the spouse or dependent child. If there is more than one dependent child, the allowance will be paid to them after being divided into equal parts. According to the law, the pension and the other payments must be paid to the ex-president from deserting his presidential post till his death. If the ex-president dies, it must be paid to the spouse of the ex-president, to the child until he or she reaches 18. In general, the payment of pension and grants and other provisions will be considered in the state budget. The pension and grants paid to the ex-presidents are free from tax. The clauses of any law and rules on medical supply determined for civil service will also concern ex-president and his (her) family members. The law considers to give 3 security staffs, one driver, one service car, the payment of representation expenses in amount of 20% of monthly salary of person, who is in the presidential post, and to

give a diplomatic passport for life to ex-president and his (her) spouse. Ex-president can not be brought to administrative or criminal responsibility for the acts made before his (her) election or during fulfilling its obligations. His (her) spouse will not be brought to the demonstrative and criminal responsibility for the acts made by ex-president during the period of fulfilling the obligations or previous periods. Ex-president can't be brought to responsibility, detained, examined without the consent of the General Prosecutor except the detention on the scene of the crime. According to the law, the archive consisting of copies of personal correspondence documents is kept in ex-president's order.

11th International Transport Exhibition kicks off in Baku

June 12 (AzerTAc). Today, the press conference dedicated to the opening of the 11th edition of TransCaspian, the International Transport, Transit & Logistics Exhibition and 2nd Caspian International Road Infrastructure and Public Transport Exhibition was held at Trend news agency's press centre. The exhibition will be open on June 13 at Baku Expo Centre.

This year, over 70 companies from 15 countries are set to exhibit, with the exhibition's floor space growing by 25%. Several Government bodies will take part alongside the commercial companies, including the Ministry of Transport of the Azerbaijan Republic, Azerbaijan Railways CJSC, the Azerbaijan State Caspian Sea Shipping Company, and the State Road Transport Service of Azerbaijan Republic.

Azerbaijani FM hold discussions with President of International Court of Justice

June 13 (Xinhua). Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with President of the International Court of Justice Peter Tomka, the Foreign Ministry told media on Wednesday. Tomka informed Mammadyarov about the structure and jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, about the cases, which are currently under consideration and the transformation carried out in the court system. Tomka thanked Azerbaijan for the support. The Minister, in turn, emphasized that Azerbaijan as a democratic country with respect for the rule of law is a proponent of settling international disputes and conflicts on the basis of international legal principles and standards, supports the activities of the International Court of Justice as a full member of the United Nations. Other issues of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.

Bishkek to host discussion on prospects for development of relations between members of TURKPA

June 14 (AzerTAc). The Azerbaijani delegation headed by Speaker of the Milli Majlis Oqtay Asadov visited Kyrgyzstan to attend the third plenary session of TURKPA.

The Azerbaijani delegation included head of the Milli Majlis Administration Safa Mirzayev, Chairman of the Parliamentary Culture Committee Nizami Jafarov, MPs Ahliman Amiraslanov, Sevinc Fataliyeva, Chingiz Ganizade, Ulvi Guliyev and Sadagat Valiyeva. The Azerbaijani delegation has been welcomed at the Manas International Airport by Deputy Chairman of Jogorku Kengesh (unicameral parliament of Kyrgyzstan) Asia Satikbaeva, TURKPA Secretary General Ramil Hasanov, Azerbaijani Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Arif Agayev and other officials. The meeting will feature discussions on the development of interparliamentary relations between the members of TURKPA and other important issues. It is also planned to approve the draft budget of TURKPA for 2013.

Ankara's 636th avenue named after Khojaly

June 14 (AzerTAc). The 636th avenue of Mamak, a metropolitan district of Ankara, Turkey, was given a name of the Azerbaijani town Khojaly, according to the Azeri Embassy in Turkey. The decision was made May 12, 2012 to perpetuate the memory of the victims of terrible massacre committed by the Armenians in the Azeri-populated town Khojaly, located in Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan (now occupied by the Armenian Armed Forces).

Khojaly Avenue is one of the largest avenues of Mamak district binding Ankara's Shakhintepe, Shirintepe, Misket and Dutluk areas. The initiative was launched by the Commission of Ankara Municipality and accepted by a majority of 82 voters.

International Bank of Azerbaijan finances construction of largest textile plant in Middle East

June 14 (AzerTAc). The International Bank of Azerbaijan has financed the construction of Middle East's largest textile factory in the Emirate of Fujairah of United Arab Emirates. Chairman of the Bank's Board Jahangir Hajiyev, Ruler of the Emirate of Fujairah Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi, Emirate's Minister of Industry and Economy Sheikh Saleh bin Mohammed Al Sharqi, Chairman of Fujairah Free Zone Authority Sheikh Saif

bin Hamad Al Sharqi participated in the opening of the factory. The factory's construction budget is \$ 60 mln. The factory with the annual production capacity of 10,000 tons will employ 225 people. The factory was provided with the German equipment. The goods to be produced in the factory will be exported to European and Asian countries.

Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan discuss deepening relations

June 15 (AzerTAc). On the sidelines of the third plenary meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA) in Bishkek, speaker of Azerbaijan Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov has met speaker of Kyrgyz parliament - Jogorku Kenesh Asilbek Jeenbekov. The sides discussed a number of issues, including how to deepen relations between Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, expand interparliamentary ties and develop cooperation within TURKPA. They noted a lot of work had been done for development of cooperation among member states of TURKPA during Kazakhstan's presidency in the organization.

OSCE praises adoption of National Action Plan on Protection of Human Rights in Azerbaijan

June 15 (AzerTAc). Vice-speaker of Azerbaijan Milli Majlis, head of parliamentary delegation to OSCE Bahar Muradova met Thursday OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ireland's minister for foreign affairs and trade, Eamon Gilmore. Muradova said her country puts emphasis on development of relations with OSCE on the level of government, parliament and civil society. "We think that these relations will contribute to development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation." Muradova noted great achievements were made in Azerbaijan in building civil society, holding transparent elections, ensuring rule of law after the country joined the OSCE. She pointed out there were some factors to impede strengthening security both in the country and region and one of them is Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh conflict. "Official Baku regards decisions adopted in OSCE's summits and Parliamentary Assembly as efforts towards settlement of the problem. Unfulfillment of these decisions means that OSCE has not completely implemented its mission. "We are satisfied with the principles announced by the OSCE and Minsk Group co-chairs, documents signed by presidents, 4 resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council on the conflict, but what does not satisfy us is lack of concrete result. If we take into consideration the opportunities of international organizations, we can say that there are ways of solution to the problem. The main issue is that political will must be demonstrated. We hope that

your visit to the region, your statements will have results.” Eamon Gilmore, in turn, praised the progress done in Azerbaijan to develop civil society and ensure human rights and liberties. He particularly highly appreciated the adoption of the National Action Plan on Protection of Human Rights. Gilmore said there was freedom of speech, pluralism in Azerbaijan. The Chairperson-in-Office expressed concern over recent tensions on Armenian-Azerbaijani frontline. “Ireland has suffered conflicts as well. We understand very well that such problems must be solved soon. The OSCE plans to take some measures to settle this conflict.” During the meeting the sides also exchanged views on development of draft law on Defamation, preparation for the upcoming elections, cooperation with OSCE’s relevant institutions, joint activity in law-making process and other issues of mutual interest.

Kazakhstan

16 May 2012, 07:59

President Nazarbayev invites V. Putin to Kazakhstan

MOSCOW. May 16. KAZINFORM In the course of a bilateral meeting in Kremlin on May 15 the Head of State Nursultan Nazarbayev invited President of Russia Vladimir Putin to pay an official visit to Kazakhstan.

Vladimir Putin, in his turn, said that he kindly accepted Presidents Nazarbayev's invitation.

During the top-level negotiations presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia underlined the importance of joint work done in terms of bilateral interaction and cooperation within various international integration organizations.

The sides especially underscored the key role of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Aid between Kazakhstan and Russia. "Some provisions of this treaty are out of date - we 'left them behind' by creating the Customs Union. It is crucial to make necessary amendments to the treaty and extend it," N. Nazarbayev noted. His Russian counterpart supported this idea.

16 May 2012, 09:55

CSTO member states' declaration - Kazakhstan's chairmanship progress

MOSCOW. May 16. KAZINFORM "Russia highly appreciates Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Collective Security Treaty Organization," Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov told Kazinform correspondent at the non-formal meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State.

"I extended my congratulations to the Kazakh Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov on the occasion of excellent preparation of the CSTO Jubilee Summit. An adoption of the CSTO member states Declaration crowned the Summit. The Declaration expresses a joint stance of all CSTO member states on various key issues. I think it is a laudable point that we have achieved under Kazakhstan's chairmanship," S. Lavrov said

16 May 2012, 12:12

Cyprus, Kazakhstan to discuss profitable coop

ALMATY. May 16. KAZINFORM A delegation from the Republic of Cyprus is to visit Almaty on May 23-25.

The delegation will consist of heads of Cyprus's State Agency for Investment Attraction and Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hellenic Bank and Deloitte Cyprus, partners and heads of the leading Cyprian companies. The guests are expected to meet with businessmen of Almaty within a business forum "Development of mutually profitable cooperation between Kazakhstan and Cyprus". The forum is organized with the support of the Kazakh Embassy to Cyprus and the Kazakh Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The conference will focus on business cooperation, international banking activity, taxation and opportunities that Cyprus offers as a well-recognized financial center.

16 May 2012, 13:16

Kazakhstan ranks 2nd in world in terms of e-participation

GENEVA. May 16. KAZINFORM The delegation of Kazakhstan presented the achievements of the country in the sphere of information and communication technologies at the Forum of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva.

According to the latest rankings of the UN, Kazakhstan jointly with Singapore took the second place in the world in terms of the e-participation among 190 participating countries, Pm. kz site informed.

Kazakhstan ranked 31st in terms of these rankings in 2005. Our country also climbed up from the 65th place to the 38th one in 2005 in terms of development of electronic government.

Creation of the e-government in Kazakhstan was initiated by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. The program on introduction of e-government was approved on November 10, 2004 by the Decree of the President.

The web portal and the communication server of the e-government, electronic interdepartmental document circulation, certification centers, single transport sphere, state database of individuals and entities were launched from 2004 through 2006. www.egov.kz portal began its work on April 12, 2006 and when it was launched it rendered 377 information services of different state bodies.

The work on creation of the payment gateway of the electronic government which would allow conducting transactions had been held

from 2007 till 2009. Besides, the e-licensing database and the first interactive services were launched on the portal.

Presently, more than 2000 information, 225 interactive and transaction services are rendered within the framework of the e-government project. 154 120 users are registered on the portal and the average daily visits make about 25 thousand people. In total, more than 11 200 000 electronic services have been rendered over the last 6 years. Since April 1, 2012, all types of licenses are issued only in electronic format through the e-license portal.

16 May 2012, 15:37

Kazakhstan and the US: 20 Years of Partnership for the Sake of Security and Development conf to take place May 18

ASTANA. May 16. KAZINFORM An international conference called "Kazakhstan and the U.S. Twenty Years of Partnership for the Sake of Security and Development" will be held in Astana on May 18.

The conference will discuss the present state and prospects of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the U.S. in nuclear non-proliferation, energy, trade, high technology, democracy building and regional security. The invited speakers from Kazakhstan include Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov, Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Issekeshov, Minister of Oil and Gas Sauat Mynbaev, Environmental Minister Nurlan Kapparov, as well as Kazatomprom CEO Vladimir Shkolnik and others. Kenneth Fairfax, a member of U.S.-Russia Bilateral Consultative Commission on the New START Treaty; John Ordway, a former U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan; William Courtney, U.S. first ambassador to Kazakhstan, and others will represent the U.S. side. The conference is organized by Nazarbayev Center and the U.S. Embassy to Kazakhstan, the Kazakh MFA's press service said.

16 May 2012, 16:41

Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to tackle refinery construction issue BISHKEK. May 16. KAZINFORM As part of his visit to Moscow Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev met with his Azerbaijan counterpart Ilham Aliyev, the Kyrgyz President's press service said.

The parties met on the sidelines of the CSTO Collective Security Council meeting and informal summit of the CIS Heads of State. The Presidents

debated progress of implementation of agreements reached previously during Atambayev's visit to Azerbaijan this March.

As earlier reported, one of the outcomes of his visit to Azerbaijan was a preliminary agreement on Azeri investments into the construction of a refinery in Kyrgyzstan. Kazakhstan's KazMunaiGaz Company is considered as a raw material supplier for the future refinery.

As stated there, a Kazakhstan's representative will join the working group dealing with the construction of the refinery and raw material supplies.

16 May 2012, 17:01

Fitch forecasts 5 percent growth for Kazakh economy in 2012

ALMATY. May 16. KAZINFORM Kazakh economy could expect a growth of 5 percent in 2012, Charles Seville, director in Fitch Rating's sovereign team said Tuesday at the 6th Annual Conference of Fitch Ratings for Kazakhstan in Almaty.

"The oil revenues will contribute only 1 percent to the real GDP growth," he said.

According to him, the extractive industry is not growing as rapidly as the non-resource sector, Xinhua reports.

Kazakh economy grew 5.6 percent in the first quarter, while in 2011 the growth was 7.5 percent.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade has forecast an economic growth of 6 percent for 2012. The IMF recently raised its forecast from 5.9 percent to 6 percent.

16 May 2012, 19:29

OSCE Gender Adviser, in Kazakhstan, says women's rights essential for lasting security

ASTANA. May 16. KAZINFORM Miroslava Beham, OSCE Senior Adviser on Gender Issues, started today her visit to Kazakhstan during which she will discuss gender issues and exchange experiences with Kazakhstani officials, civil society, academics and journalists.

The two-day visit included a meeting with Gulshara Abdykalikova, Labour Minister of Kazakhstan who also chairs the National Commission on

Women and Family-Demographic Politics and members of the Majilis (lower chamber of the Parliament).

"A gender perspective is an important part of the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security," Beham said during the meeting with the Labour Minister. "If we want to achieve security and lasting peace in any society, we cannot ignore gender issues and women's rights."

"The national Strategy for Gender Equality is an important step taken by the Kazakhstan authorities towards achieving equal rights for men and women. However, there is still room for development, for instance regarding the representation of women in political life, especially in decision-making positions."

According to the OSCE Center in Astana, Ambassador Natalya Zarudna, the Head of the OSCE Centre in Astana who participated in the meetings, positively assessed the "fruitful longstanding co-operation with the Kazakhstani side". She said that "Kazakhstan's 33rd place among 154 countries according to the Gender Equity Index is a clear indicator of the progress made by this nation in promoting gender-balanced policy which the OSCE and the Commission have jointly contributed to".

Tomorrow Beham will travel to Almaty to deliver a lecture on the topic "Gender Issues as an Approach to Security in the OSCE Region" at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. On May 18 she will speak about the strategy and best practices in promoting gender equality in the OSCE region at a high-level conference on "Gender Aspects of Society's Modernization" at the Kazakh Women State University.

16 May 2012, 19:05

Almaty, Shenzhen cities set to to advance coop

ALMATY. May 16. KAZINFORM "China highly appreciates traditional friendship with Kazakhstan. My city exerts every effort to strengthen cooperation with Kazakhstan, particularly, with Almaty," China's Shenzhen city vice mayor Zhang Wen told the meeting enjoying the participation of Almaty and Shenzhen businessmen.

"Our visit is purposed to promote friendly relations in such areas as economy, culture, education, creation of favorable conditions for cooperation of Kazakhstani and Shenzhen enterprises," he added.

Shenzhen city presentation took place there to debate opportunities for cooperation in logistics and supply chain management between Kazakh and Shenzhen companies.

Shenzhen is a major city in the south of Southern China's Guangdong Province, situated immediately north of Hong Kong. The area became China's first-and one of the most successful-Special Economic Zones (SEZs). It currently also holds sub-provincial administrative status, with powers slightly less than a province.

Shenzhen's modern cityscape is the result of the vibrant economy made possible by rapid foreign investment since the institution of the policy of "reform and opening" establishment of the SEZ in the late 1979, before which it was only a small village. Both Chinese and foreign nationals have invested enormous amount of money in the Shenzhen SEZ. Shenzhen is now reputedly considered as one of the fastest-growing cities in the world.

17 May 2012, 09:28

Austria, Kazakhstan to develop coop in tourism

ASTANA. May 17. KAZINFORM Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Austria Kairat Abdrakhmanov paid a visit to the federal state of Salzburg, press service of the Kazakh Foreign Ministry reports.

During his trip Ambassador Abdrakhmanov met with Salzburg Governor Gabi Burgstaller, vice president of the Salzburg Economic Chamber Peter Genser and heads of the leading industrial, transport and tourist companies.

Ms Burgstaller noted that Salzburg business circles were interested in cooperation with Kazakhstan and ready to share their rich experience in high technologies, software, telecommunications, renewable energy resources, food industry, tourism, etc. Kazakhstan is of particular interest to Austria as an energy supplier. (35 per cent of Austria's oil come from Kazakhstan).

The sides touched upon the opportunities for commercial and economic cooperation between separate regions of Kazakhstan and federal states of Austria.

Kazakhstan and Austria are also keen to promote cultural collaboration. Especially in terms of Salzburg Festival held annually in July-August under the supervision of Ms Burgstaller.

Special attention was paid to cooperation between Kazakhstan and Austria in tourism. The sides discussed possible training for Kazakhstani tourist staff at the Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management. This issue will be tabled in more details at the upcoming session of the Kazakh-Austrian Intergovernmental Commission for commercial and economic cooperation in Astana this autumn.

17 May 2012, 13:01

Senate approves bill combating money laundering

ASTANA. May 17. KAZINFORM Senate approved in the first reading a bill "On amendments to some legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on counteraction to laundering of illegally gained income and financing of terrorism."

While presenting the bill Kazakh Finance Minister Ruslan Dalenov noted payments between legal entities would be made only by bank transfers if the sum of a transaction exceeded the prescribed amount.

In addition, individual entrepreneurs and legal entities will be subjected to administrative sanctions due to lack of equipment designed to make payments via credit cards. It was also proposed to change the threshold values for transactions subject to financial monitoring.

17 May 2012, 14:32

Sarkozy hopes his successor will continue partnership between Kazakhstan, France

ASTANA. May 17. KAZINFORM Ex-president of France Nicolas Sarkozy sent a follow-up letter to Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Kazakh President's press service informs.

"I sincerely wish my successor to continue partnership between Kazakhstan and France. This is one of important achievements of my mandate of which I'm very proud. The effective cooperation between our countries has become possible due to your vision of a statesman and unique qualities that you used to make Kazakhstan a leader in Central Asia and strengthen its position in the international arena," Nicolas Sarkozy said in the letter.

France's former president also expressed his intention to maintain and strengthen friendly relations with Nursultan Nazarbayev which he appreciates highly.

17 May 2012, 16:34

Int'l conf to review results and prospects of Kazakhstan-US coop over 20 years

ASTANA. May 17. KAZINFORM A major international conference "Kazakhstan - USA: 20 Years of Partnership for Security and Development" will take place at the Nazarbayev Center in Astana, the multifunctional research and educational public institution, on Friday May 18, 2012.

The conference is dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan-U.S. strategic partnership and is timed to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the first official visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to the U.S. in 1992 at the invitation of President George H.W. Bush. The Nazarbayev Center and the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan are organizing the conference, the press service of the US Diplomatic Mission to Kazakhstan said.

The event will focus on the development of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the U.S. in the areas of non-proliferation and reduction of nuclear weapons, energy, trade and economic sectors, in the field of technology as well as democracy building and regional security.

"By holding this conference we are marking a special strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and the United States, which will last for many years ahead," U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan Kenneth Fairfax noted.

A number of high-level officials, including Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov and U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan Kenneth Fairfax, will participate.

An exhibition, which will include archival photographic documents and reflect the history of the development of bilateral cooperation over the years of partnership, will take place at the conference.

17 May 2012, 17:55

8th Int'l PR Forum kicks off in Almaty

ALMATY. May 17. KAZINFORM The 8th International PR Forum has started its work today in Almaty as part of PR Days in Kazakhstan.

It is the largest annual event of Kazakhstan's PR industry. It gathers leading experts of communications industry, opinion shapers, deputies, top managers of state and business structures, journalists and others.

It is organized by the Club of Kazakhstan's PR Professionals under the support PR Communications Consulting Company.

17 May 2012, 22:22

OSCE supports event on protecting children's rights in Kazakhstan
ASTANA. May 17. KAZINFORM A roundtable meeting co-organized by the OSCE Centre in Astana to discuss issues of preventing and combating trafficking and violence against children took place in Astana today.

The event, held on the International Child Helpline Day, focused on successes and challenges in protecting and promoting children's rights. A special emphasis was placed on ways to improve legislation and to support Kazakhstani stakeholders in protecting children from domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, the OSCE Center in Astana reports.

Jeannette Kloetzer, the Deputy Head of the OSCE Centre in Astana, said: "Children are among the most disempowered groups in all societies, least able to get information, support and help when needed. Child helplines can play an important role in the protection of children from abuse and violence."

"Today's event is part of the OSCE Centre's work aimed at preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and domestic violence, especially the abuse and exploitation of children, in co-operation with state actors, including law-enforcement, educational, social services and non-governmental organizations."

The meeting brought together some 40 representatives from ministries, Parliament, the National Commission on Women and Family-Demographic Policy, the Office of the Ombudsman, as well as non-governmental and international organizations, and media representatives.

A publication prepared by local non-governmental organizations with the assistance of the OSCE Centre in Astana entitled "Monitoring of Implementation of the Law on Domestic Violence" was presented at the event.

The roundtable was co-organized by the OSCE Centre in Astana, Education Ministry of Kazakhstan, the International Organization for Migration, the National Centre for a Healthy Lifestyle and the non-governmental organization "Union of Crisis Centres".

17 May 2012, 21:41

People's IPO information support meeting held in Astana

ASTANA. May 17. KAZINFORM A seminar-meeting with participation of Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Kairat Kelimbetov and heads and editors-in-chief of mass media gathered in Astana to debate information and analytical support of the People's IPO programme.

Information and Culture Minister D. Mynbai, Vice Minister of Economic Development and Trade A. Iskendirov, heads, editors-in-chief and journalists of the country's leading mass media took part in it, the Samruk Kazyna Fund's press release reads.

Those gathered were presented up-to-date information concerning realization of the People's IPO programme.

"As the Head of State stated, the key goal of the People's IPO is to give a regular citizen of Kazakhstan an opportunity to own shares of the country's largest companies and earn profit in the future. The idea of social justice, people's involvement into economic growth of the country lie at the root of the programme," he added.

18 May 2012, 10:14

Kazakhstan's key priorities in CSTO to keep relevance - Majilis Speaker
ASTANA. May 18. KAZINFORM CIS Interparliamentary Assembly has finished its meetings in Saint Petersburg.

Kazakh parliamentary delegation headed by Majilis Chairman Nurlan Nigmatulin participated in the following events: the meeting of the heads of parliaments of the Single Economic Space, 37th plenary sitting of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, sittings of the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly.

This year CSTO marks 10th anniversary. Speaking about the main activities of the Organization Nurlan Nigmatulin noted that Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, while presiding over the CSTO, determined the priorities for the next year. Among them are the protection of the information space in the CSTO member states, development of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force, collective protection of the airspace of the Central Asian region, formation of the CSTO anti-drug strategy; development of the training site of the Ministry of Emergencies of Kazakhstan "Astana, the Rock City".

The Speaker expressed confidence that all those medium-term and long-term priorities would maintain the relevance after the Kazakhstan's chairmanship.

18 May 2012, 10:38

Kazakh ecological initiatives to influence CA development positively

ASTANA. May 18. KAZINFORM "Kazakhstan's ecological initiatives will positively influence the Central Asia Countries' development," Official Secretary of the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Kyrgyz Government Abdymital Chyngyzhoyev said in the interview to Kazinform correspondent within the 5th Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers.

He stressed that at the conference he intended to discuss the condition of mountain ecological systems, because the Central Asia Mountains were of great importance not only for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, but also for all countries in the region. According to him, Kyrgyzstan is greatly concerned with the state of glaciers.

In addition, A.Chyngyzhoyev expressed confidence that such Kazakhstan's initiatives as "Global energy ecological strategy" and "Green Bridge" Partnership Program would be supported by the conference participants.

18 May 2012, 11:01

Kazakhstan's key priorities to preserve relevance for CSTO

ASTANA. May 18. KAZINFORM Kazakh parliamentarians headed by Majilis Speaker Nurlan Nigmatulin took part in the session of the Interparliamentary Assembly Council of the CIS member states held in St. Petersburg.

The meeting of the SES parliament heads, the 37th plenary meeting of the CIS IPA and the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly session were held on May 17.

Speaking on the CSTO main guidelines Kazakh Majilis Speaker N. Nigmatulin mentioned Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who chairs the CSTO this year, outlined the key priorities for the country within the CSTO for the next year.

The CSTO members named information space protection, development of the collective reaction forces, the CSTO Central Asian airspace collective defense, the CSTO antinarcotics strategy formation, "Astana-the rock city" test site capabilities development as the key priorities of Kazakhstan's chairmanship.

All these priorities are of long term character and will be relevant after Kazakhstan completes its chairmanship in the CSTO. It was stressed that

the CSTO parliamentarians could render legal assistance to the priorities mentioned in the medium term.

18 May 2012, 14:01

Nazarbayev received Kazakh Minister of Transport and Communications ASTANA. May 18. KAZINFORM Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has received Kazakhstan Minister of Transport and Communications Askar Zhumagaliyev, the Kazakh President's press service reported.

A Zhumagaliyev reported on the internet security and acceleration, the transfer of the state services to the electronic format and modernization of the public service centers.

According to A. Zhumagaliyev, the work on introduction of the CDMA technology continues. Communities of the villages of Almaty, Aktobe, Zhambyl, Kostanay, South Kazakhstan, Pavlodar regions have wireless broadband internet access due to the EVDO technology. Kazakh Minister of Transport and Communications has paid attention to the increasing number of the internet and e-government users.

Kazakhstan took the 38th place among the UN e-Government development rankings, and 14th in the on-line service.

Networked Readiness Index ranked Kazakhstan 55th . Kazakhstan has managed to achieve 46th position in the global Fixed Telephone Lines and 38th position in Mobile telephone subscriptions. 53% of Kazakh people use the services of the internet.

"Also, to date more than 1 million electronic signatures were issued," A. Zhumagaliyev said.

Till the end of the current year the Ministry of Transport and Communications is planning to convert 60 percent of socially important services to electronic format, and 100 percent in 2013.

The Minister also said that it is planned to put into service 998 kilometers of republican roads this year, of which 700 kilometers as part of the international transit corridor "Western Europe - Western China." Next year it is planned to launch 803 km international superhighway.

Zhumagaliyev informed that currently 158 technical inspection centers operate in the country. He also told about the beginning of testing the new system of technical inspection, which will allow to keep record of vehicles

that passed technical inspection, conduct multi-factor analyses and phasing out paper certificates.

The Minister presented to the President the plans on the development of sea transport and civil aviation. It is planned to buy 9 aircrafts till the end of this year and 8 more crafts in 2013.

Following the meeting Nursultan Nazarbayev gave specific instructions to the Ministry.

18 May 2012, 14:23

Kazakhstan to produce railway products worth KZT 300 bln by 2015
ASTANA. May 18. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan plans to produce railway products worth KZT 300 billion by 2015, Vice President of JSC "NC "Kazakhstan Temir Zholy" Yerik Sultanov told the extended session of the Social Council of Samruk-Kazyna National Welfare Fund dedicated to the problems of kazcontent.

According to Mr. Sultanov, railway industry produced products worth KZT 100 billion in 2011. This year the industry wants to hit the mark of KZT 155 billion.

By 2015 Kazakhstani railway producers are believed to produce 5 200 items of railway products. Today the analogous figure stands at 3 563 items, Sultanov added.

18 May 2012, 15:36

Kazakh President, Iranian Vice President debated bilateral relations aspects
ASTANA. May 18. KAZINFORM Today President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has received Vice President of Iran Mohammad Javad Mohammadzadeh.

The Head of State noted, currently Kazakhstan and Iran enjoy good relations in various spheres, the Kazakh President's press service said.

"We would like to advance our trade and economic partnership. Commodity turnover up to USD 1.3 bln does not meet potential opportunities of the two countries. We actively cooperate in international and regional structures, namely, UN, SCO and CICA. We are interested in reaching agreement on the Caspian Sea status. It is vital to intensify our efforts in this direction," Nursultan Nazarbayev said.

In his turn, the Iranian Vice President drew attention to good political and economic relations between the states.

The parties debated aspects of bilateral relations and shared views on regional and international agenda.

20 May 2012, 05:44

Kazakh, Indonesian oil and gas companies to sign memo

BAKU. May 20. KAZINFORM National oil and gas companies of Kazakhstan and Indonesia KazMunayGas and Pertamina will sign a memorandum on Monday, KazMunayGas told **Trend** on Friday.

According to the company, Pertamina is interested in identifying opportunities in the exploration and production in the gas industry in Kazakhstan.

KazMunayGas plans to continue to further attract foreign capital, technology and experience to develop oil and gas resources in Kazakhstan, Trend reports.

During Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Indonesia in April, the heads of Kazakhstan and Indonesia reached an agreement on oil and gas cooperation.

KazMunayGas is Kazakhstan's national operator for exploration, production, processing and transportation of hydrocarbons.

KazMunayGas's shares are owned by Samruk-Kazyna.

19 May 2012, 12:24

First-ever Kazakh student took first place at Intel ISEF 2012

ASTANA. May 19. KAZINFORM For the first time Kazakhstan's pupil Assiya Kussainova took the first place at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair 2012 held in the US, the press service of the Specialized School for Gifted Children Daryn reports.

Kussainova, a student of the Specialized School for Gifted Children Daryn, Karagandy, won "best of category" award worth \$5,000.

The design for a wind turbine that could work fairly efficiently at low speeds garnered Assiya Kussainova first place in electrical and mechanical

engineering. Most wind turbines don't generate power efficiently at wind speeds below 10 meters per second (and can't operate at all when wind speeds drop below 5 m/s), the young woman explains. But substituting long, rotating cylinders for the more-aerodynamic blades found on most standard wind turbines could enable the turbines to generate power at wind speeds as low as 3 m/s, her work indicates.

19 May 2012, 12:23

Kazakh Ambassador delivered credentials to President of Lebanon
ASTANA. May 19. KAZINFORM On May 17 Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Kazakhstan Bulat Sarsenbayev delivered credentials to President of Lebanon Michel Sleiman in Beirut, the embassy's press service said.

The Kazakh ambassador informed Michel Sleiman of Kazakhstan's current development, its foreign policy initiatives, and key provisions of the State-of-the-Nation Address of Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The Lebanon's President stated in his turn that he follows Kazakhstan's development and highly appreciates success of President Nursultan Nazarbayev in building up the modern democratic state.

19 May 2012, 15:42

Kazakhstan accepts presentations for President's mass media grants and prizes

ASTANA. May 19. KAZINFORM The Kazakh President's press service, which is also a working body of the Public Commission for awarding prizes and grants of the President of Kazakhstan in the sphere of mass media, has started accepting presentations for grants and prizes in 2012.

Mass media, artistic unions, public associations and state agencies may submit their presentations no later than **June 20, 2012**.

Stories or articles published and broadcast during the period of **June 1, 2011 through June 1, 2012** will be considered.

20 May 2012, 11:02

Abay monument to be erected in Tashkent

TASHKENT. May 20. KAZINFORM This year Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan mark the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations. During the celebratory meeting in Tashkent Kazakh Ambassador Boribai Zheksemin announced that a new building of the Kazakh Embassy in Uzbekistan and a monument

to the great ancestor of the Kazakhs, Abay Kunanbaev, will be opened in the capital of Uzbekistan on the eve of the Independence Day.

As part of the anniversary events and in order to promote mutual cultural and spiritual ties, on behalf of the Kazakhstan People's Assembly the diplomat invited Chairman of the Uzbekistan Council of Friendship Societies and Cultural and Educational Relations with Foreign Countries Saidahrur Gulyamov and Chairman of the International Cultural Centre of Uzbekistan Nasreddin Mukhamadiev to visit Astana with a friendly and fraternal visit.

At present, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as two major countries in the region, conduct mutually beneficial economic, foreign policy and cultural-humanitarian relationships. "Uzbekistan is the largest neighbor of Kazakhstan in Central Asia, as well as a strategic partner in trade and economic spheres. Each year bilateral trade turnover is growing. Over the past five years it grew up in a few times, and upon the results of the last year amounted to about USD 3 billion," the ambassador said.

21 May 2012, 09:34

5th Astana Economic Forum: new glance at global economic architecture

ASTANA. May 21. KAZINFORM The 5th Astana Economic Forum titled "Global economic transformation: challenges and prospects of development" will be held in the capital of Kazakhstan on May 22-24.

The opening of the 5th Astana Economic Forum with the participation of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is scheduled for May 23.

The program of the forum includes more than 40 events of different formats with the participation of 6 500 delegates from 85 world countries. Well-known public figures, international experts and Nobel Laureates are expected to take part in the forum.

"Connect Kazakhstan" Eurasian ICT forum, the 7th Innovative Congress, Global energy ecological forum "Kazakhstan's initiatives on energy and ecology", Astana Invest 2012 forum, etc. will be held within the framework of the 5th Astana Economic Forum.

New communicative platform "G-global" which is a unique idea initiated by the President of Kazakhstan will be presented at the session of the 5th Astana Economic Forum.

Besides, an exhibition presenting more than 50 most promising and high technology projects of Kazakhstan will open in the Palace of Independence.

The webcast of the debates "Dialogue of Leaders: New Financial Economic Policy" will be available online on the official site of the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Pm.kz at 5:30 p.m. on May 24. Policymakers, economists, journalists will express their opinions about modern financial and economical turmoil in the world at the debates. The participants of the event will also consider the issues of transformation of the global economy and discuss fulfillment of the obligations of G-20 on financial regulation and supervision.

Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, President of the Club of Madrid Wim Kok, WTO Deputy Director General Alejandro Jara, Executive Director of the Reinventing Bretton Woods Committee Marc Uzan, former OECD Secretary- General Donald Johnston and others are among the participants of the debates. Nobel Laureates and famous journalists are also expected to take part in the discussions.

The main result of the 5th Astana Economic Forum will be the Open Letter with recommendations for the recovery and development of the global economy sent to the organization committees of the G-8 and the G-20, UN, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Pm.kz reports.

21 May 2012, 10:04

Apple Facts: Fruit, closely related to crabapples, originated in Kazakhstan
NEW YORK. May 21. KAZINFORM Nearly every child has bitten into a crabapple (left) at some point and spit it back out--yuck! But a new study in *PLoS Genetics* shows that **modern supermarket apples (right) are more closely related to crabapples than to other, better-tasting ancient species.**

Apples originated in Kazakhstan, where they show incredible variety in taste and size, then spread along the Silk Road trading route thousands of years ago.

The Romans brought sweet apples from western Asia into Europe (Europeans previously used the fruit for cider), but the domesticated apple's history was murky after that. The new study looked at rapidly evolving DNA regions known as microsatellites in 839 apple samples representing five species ranging from Spain to China.

Testing these microsatellites allowed scientists to tease out the impact of recent crossings with wild apples. The researchers confirmed that modern apples were first domesticated from wild Asian apples, but they found that subsequent crosses with European crabapples--possibly selected for disease resistance, hardiness, or other traits--contributed the most DNA to modern domesticated apples, Huffington Post reports.

The scientists also found no evidence of genetic bottlenecks--a severe narrowing of genetic diversity--in domesticated apples, a pattern that contrasts with the earliest domesticated crops like barley, millet, and wheat.

21 May 2012, 11:03

Kazakhstan to spend 38 bln on single-industry cities development

ASTANA. May 21. KAZINFORM KZT 38.2 billion are allotted for single-industry cities development in 2013, Minister of Economic Development and Trade Bakytzhan Sagintayev has told the Government's session today.

In addition, KZT 43.2 and 53.9 billion are to be spent on the same purposes in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

"The draft program suggests development of the package plans for towns not featured into the list of single-industry cities," B. Sagintayev added.

According to Minister Sagintayev, financing will be implemented at the expense of the local budgets.

Large cities are to be financed using republican budget funds whereas financing for small towns will be provided by the regions. The implementation of the program is divided into two stages - 2013-2015 and 2015-2020.

21 May 2012, 12:46

Kazakhstan, Poland to host business forum in Almaty

ALMATY. May 21. KAZINFORM The Kazakh-Polish Business Forum will be held in Almaty on May 24, Trade and Investments Department of the Embassy of Poland to Kazakhstan reports.

The delegation of the Łódź Voivodeship headed by Marshal Witold Stępień came to Almaty yesterday to participate in the forum. The delegation includes representatives of local administration, the Łódź Agency for

Regional Development, heads and leading experts of Polish firms interested in establishing direct contacts with entrepreneurs from Kazakhstan.

Businessmen from Kazakhstan and Poland are to have bilateral meetings after the forum.

Kazakhstan and Poland established diplomatic ties on April 6, 1992. The commodity turnover between the countries amounted to USD 1.8 billion in 2011. The countries are proud to have dynamically developing and mutually profitable relations in the field of culture, science and higher education. 500 students, including Bolashak Scholarship holders, from Kazakhstan study at HEIs of Poland.

21 May 2012, 14:42

World's latest IT developments showcased in Kazakhstan

ASTANA. May 21. KAZINFORM "Connect Kazakhstan-2012" exhibition and conference has opened within the frame of the 5th Astana Economic Forum today.

During the two-day conference IT experts are expected to discuss new directions in the development of ICT in Kazakhstan, demonstrate trends and up-to-date innovative solutions in this sphere, and share their experience in the Internet business.

According to the organizers of the event - Kazakh Ministry of Transport and Communications, world and local producers of software products, network equipment and IT technologies will exhibit their innovative products and services.

"This conference can become yet another dialogue platform for IT specialists, public agencies and business structures that will affect all spheres of our lives. Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the development of the IT sector. The country offers e-Government, online services and various innovative projects to its population," Vice Minister of Transport and Communications Saken Sarsenov noted.

"We have invited well-known IT experts from the USA, Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, and Estonia to attend the exposition and exchange the experience," Vice Minister Sarsenov told representatives of mass media at the event.

Guests of the exposition may survey the latest achievements and technologies of Great Britain, Germany, Lithuania and Kazakhstan, such as music table, multimedia stands, 3-D games and so on, at the exhibition pavilion of Beijing Palace Soluxe Hotel in Astana.

21 May 2012, 14:16

Kazakhstan's information technologies developing rapidly, view
ASTANA. May 21. KAZINFORM "Kazakhstan enjoys fast and rapid development of information technologies that is the result of good planning," board member of the Estonian e-Governance Academy Arvo Ott told Kazinform at the opening of Connect Kazakhstan Eurasian forum in Astana.

"Kazakhstan succeeded in this sphere, for example, it is noteworthy, the country's population has access to a wide range of services, including e-government, internet banking, etc. Kazakhstan ranks 8th in the international rating of IT development index," he added.

"It is necessary to note the state support to the development of e-government program in Kazakhstan that bespeaks for benefits as introduction of innovations, raising of efficiency of the state and transparency of the President and Government's activities," Mr Ott noted.

21 May 2012, 17:22

Priorities of Kazakhstan actively realized within the CSTO - Sec-Gen Nikolai Bordyuzha

MOSCOW. May 21. KAZINFORM "The CSTO has formed a legal base allowing to act within the law and according to the tasks outlined before the presidents of the member states," CSTO Secretary General Nikolai Bordyuzha said during the press conference in Moscow.

N. Bordyuzha noted the active work on implementation of the priorities outlined by Kazakhstan as a chairman this year. "Those priorities, defined by Kazakhstan are of our great interest. It is important to develop not only military cooperation but also the collective response system. "

Much attention is paid to the CSTO information security. "Today there is no need to take the power potential for any impact, it is sufficient to use information technology", N. Bordyuzha stressed.

The CSTO Secretary General mentioned the corresponding power potential was established. Bordyuzha also noted the CSTO member states are working to establish a collective defense of the CSTO

Central Asian airspace. "We remember all of the priorities and are doing everything to be able to report on what has been done at the end of the year when the presidency will pass to another state," he said.

21 May 2012, 18:09

Kazakh Foreign Minister meets colleagues on sidelines of NATO Summit
ASTANA. May 21. KAZINFORM Today the delegation of Kazakhstan headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Yerzhan Kazykhanov participates in the NATO Summit in Chicago. Official representative of the Foreign Ministry of Kazakhstan Altay Abibullayev told a briefing on Monday.

"The summit includes a meeting on Afghanistan with participation of senior representatives of the International Security Assistance Force, as well as countries providing territory for transit to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the northern distribution network. Also on the sidelines of the summit there are held bilateral meetings between Kazykhanov and foreign ministers of NATO partner countries," Abibullayev said.

21 May 2012, 18:34

Kazakhstan and Turkey to sign bilateral agreements
ASTANA. May 21. KAZINFORM "Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is expected to visit Kazakhstan on May 22-24," the Kazakh Foreign Ministry's official representative Altay Abibullayev said today at a briefing.

"The Turkish Prime Minister will participate in the 5th Astana Economic Forum opening ceremony. Bilateral cooperation issues, key international situations will be discussed at the meetings with the Government of Kazakhstan. In general the visit will be devoted to the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan -Turkey diplomatic relations," A. Abibullayev informed.

Bilateral agreements will be also signed during the visit.

21 May 2012, 19:10

Head of EDB: Common Economic Space of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus aimed at improving business climate

ALMATY. May 21. KAZINFORM The main objective of the Common Economic Space (CES) is to foster improvements in business environment for investors and entrepreneurs from the three countries and other states through the promotion of the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour. Igor Finogenov, Chairman of Eurasian Development Bank's (EDB) Managing Board, said this on Saturday at the session Russia, Kazakhstan,

Belarus: New Investment Opportunities within the Common Economic Space (CES) at the EBRD Annual Meeting in London.

According to the press service of the EABR, the head of EDB reminded that the CES member states had already adopted a number of agreements that coordinate their macroeconomic and financial policies, labour migration, the power sector, and technical regulation. Although significant mutual efforts and time are needed to implement them there are a number of arguments that the development of the CES will lead to improvements in business environment and foster economic growth.

This is primarily about the long-term effects of the CES on its member countries. According to a comprehensive assessment undertaken by the EDB Centre for Integration Studies in cooperation with Russian and Ukrainian researchers, the effect of the creation of the CES and Ukraine's subsequent joining it can reach US \$1 trillion for the four countries before 2030. This effect will produce an additional growth in Belarusian GDP of 14%, Ukrainian GDP of 6%, Kazakh GDP of 3.5%, and Russian GDP of 2%. Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan are expected to benefit from integration to the greatest extent in terms of per capita effects and Russia in absolute terms.

Overall, the aggregate annual GDP of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus in the event of deeper integration within the CES is expected to be 2.5% higher than in the non-integration scenario. This will become possible due to greater accumulation of fixed capital, mutual investments and better competitiveness of the economies (because of a reduction in the share of primary resources in GDP), as well as the growth in trade within the CES and with its partners.

The adoption of a uniform migration policy will be a critical step in integration within the CES. «This is a key issue for the region's economies,» Igor Finogenov said. «For example, today labour migrants produce up to 6% of the Russian gross product.»

In addition, the CES will promote improvements in technical standards and technical regulation in the three countries, which will assist in their technological integration with the global economy. «There are 46 new regulations in the pipeline, a third of which have been already developed and adopted,» the head of EDB continued. «These are „new-generation “regulations and standards that are compulsorily compliant with the WTO requirements and often harmonised with the standards of the European Union.»

Finally, further promotion of regional integration can result in the creation of a free trade zone between the CES and the EU, which will be of benefit to all its members due to the removal of barriers to the trade in goods and services, labour and capital flows, and intellectual property protection. «Its uniqueness and synergistic potential are based on the unprecedented size of such a regional union, which will unite the markets of thirty-one countries with a population of about 700 million and a GDP of more than US \$18 trillion,» Igor Finogenov concluded.

1 May 2012, 19:30

Nazarbayev: Kazakhstan enjoys partnership relations with France
ASTANA. May 21. KAZINFORM Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev received Total Executive Vice President Yves-Louis Darricarrere on Monday, the Presidential press service reported.

During the meeting, Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that Kazakhstan and France established good partnership.

"We have established good relations with Nicolas Sarkozy. The presidential election has been recently held in France. Now we are ready to work with the new president. Kazakhstan has established strategic relationship with Total. You participate in many of our projects and we intend to develop our partnership," the Kazakh President said.

In turn Yves-Louis Darricarrere noted that the company intends to develop its activities in Kazakhstan.

"We are members of the consortium in the project "Kashagan". In addition, we will develop other projects. I look forward to working in the Kazakh-French Council," he said.

Since 1992, Total has been present in Kazakhstan with the company's 16.8% stake in the North Caspian permit, which includes the giant Kashagan field operated by the North Caspian Operating Company (NCOC).

1 May 2012, 19:55

Kazakhstan established close cooperation with GE Transportation - President Nazarbayev
ASTANA. May 21. KAZINFORM Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev received President and Chief Executive Officer of General Electric Transportation Lorenzo Simonelli on Monday in Astana, the Presidential press service said.

Nazarbayev said that Kazakhstan and GE Transportation have established close cooperation. He noted that together with JSC Kazakhstan Temir Zholy the project on locomotive assembly in Astana was successfully implemented.

Simonelli emphasized the importance of cooperation with Kazakhstan. "We have a number of programs that we implement. In addition to the locomotive plant we have projects in the oil and gas industry, health care, water treatment. It is important that the President of Kazakhstan has created a favorable climate for the partnership that promotes the development of business relations. Our company is committed to establishing long-term closer ties with Kazakhstan," he said.

Representation of General Electric in Almaty was opened in 1994. Currently, GE headquarters in Kazakhstan and Central Asia is in Astana and has offices in Almaty and Aksai. To date, 200 employees of GE in Kazakhstan productively work with national and private companies. GE has been successfully cooperating with Kazakhstan in such areas as oil and gas infrastructure, power generation, rail and air transport, water treatment and health.

22 May 2012, 08:53

25th FIC sitting kicks off in Astana

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM The 25th jubilee plenary session of the Foreign Investors Council (FIC) under the President of Kazakhstan will be held in Astana today.

The FIC under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan was established by the Head of State in 1998 in order to ensure the direct dialogue with foreign investors working in Kazakhstan and solve pressing issues relating to the investment activity and investment climate.

The Council is a consultative body chaired by the President of Kazakhstan.

Permanent members of the Council on the part of Kazakhstan are Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chairman of the National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, foreign affairs, industry and new technologies, economic development and trade, finance ministers of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Chairman of the Committee for Investments of the Industry and New Technologies Ministry of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The FIC composition is made up of heads of international financial organizations and international companies.

Representatives of companies and organizations who are not featured into the FIC composition may be invited to its seating. Five joint working groups on taxation, legislation, current activity of foreign investors, improvement of Kazakhstan's investment image and oil and gas sector operate within the FIC.

22 May 2012, 10:31

President Nazarbayev opens 25th FIC session

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM The 25th jubilee plenary session of the Foreign Investors' Council (FIC) under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan has kicked off at Rixos President Hotel in Astana.

"14 years ago we have established the Foreign Investors' Council and you all may remember in what situation Kazakhstan was at that time. Look how far we have come. Your share in Kazakhstan's success is enormous. I genuinely want to thank you for your work and wish you good health and success in your work," President Nazarbayev said.

The Head of State congratulated the participants on the 25th jubilee plenary session and stressed that the FIC had become an open dialogue platform important both for the investors and Kazakhstan.

22 May 2012, 11:50

Nursultan Nazarbayev introduces new FIC members

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev announced changes to the composition of the Foreign Investors' Council under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The announcement came during the 25th jubilee plenary FIC session at Rixos President Hotel in Astana.

"Since its establishment the council's composition has significantly expanded. I think it is a normal course of business. It reflects growing interest towards Kazakhstan on the part of the international business community and ever-increasing inflow of foreign investments into the country. Some USD 150 billion has been attracted to Kazakhstan over the last years. It accounts for 80 per cent of all direct investments that the region has attracted so far," Nursultan Nazarbayev said.

In addition, President Nazarbayev introduced new FIC members - President of Russian Sberbank German Gref, CEO of Conoco Philips Ryan Lance, Chairman of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited's (DTTL) Global Board of Directors Steve Almond, President and CEO of Cameco Tim Gitzel, and President and CEO of GE Transportation Lorenzo Simonelli.

First Vice Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov, Vice Prime Minister Kairat Kelimbetov, Vice Prime Minister Yerbol Orynbayev and Minister of Economic Development and Trade Bakytzhan Sagintayev are to represent Kazakhstan at the FIC sessions.

22 May 2012, 12:18

Kazakhstan most attractive in Central Asia, EBRD President

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM EBRD President Thomas Mirow has told the 25th FIC session under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Astana today that Kazakhstan is one of the most attractive countries in the region.

According to Mr. Mirow, it is reflected in numerous international research. Today Kazakhstan demonstrates good results in various spheres and outranks other Central Asian countries.

"Cost of doing business in Kazakhstan has been considerably decreased over the last years," Thomas Mirow added.

In addition, the EBRD President noted that Kazakh had created conditions for protection of investors.

22 May 2012, 12:26

Kazakh President OKs New Silk Road project

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has suggested joint implementation of New Silk Road project at the 25th session of the Foreign Investors' Council in Astana today.

"Kazakhstan needs to revive its historical role and become the largest transit hub in the Central Asian region and bring Europe and Asia closer. The implementation of this project will double the transit cargo traffic through Kazakhstan's territory by 2020," Nursultan Nazarbayev said. It is expected to amount to 50 million tones.

The Head of State also pointed out Kazakhstan had favorable geographic position which was of paramount importance amid globalization. Kazakhstan acts as a connecting link between the biggest markets of China, Europe, Russia, and the CIS member countries.

22 May 2012, 13:12

Kazakhstan names best foreign investors

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM The best foreign investors were named at the session of the Foreign Investors' Council under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Astana.

Minister of Industry and New Technologies of Kazakhstan Asset Issekeshov awarded the winners of the contest.

The ENRC took the prize for its direct investments. BG Group was awarded in the category "For long-term strategic partnership". Metro Cash & Carry was named the most socially responsible investor.

"The Best Foreign Investor" award went to Tengizchevroil LLP.

22 May 2012, 13:28

EBRD to aid Kazakhstan via investments, constructive political dialogue

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM "The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is ready to assist Kazakhstan through investments and constructive political dialogue," the EBRD President Thomas Mirow said.

"Kazakhstan needs sound banking system and liquid capital markets in order to fulfill its potential role of a regional financial center," the EBRD President stated.

According to T. Mirow, Kazakhstan is also to regulate the capital market, strengthen institutional potential at the stock exchange and develop commodity market.

"The EBRD works with Kazakhstan in all these areas and we are ready to help through investments within the technical cooperation projects and constructive political dialogue with the state-run private sector," Mr. Mirow concluded.

22 May 2012, 13:42

Nazarbayev instructs Gov't to study FIC proposals

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev instructed the Government to study the proposals of foreign investors submitted at the 25th plenary FIC session in Astana and make specific decisions.

"I would like to thank German Gref who has prepared the 10-year overview of Kazakhstan's development and all the participants who have praised our achievements and put forward specific proposals," N. Nazarbayev noted.

President Nazarbayev stressed that Kazakhstan's economy had more than doubled since establishment of the Foreign Investors' Council 14 years ago. In 2011 growth of Kazakhstan's GDP accounted for 7.5 per cent. The external trade turnover of Kazakhstan increased for 40 per cent and made USD 120 billion in 2011.

Nursultan Nazarbayev especially emphasized Kazakhstan's achievements in many respects drew upon the active role of its foreign partners. The Head of State thanked the members of the council for their contribution to the improvement of Kazakhstan's investment climate and economic development.

SES countries drew up business cooperation calendar plan

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM Single Economic Space member states - Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus - have prepared a specific calendar schedule for interaction between business structures, Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Kairat Kelimbetov said at the II Eurasian Business Council on Tuesday.

Kelimbetov considered the SES Troika as the most advanced form of integration. "After the establishment of the Customs Union we have done a lot to form the Single Economic Space. I think that till 2015 we have a very specific calendar plan that helps the business feel that registration procedures and terms of penetrating into other markets become easier," Kelimbetov noted.

22 May 2012, 19:27

Germany carrying out 38 investment projects in Kazakhstan

ASTANA. May 22. KAZINFORM Presently, Germany is carrying out 38 investment projects totaling EUR 3.7 billion in Kazakhstan, Kazakh First Deputy Chairman of Industry and New Technologies Albert Rau said at Kazakhstan-Germany business forum on Tuesday in Astana.

Among the important projects the Vice Minister named three plants that are under construction. A cement plant in Mangystau region is constructed with German HeidelbergCement. EUR 160 million of direct investments was invested in this project. The plant will create about 1,000 jobs. Another project is a unit for the production of industrial gases, which is built by the Linde Group in Karaganda region. Capital investment is EUR 95 million. Also, Siemens and JSC Kazakhstan Temir Zholy cooperate in the field of electrification of the railways of Kazakhstan and the modernization of traction substations.

"Over the last two years of cooperation there were several mutual visits of heads of state and government of the two countries, when 93 investment and trade and service agreements totaling EUR 6.5 billion were signed," A. Rau noted.

23 May 2012, 08:40

Kazakh President to participate in 5th Astana Economic Forum

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM The opening ceremony of the 5th Astana Economic Forum with the participation of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is to take place in Astana today.

The 5th Astana Economic Forum has brought together 8 000 delegates from 90 countries. The forum is one of the largest international platforms where a wide range of world economy issues is discussed.

This year's conference will be focused on three topics: financial capital and world economy, industrial and innovative development, sustainable development and global social situation.

The majority of events within the forum will be held today. A number of panel sessions and other events were conducted yesterday.

23 May 2012, 13:42

Kazakhstan feels responsibility for Eurasia's fate, Nazarbayev

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM The Head of State Nursultan Nazarbayev told the 5th Astana Economic Forum that Kazakhstan, one of the leaders of the non-proliferation movement, took on a part of responsibility for the fate of the Eurasian space.

Nursultan Nazarbayev especially emphasized that Kazakhstan had realized that it was a part of this world more than two decades ago by shutting down the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site and abandoning its nuclear arsenal.

"Nowadays Kazakhstan is one of the leaders of the movement for nuclear free world. It is proved by Kazakhstani initiatives put forward at the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit. We have taken on a part of responsibility for the fate of our region, Eurasian space and the whole world. We do suggest and achieve the implementation of a number of regional and global initiatives," President Nazarbayev noted.

"Kazakhstan realizes that its prosperity and prosperity of other countries would be impossible outside stable and safe world," Nursultan Nazarbayev added.

23 May 2012, 14:29

Kazakhstan suggests holding World Anti-Crisis Conference

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev asked the participants of the 5th Astana Economic Forum to address the UN with a proposal to conduct the World Anti-Crisis Conference in order to draw up the global anti-crisis plan.

In addition, the Head of State emphasized the necessity for all countries to make a step towards the world without economic crisis and with new effective currency.

In conclusion, Nursultan Nazarbayev wished the participants success in their work.

23 May 2012, 16:38

Exxon Mobil - an important partner for Kazakhstan

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM Today Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has met with Chairman and CEO of Exxon Mobil Corporation Rex Tillerson, the press service of the Kazakh President informed.

N. Nazarbayev noted that solid partnership has been established between Kazakhstan and ExxonMobil.

"We are intending to develop our cooperation. We all are interested in Kashagan project implementation. Also ExxonMobil is an important partner of Kazakhstan, since helps us develop dynamically the national economy and harness natural resources effectively," Nazarbayev told.

In turn, R. Tillerson expressed confidence in further development of partnership with Kazakhstan.

ExxonMobil is the world's largest private oil company. Corporation has been working in Kazakhstan for 19 years, taking part in the North Caspian and Tengiz projects, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium and Kazakhstan Caspian transportation system project.

23 May 2012, 16:56

Kazakhstan can use Turkish experience in social housing construction - Erdogan

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM At the Kazakhstan-Turkey business forum in Astana Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan offered Kazakhstan to use the Turkish experience in the construction of social housing.

Erdogan said that the common historical and brotherly ties attach special importance to the relations of Turkey and Kazakhstan and on the basis of our brotherhood and kinship relations are developing very rapidly.

According to him, today the Turkish contractors carry out in Kazakhstan projects totaling USD 20 billion. Turkish entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan implement large-scale projects to build dams, roads and railway lines.

23 May 2012, 17:49

More than 300 thousand Kazakh tourists visited Turkey in 2011

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM More than 300 thousand Kazakhstanis visited Turkey in 2011, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Wednesday during the Kazakhstan-Turkey business forum in Astana.

"Today, Turkey remains in first place as one of the most attractive country for tourists. We are also very pleased that for Kazakh citizens our country is a very important destination. In 2011 the number of Kazakhstanis, who visited our country, exceeded 300 thousand people," the Premier noted.

Erdogan also said Turkey is ready to share with Kazakhstan its extensive experience in tourism.

23 May 2012, 18:25

Turkey and Kazakhstan to increase flights

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM Turkey and Kazakhstan are planning to increase the number of flights between the two countries, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Wednesday in Astana.

"I think the increase in flights will unite our people," the Prime Minister of Turkey noted. "Today we have given our ministers appropriate instruction to hold talks on the development of relations in this area," he added.

Erdogan invited Kazakh businessmen to work in Turkey. "We look forward to welcoming Kazakh businessmen in Turkey and encouraging them to invest in Turkey. We have now introduced a number of incentives, and I think our partners - the Kazakh businessmen should take advantage of this opportunity," he said.

23 May 2012, 20:31

Kazakhstan to produce 109-110 cubic meters of gas by 2030

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan will produce 109-110 cubic meters of gas by 2030, Kazakh Vice Minister of Oil and Gas Bolat Akchulakov told the V Astana Economic Forum.

According to the Vice Minister, Kazakhstan has 3.9 trillion cubic meters of recoverable gas reserves. On gas reserves Kazakhstan occupies the 18th place in the world.

Akchulakov noted Kazakhstan produces mostly associated gas. It is used for injection into oil reservoirs to maintain pressure.

Currently, Kazakhstan is not a player in the world market of commercial gas. But, amid the decrease in production of liquid hydrocarbons and the need to increase gas production in the future we will reach the volume of 110 billion cubic meters of gas per year.

23 May 2012, 21:42

Kazakhstan and Turkey to establish Strategic Cooperation Council

ASTANA. May 23. KAZINFORM Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev met with Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who arrived in Kazakhstan for an official visit.

The sides had talks in narrow and extended format. They discussed the issues of cooperation in political, trade and economic and cultural-humanitarian areas.

The President of Kazakhstan and Prime Minister of Turkey exchanged views on topical international and regional issues as the situation in the Middle East, promoting the reconstruction of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the OIC and the presidency of Turkey in the CICA.

In addition, they discussed issues of raising the level of mutual trade, investment attraction, transport development, in particular, the prospects for the connection of Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railroad with the railway system of Turkey.

Following the talks, there was signed a number of documents. One of them was a joint statement on the establishment of the High-Level Council of Strategic Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Turkey. The Council will be an effective tool for multi-faceted cooperation between Kazakhstan and Turkey and will determine the strategy for the development of bilateral and multilateral relations in all spheres of interaction.

24 May 2012, 08:48

GE Transportation to build diesel plant in Kazakhstan

ERIE. May 24. KAZINFORM More signs of global growth for GE transportation. The company announced that it will invest \$90 million dollars to build a new diesel engine facility in Kazakhstan.

GE has signed an agreement to form a joint venture with TransMashDiesel and JSC National Company Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, to produce 400 Evolution Series diesel engines a year, ErieTVNews reports.

Those engines will be used in rail, marine and stationary power industries in Russia, Kazakhstan and other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States region.

Lorenzo Simonelli, President of GE Transportation said, "We are excited about the prospect of expanding our global manufacturing footprint and supplying our leading Evolution Series diesel engines to customers in Russia, Kazakhstan and other countries."

The agreement is good news for GE's Grove City plant, which will provide diesel engine kits to the new facility in Kazakhstan.

There's already a plant in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, that can assemble 100 Evolution Series locomotives a year.

24 May 2012, 12:36

China commodities fair opens in Kazakhstan

ALMATY. May 24. KAZINFORM The 10th annual China Commodities Fair in Kazakhstan opened here Wednesday.

The three-day fair includes three special categories, including machine-technical products, building materials and home furnishing products, and consumer goods and electrical products.

The fair gathers 250 major manufacturing enterprises from 10 Chinese provinces, cities and regions including Beijing, Tianjin, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Liaoning, Xinjiang and Qinghai, Xinhua reports.

On the sideline of the exhibition, an international business meeting will also be held to discuss trade and investment projects and create opportunities for cooperation between the two countries.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce has been organizing the China Commodities Fair in Kazakhstan since 2003.

24 May 2012, 13:18

Majilis approves bill on agro-industrial complex development

ASTANA. May 24. KAZINFORM Deputies of Majilis, the Lower Chamber of the Kazakh Parliament, approved in the second reading a draft law "On

amendments to some legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on development and support of the agro-industrial complex.

According to Majilisman Rauan Shayekin, the bill was initiated by a group of parliamentarians and aimed at creating the legal basis to form and use the regional stabilization fund of food products. The stabilization fund will be formed based on the list of socially important food products with shelf time of more than six months.

The draft law is to eliminate mismatches in the legislation relating to varying interpretation of tax legislation norms on VAT payment.

24 May 2012, 08:00

Head of State expected in Zhambyl region

TARAZ. May 24. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is expected to arrive in Zhambyl region for a two-day working visit.

The President is scheduled to survey facilities of the State Forced Industrial and Innovation Development Programme, Business Roadmap 2020, housing and public utilities modernization and Balapan programs.

Nursultan Nazarbayev will hold a regional meeting with the participation of the governors of the southern regions of Kazakhstan.

24 May 2012, 17:25

K.Massimov, T.Mansurov discussed further integration into Eurasian space
ASTANA. May 24. KAZINFORM Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov met with EurAsEC Secretary General Tair Mansurov today. The sides discussed the issues regarding further integration into the Eurasian space and implementation of state programs.

Besides, K.Massimov and T.Mansurov discussed the issues of publishing of a book titled "The Eurasian Project of Nursultan Nazarbayev Embodied in Life" in the Kazakh and English languages. The EurAsEC Secretary General presented the book at the 5th Astana Economic Forum. The Prime Minister expressed his support for publishing the book, pm.kz informed.

Implementation of the Eurasian project initiated by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is comprehensively considered in the book for the first time. The Eurasian Economic Community, Customs Union

and the Single Economic Space are the real evidence of implementation of this project.

The role of the Eurasian project as the key instrument of effective economic and social development providing post-soviet states with new opportunities and perspectives is described in the book. The publication targets a wide range of readers including scientists, specialists in the state management and international relations and all people interested in the modern history.

It is also worth noting that during the 5th Astana Economic Forum, EurAsEC Secretary General T.Mansurov held a press conference titled "The Eurasian project of N.Nazarbayev - methodological basis of the Eurasian integration".

Speaking at the conference, T.Mansurov said that the modern Eurasian integration was started from the project on formation of the Eurasian Union (EAU) proposed by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in the M.Lomonosov Moscow State University in March 1994.

T.Mansurov noted that the Eurasian strategy of Nazarbayev went a long way from an idea to its implementation. The President of Kazakhstan managed to convince the Heads of neighbor states that his integration proposals were efficient. The Eurasian project was implemented with the participation of these neighbor countries.

The project of the President became a conceptual and organizational base for establishment of economic integration structures such as the EurAsEC, Customs Union and the Single Economic Space, T.Mansurov said.

24 May 2012, 18:01

Majilis Speaker, Turkish Prime Minister discussed bilateral relations
ASTANA. May 24. KAZINFORM Chairman of the Majilis of the Kazakh Parliament Nurlan Nigmatulin met with Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who came to Kazakhstan for an official visit.

The parties noted the strategic nature of relations between the two countries, stressing the important role of the leaders of Kazakhstan and Turkey. The sides expressed confidence that the activities of the two countries' leaders are aimed at continuous expansion and deepening of political, trade-economic, cultural and humanitarian ties.

Speaker of the Majilis Nurlan Nigmatulin emphasized the absolute authority of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in the Turkic world, as well as a huge contribution of our Head of State to the development of relations with the brotherly Turkish people.

In turn, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey has always supported the initiatives of the President of Kazakhstan and values its activities aimed at consolidating the Turkic speaking states.

Nurlan Nigmatulin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan exchanged views on a whole range of bilateral relations, with emphasis on inter-parliamentary relations. The two sides expressed confidence that the third plenary session of TurkPA, which will be held in June in Bishkek, will enable parliamentarians to exchange views on a wide range of issues.

24 May 2012, 19:58

Fifth Astana Economic Forum opens in Kazakhstan - media

ASTANA. May 24. KAZINFORM As part of its rubric "Foreign mass media about Kazakhstan" Kazinform offers the article by Trend Agency on the 5th Astana Economic Forum.

Astana Economic Forum has opened in Kazakhstan on Wednesday.

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev welcomed forum participants.

"The range of discussions of the Astana forum has expanded, since Kazakhstan has become a retransmitter of wide Eurasian look. This became especially important with the creation of a customs union," the president said.

This year the Astana Economic Forum brought together an unprecedented number of participants -- about 8,000 people from 90 countries. The topic of the forum is "Global Economic Transformation: Challenges and Prospects".

AEF-2012 program will be moving in three directions, including the most important topics of socio-economic development of the country and global economy:

1. Financial capital and global economy;

2. Industrial and innovative development;
3. Sustainable development and global social situation.

A signing ceremony of agreements and memorandums will be held during the forum. Some 50 agreements worth, according to preliminary estimates at least \$ 2 billion are ready for signing. The signing ceremony will take place following the first three business forums during AEF between the Kazakh and foreign companies.

A number of exclusive events are scheduled as part of AEF 2012 -- briefing "Dialogue of leaders: new financial and economic policy," CNN televised debate on "Rethinking Integration: Lessons for Emerging Markets", debates of the Eurasian Economic Club of Scientists -- "Creating a single world currency", televised debates of Kazakhstan TV -- "G-Global" and Food Security", lecture for the Nobel Prize winners.

The traditional result of the Astana Economic Forum will be recommendations for governments, which will be sent to the secretariats of the UN, IMF, World Bank, the organizing committee of the G20 summit, and other influential international organizations.

25 May 2012, 09:08

Kazakhstan, Russia commemorate 20 years of friendship, coop and mutual aid

MOSCOW. May 25. KAZINFORM Official visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Kazakhstan is one of key priorities for the short-term, Alexander Sternik, Director of the 3rd Department of CIS countries of the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry, said in an interview to Kazakh mass media.

20 years ago, on the 25th of May 1992, Kazakhstan and Russia signed the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the countries. In 2002 the document was automatically prolonged for another 10 years because none of the countries expressed a wish to withdraw from the treaty.

"Over the period our ties and partnership have become more solid, we have passed the test of time and our relationship fully reflect interests of Russia and Kazakhstan. We have witnessed the growth in commodity turnover, strengthening of political interaction in the international and regional organizations and strategic leadership in the problems of integration in Eurasia," A. Sternik noted.

The diplomat also pointed out that Kazakh and Russian businessmen worked within a single space. "Kazakhstani businessmen are very active at the Russian market. The direct investments amounted to USD 200 million," Russian MFA representative stated.

"Right now we see a new integration phenomenon on the rise - single economic space. It is based on the Customs Union of Kazakhstan, Russian and Belarus," he said. "We are forming a single market covering 170 million consumers."

"Over the last two decades the CIS member countries have seen shattering changes. Thanks to wise leadership of President Nazarbayev and his colleagues in the CIS countries the implementation and deepening of the integration processes are of stable and gradual character," A. Sternik underlined.

"We bound not only by a centuries-long history but also by the largest border between the countries. We destined to be the closest allies and strategic partners," he added.

25 May 2012, 11:02

Kazakhstan, Norway discuss human rights

ASTANA. May 25. KAZINFORM Gunnar Ekeløve-Slydal, Deputy Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) and NHC regional representative in Central Asia Ivar Dale paid a visit to the Human Rights National Center in Astana where they met with Kazakhstan's Human Rights Commissioner Askar Shakirov, ombudsman's press service reports.

In the course of the meeting the sides touched upon the cooperation between the NHC and Human Rights Commissioner's office, in particular within the International Coordination Committee of National Human Rights Organization. The Norwegian side suggested holding a roundtable between the Kazakh and Norwegian human rights organizations in order to exchange experience.

Both sides expressed interest in the implementation of joint projects.

26 May 2012, 11:20

EU, Kazakhstan to sign new agreement after Kazakhstan joins WTO

BRUSSELS. May 26. KAZINFORM The second round of negotiations on the new Agreement on expanded partnership and cooperation between

Kazakhstan and the European Union came to an end in Brussels. Both parties noted they made a significant advance in negotiations.

The Kazakhstani delegation was headed by Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Alexey Volkov, the EU delegation was led by Gunnar Wiegand, head of the European Commission's Unit for Relations with Russia and Central Asia.

According to A. Volkov, the document numbers more than 160 pages and covers specific areas of bilateral cooperation.

"I would like to point out that we've made significant strides in negotiations. It was the first pilot round of talks. But the sides expressed a wish and readiness to make a compromise, concessions and find common grounds. I hope we will be ready to sign the new agreement after Kazakhstan enters the WTO," A. Volkov said.

He also stressed that Kazakhstani side put forward a number of specific suggestions in economic and bank cooperation, implementation of some agreements and expressed readiness to join the European conventions.

In his turn, Gunnar Wiegand, said the level of the second round of talks was high.

"We believe we will get our political, legal, commercial and investment relations and contacts up to the brand new level. Our citizens and business circles will benefit from it," EU representative added.

In addition, Mr. Wiegand expressed hope for strengthening of commercial and investment relations between Kazakhstan and the EU, especially in the light of upcoming accession of Kazakhstan to the WTO.

Within the negotiations the sides discussed all provisions of the future agreement embracing the problems of political, commercial and economic, legal, financial and humanitarian cooperation.

It is also worth mentioning that during President Nazarbayev's visit to Brussels in October 2010 Jose Manuel Barroso spoke in favor of expanding cooperation between Kazakhstan and the EU. According to the President of the European Commission, the EU was keen to develop relations with Kazakhstan in future.

26 May 2012, 12:00

President Nazarbayev visits Almaty region

ALMATY REGION. May 26. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is in the Almaty region to survey the construction of facilities at Altynkol railway station on Zhetygen-Korgas railway line.

The railroad will boost Kazakhstan's transit potential and open the second international border railway crossing between the Republic of Kazakhstan and People's Republic of China.

The rail mileage amounts to 6.3 km.

Railway stations for local and transit passengers, a hotel with a gym, and a canteen were built to ensure the comfort of passengers.

Office block for the staff of border railway crossing was erected. Construction of the customs and borderline infrastructure is finished.

26 May 2012, 18:00

President Nazarbayev praised S Kazakhstan development
ALMATY REGION. May 26. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan positively assessed the socioeconomic development of Southern Kazakhstan while being on a working trip to Almaty region, Kazinform correspondent Yerlik Yerzhanuly reports from Almaty.

"My working trip around Southern Kazakhstan has come to an end. Half of Kazakhstan's population resides in this area. I have familiarized with the work being done in Zhambyl, South Kazakhstan and Almaty regions and assess it as positive. The work is being done in line with the State Program of Advanced Industrial and Innovative Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan and other programs," President Nazarbayev said.

28 May 2012, 10:59

Kazakhstan to launch public service centers on registering vehicles
ASTANA. May 28. KAZINFORM Four special public service centers on registering vehicles and issuing driver's licenses will be opened in Astana, Almaty, Aktau and Karaganda this year, Kazakh Minister of Transport and Communications Askar Zhumagaliyev told the Governmental Hour in the Majilis on Monday.

According to him, it is planned to open analogous centers in other regions of Kazakhstan in 2013.

28 May 2012, 11:36

Number of oncologic diseases increased - Kazakh Health Minister

ASTANA. May 28. KAZINFORM "A number of oncologic diseases in Kazakhstan increase annually," Kazakh Health Minister Salidat Kairbekova said at the Government's sitting.

According to her, just 47.2% of diseases is detected at early stages. Today more than 144 thousand people are registered in the National Oncologic Registry," S. Kairbekova informed.

It is necessary to take into account that the population forecast for increase in people's lifetime will inevitably result in increased cancer incidence rate in the future. Annual growth of cancer by an average 5 % is observed in the world.

28 May 2012, 15:48

Almaty to host Expo Russia Kazakhstan-2012

ALMATY. May 28. KAZINFORM "We, the organizers, see that "Expo Russia Kazakhstan" generates more and more public interest from year to year. Thanks to this exposition commodity turnover between the countries grows on a constant basis," Chairman of "Expo Russia Kazakhstan-2012" Steering Committee David Vartanov told a press conference in Almaty.

"The geography of cooperation between the non-border areas is expanding. The number of annual participants has increased. Last year we had only 60 [participants], but this year's expo brought together 114 participants," D. Vartanov added.

The exhibition is divided into the following sections: "Engineering and metallurgy", "Construction and design", "Oil and gas industry", "Transport and logistics", "Energy", "Telecommunications", "Education" and "Agro-industrial complex".

"Expo Russia Kazakhstan-2012" will be held from May 29-31 in Almaty.

28 May 2012, 20:27

Kazakhstan, China commemorate 20 years of diplomatic relations

ASTANA. May 28. KAZINFORM An official reception on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the Republic of Kazakhstan and People's Republic of China was held at Westin Beijing Chaoyang Hotel in Beijing on May 25.

The event was organized by the Embassy of Kazakhstan to People's Republic of China, Kazakh Foreign Ministry's press service reports.

The event brought together 250 guests, including representatives of Chinese ministries and agencies, analytical and academic structures, business circles, leading Chinese mass media and heads of foreign diplomatic missions and large companies.

In his speech Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to China Nurlan Yermekbayev said that over the two decades Kazakhstan and China had formed a classic model of good neighbour relations characterized by political trust, mutual support, equality and partnership.

Within a short period Kazakhstan and China successfully solved the frontier problem. In 1995 China, being a nuclear nation, provided security guarantees to Kazakhstan. The sides achieved a significant progress in terms of joint usage of cross border rivers' resources and multiplied the trade volume. In 2005 Kazakhstan and China established strategic partnership.

The Kazakh-Chinese relations had been brought to a brand new level of all-round strategic partnership over the last couple of years. President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao made it public during his official visit to Kazakhstan in June 2011.

The upcoming visit of President Nazarbayev to China on June 6-7, 2012 and his participation in the SCO Summit will confirm the high level of political dialogue and mutual trust.

Within the framework of the reception guests enjoyed a photo exhibition dedicated to the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and China. An album with photo materials demonstrating the development of cooperation between the counties was presented during the event. The album generated intense public interest.

29 May 2012, 13:26

We have not only good relations, but special strategic partnership with Kazakhstan - Dmitry Medvedev

ASTANA. May 29. KAZINFORM Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has met with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who arrived in Kazakhstan for a working visit. The sides discussed a wide array of topics

concerning bilateral relations and regional cooperation, the Presidential press service said.

"Russia and Kazakhstan show the world how to build relationships between neighbors. For 20 years we have built absolutely equal and good neighborly relations. I must say that during your presidency we have solved a lot of important historical problems, adopted common customs tariffs, set up the Customs Union, Single Economic Space. At regional meetings, we addressed specific issues. I hope the extensive experience and knowledge will enable you to work very effectively as Head of the Government and, of course, continue to develop the traditional friendly relations between our countries," Nazarbayev said.

"After I was elected President of Russia, I came to Kazakhstan. And now this is my first visit as Prime Minister of Russia to a very friendly and close country. We have not only good relations with Kazakhstan, but special strategic partnership. This as a symbol of the changes we made in recent years. I think we have advanced significantly our bilateral cooperation and have established a very powerful integration union," Medvedev noted.

The most important aspect of bilateral cooperation is trade and economic ties. Russia is the largest trade partner of Kazakhstan. Turnover between Russia and Kazakhstan amounted to USD 23.9 billion in 2011. Exports from Kazakhstan amounted to USD 7.7 billion, while imports to Kazakhstan was USD 16.2 billion. In the 1st quarter of 2012 trade turnover amounted to USD 5 billion, which is 1,3% more than in 2011.

29 May 2012, 14:30

Expo Russia Kazakhstan 2012 kicks off in Almaty

ALMATY. May 29. KAZINFORM "Expo Russia Kazakhstan 2012" exhibition and First Almaty Business Forum have been opened today in Almaty.

"I think we will benefit a lot from the exhibition and the forum, because these two events are closely related and aimed at further development of relations between Russia and Kazakhstan," Consul General of the Russian Federation Victor Zavyalov said.

According to organizers, the purpose of the ABF-2012 is the support of foreign trade activities of small and medium-sized businesses, activation of economic integration, carrying out investment and innovation projects, cooperation and mutual assistance in carrying out economic and trade missions, exhibitions and fairs, promoting the creation of necessary conditions for innovative development of SMEs.

The initiators of the Almaty Business Forum are Commerce and Industry Chambers of Russia and Kazakhstan, Almaty, Penza, Omsk, Voronezh oblasts, Almaty city administration, International Business School at the T.Ryskulov KazEU, Russian-Kazakh Business Club in Almaty and others

29 May 2012, 17:28

GlaxoSmithKline to help Kazakhstan fight with adulterated drugs

ASTANA. May 29. KAZINFORM Kazakh Healthcare Ministry and British GlaxoSmithKline plc, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in the world, signed a memo of cooperation in healthcare and pharmaceutical support, the Kazakh Ministry's press service said.

One of the underlying purposes of the Salamatty Kazakhstan state-run program is to improve health of Kazakhstanis raising efficiency of state agencies, public organizations and other concerned structures.

GlaxoSmithKline is set to help Kazakhstan fight with counterfeit drugs. Besides, the parties agreed on direct supplies of drugs with no analogues in Kazakhstan to save funds and channel those means for other needs.

30 May 2012, 12:53

Islam - one of spiritual pillars of the people of Kazakhstan - President

ASTANA. May 30. KAZINFORM Islam is one of the spiritual pillars of the people of Kazakhstan, President Nazarbayev Nursultan has said today at the IV Congress of World and Traditional Religions' Leaders in Astana.

"Kazakhstan is a country with an overwhelming majority of Muslim population. Islam is a growing layer of the cultural and material heritage of mankind," Nazarbayev stressed. He is confident that the future of modern global society is inconceivable without Islam.

30 May 2012, 14:28

Constructive religious dialogue important for ensuring freedom of people - Canada's ex-PM

ASTANA. May 30. KAZINFORM Speaking at a plenary sitting of the IV Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana former Prime Minister of Canada Jean Chretien expressed gratitude to the President of Kazakhstan for organization of constructive dialogue.

"This kind of dialogue is very important with respect to diversity and freedom of people," Jean Chretien said. Such a dialogue should be aimed at mutual understanding, he says. "All

points of view should lead to a fraternity. It is necessary to contribute to the development of society."

The politician with great experience believes that "it is much easier to stay out of politics helping people build a better life. Then you get a great sense of satisfaction."

30 May 2012, 16:00

Nazarbayev should voice G-global idea at Rio+20, UNESCO Director General ASTANA. May 30. KAZINFORM UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova will ask President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to voice his idea of G-global at Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"I think it is an interesting and important initiative, today we need far-sighted political leaders. To solve global problems we need global decisions," Ms Bokova told a press conference in Astana.

According to the UNESCO Director General, this idea incorporates all elements of sustainable development, problems of economy, social development, social justice, cultural diversity, and so on.

"I would like to ask President Nazarbayev to voice his idea at the conference in Rio de Janeiro this June," Irina Bokova concluded.

30 May 2012, 16:00

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30 May 2012, 18:13

Kazakhstan greatly contributes to UNESCO activities

ASTANA. May 30. KAZINFORM The Head of State Nursultan Nazarbayev received UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova within the frame of the 4th World and Traditional Religions Leaders' Congress in Astana.

During the meeting the sides discussed problems of cooperation between Kazakhstan and UNESCO. Nursultan Nazarbayev especially stressed that he laid special emphasis on interaction with that international organization.

"Since the first days of independence we have been actively cooperating with UNESCO. I personally knew all heads of your organization. UNESCO has always supported our initiatives, so I guess we can say that our cooperation has reached a pretty high level. UNESCO has played a big role in uniting research in the sphere of world culture. Your organization implements a special civilization mission. We recognize and support it. UNESCO's participation in the forum is of paramount importance, it enhances prestige of the congress," Nursultan Nazarbayev said.

In her turn, Ms Bokova emphasized that discussion of relevant religious and spiritual problems and the congress itself were an indispensable part of the global agenda.

"I would like to congratulate you on successful running of the congress. For us Kazakhstan has always been an important partner and my first official visit to Astana has coincided with the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan's accession to UNESCO. Your country actively participates in the activity of the organization and greatly contributes to its development," UNESCO Director General noted.

30 May 2012, 18:35

Kazakh President revealed creative and peaceful potential of traditional religions, Metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan

ASTANA. May 30. KAZINFORM Metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan Alexander believes, that the President of Kazakhstan succeeded in revealing creative and peaceful potential of traditional religions.

"I am confident that representatives of all religious confessions highly appreciate consistent, deliberate, wise home policy of President Nursultan

Nazarbayev that let reveal creative and peaceful potential of traditional religions," he told addressing the session of the IV Congress of Leader of World and Traditional Religions.

According to him, development of Kazakhstan's society since gaining independence has been accompanied by keen interest in spiritual life issues.

30 May 2012, 21:37

Kazakhstan may ease visa requirements

ASTANA. May 30. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan will consider easing visa requirements for Malaysians given the country's aspiration to be a global investment player, says Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kairat Sarybay.

"Unfortunately, Kazakhstan is not well known in Malaysia, but I am aware more Kazakhstanis are going to Malaysia, Bernama reports.

"To promote tourism between Malaysia and Kazakhstan, we should definitely think about the visa regime with Malaysia and maybe we should take our first step for the diplomatic and service passes.

"However, as our President Nursultan Nazarbayev is targeting significant developments for Kazakhstan on the investment platform, we will consider how we can ease the visa regime for the business community as they are potential investors," he told Bernama on the sidelines of the Fifth Astana Forum.

On Malaysia being among the important nations the republic would be enhancing bilateral relations, Sarybay said Malaysia can be a good model for Kazakhstan not only in terms of its economy, successfully implemented policies, strategic planning, diversified agendas and multi-ethnic population.

"Malaysia's model is crucial to Kazakhstan's strategic planning. We have long-term bilateral relations between our president and (former prime Minister) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he said.

The recent exchange of visits by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Nazarbayev would further create and give new impetus to foster relations between the two nations, he said.

"We will work to implement similar policies which have been put in place in Malaysia. The similarities in approaches give us more perspective and space for mutual cooperation.

With the Customs Union membership of Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus that provides a single economy space, foreign investors coming to Kazakhstan would also benefit from it.

"Kazakhstan will use its geo-political position to bridge the country between Euroasian and Asean region, especially with Malaysia," he added.

30 May 2012, 20:31

Religious leaders attend reception at Astana presidential residence

ASTANA. May 30. KAZINFORM An official reception on behalf of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in the honour of participants of the 4th World and Traditional Religions Leaders' Congress has been held in Astana today, presidential press service reports.

The Head of State thanked the guests for their active participation in the congress and pointed out the relevance of this event within which new initiatives on strengthening the inter-faith dialogue could be voiced. This forum is unique because representatives of various religions can get together at one table. The congress becomes an important integrating factor and promotes formation of mutual understanding. President Nazarbayev also paid attention to the fact that world's religious leaders should actively promote the ideas of tolerance and religious dialogue in their communities.

31 May 2012, 13:15

Majilis approved amendments to healthcare legislation

ASTANA. May 31. KAZINFORM Kazakh Majilis has approved a bill "On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of Kazakhstan on healthcare issues." As Kazakh member of Parliament G. Seytmaganbetova noted Majilismen suggested 17 amendments, 7 of which were adopted.

The main aim of the bill is the implementation of human rights of Kazakh people and repatriates to the guaranteed volume of free medical care. Currently, medical products and medical services that are included in the guaranteed volume of free medical care, are purchased with

31 May 2012, 14:25

Kazakhstan achieved success in promoting ideology of dialogue of civilizations, Sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin

ASTANA. May 31. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan achieved success in promoting the ideology of dialogue of civilizations, peaceful coexistence of religions and cultures in the international community, Chairman of the Russian Muftis Council Sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin stated at a press conference in Astana.

As the Chairman of the Council said, this is a great achievement of the people of Kazakhstan and President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

"Today, at the same table sat the leaders of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and other religions. They all say that we should contribute to maintaining peace and stability in the world," Ravil Gaynutdin noted.

According to him, "all the conflicts and wars that we see in different parts of the world occur not because of religious differences, but because of the mistakes of politicians. There is no religion that calls for violence."

31 May 2012, 15:36

Kazakhstan is the land of peace and consent, Nursultan Nazarbayev
ASTANA. May 31. KAZINFORM Today Head of State Nursultan Nazarbayev has unveiled the Famine Memorial in Astana, the Kazakh President's press service said.

Delegates of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, public figures attended the opening ceremony. This monument is to honor those who died in the famine in 1931-1933.

Unveiling the memorial, Nursultan Nazarbayev noted the IV Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions is underway in Astana.

"Nine years ago during the I Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, Kazakhstan was referred to as the land of peace and consent. One of the backbones of the consent is our unanimity in perception of timeless values of goods, peace and justice. Today, on the Remembrance Day of victims of political repression and famine we remember two tragic dates. This year marks the 80th anniversary of mass famine and the 75th anniversary since the beginning of political repressions. 7 million people were killed at large. 1.5 of them died in Kazakhstan. We have gathered here today to eternalize our memory and unveil the Famine Memorial," the President said.

31 May 2012, 15:34

Kazakhstan, Indonesia cement transport coop

ASTANA. May 31. KAZINFORM JSC "Kaztransservice" and the Association of Transport and Logistics companies of Indonesia signed a memorandum of cooperation and interaction in Astana.

The agreement has been reached within the Global Partner Project aimed at establishing active interaction with the world's transport and logistics leaders.

During the signing ceremony the sides debated problems of transportation of Indonesian and Chinese products to Europe and CIS countries and vice versa through Kazakhstan.

The heads of the companies agreed to develop the best route for Indonesian cargo traffic (rubber, cotton, pharmaceutical products) via Kazakhstan and its neighbors and export of grain and chemicals to Indonesia.

The memorandum is believed to strengthen the Kazakh-Indonesian business cooperation and positively affect the development of the international transit routes. It will also ensure Kazakhstan's status of the competitive country in the international arena.

The document was inked by the acting President of JSC "Kaztransservice" and the Chairman of the Association of Transport and Logistics companies of Indonesia.

31 May 2012, 17:29

IV World Religions Congress wraps up in Astana

ASTANA. May 31. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has announced today at the Palace of Accord and Peace that the 4th World and Traditional Religions Leaders' Congress came to an end.

The Head of State thanked all participants of the religious forum for fruitful work.

"I would like to thank you all once again for coming here and being with us under the Kazakhstani sky, praising the peace and accord in our country, mentioning us in your prayers and wishing Kazakhstanis eternal prosperity," Nursultan Nazarbayev emphasized at the closing ceremony in Astana.

After the ceremony the guests of the forum were invited to a concert.

31 May 2012, 17:00

V World Religions Congress to be held in 2015

ASTANA. May 31. KAZINFORM The next 5th World and Traditional Religions Leaders' Congress will be held in 2015, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev told at the closing ceremony of the 4th congress in Astana.

"The 4th congress is wrapping up its work. I look forward to new meetings within the next congress that will take place in 2015," Nursultan Nazarbayev said.

The Head of State wished all the participants spiritual stability, good health and success in their work.

31 May 2012, 18:49

Nazarbayev signs law concerning EurAsEC

ASTANA. May 31. KAZINFORM The Head of State Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On ratification of the Protocol on amendments to the Statute of the Eurasian Economic Community Court as of July 5, 2010", presidential press service reports.

The text of the law will be published in mass media.

31 May 2012, 21:44

Kazakhstan keen to develop coop with UAE, Dubai

ASTANA. May 31. KAZINFORM Consul general of Kazakhstan to Dubai and the United Arab Emirates Askar Shokybayev met with the UAE Minister of Finance Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum on May 28, Kazakh Foreign Ministry's press service reports.

In the course of the meeting Kazakhstani diplomat told about the current political and socioeconomic situation, investment opportunities and initiatives of Kazakhstan in the international arena.

He noted the UAE was a highly developed country in the Persian Gulf that despite global financial crisis managed to restore its economy promptly. He assured Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid that Kazakhstan was keen to develop relations with the UAE and Dubai in particular.

Mr. Shokybayev stressed that cooperation between two countries was developing in various spheres. According to the consul, the signing of the Memorandum of Mutual Understanding between JSC "NC "Kazakhstan Temir Zholy" and "Dubai Ports World" on April 21, 2012 would promote the implementation of joint projects in the field of logistics on the territory of Kazakhstan. In this context, A. Shokybayev invited Dubai businessmen to take part in the implementation of new large projects in Kazakhstan.

In his turn, Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid congratulated A. Shokybayev on his appointment and mentioned that dialogue between the UAE and Kazakhstan was on a high level. He also emphasized the importance of further development of relations between the countries in the commercial and economic and investment spheres and reiterated the readiness to bend every effort to expand the bilateral cooperation.

The UAE Minister of Finance also noted the significance of renewing the direct flights between large cities of Kazakhstan and Dubai and promised to arrange a meeting with the President of Emirates Airline.

01 June 2012, 12:54

Islamic finance development in Kazakhstan discussed

ASTANA. June 1. KAZINFORM Kazakh Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Issekeshov met with Vice President of Islamic Development Bank Birama Sidibe on Friday, the Ministry's press service said.

The sides discussed further steps to implement the initiatives of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. In particular, they talked about establishing OIC food security fund, fund for development of small and medium businesses, Fund on investments in renewable energy, as well as the development of Islamic finance in Kazakhstan and regional cooperation and integration in Central Asia.

The sides noted the importance of signing of the Country Partnership Strategy between Kazakhstan and the IDB Group (to the amount of USD 1.2 billion), which would be an effective tool to enhance the bank's activities in Kazakhstan, aimed at diversifying the economy in terms of supporting SMEs, developing transport and energy infrastructure, agriculture, Islamic financial sector and regional integration.

As Issekeshv noted, Kazakhstan, during its presidency over OIC, has received strong support for its initiatives from the structural institutions of the Organization, particularly from the Islamic Development Bank.

01 June 2012, 17:04

WHO adds Almaty among ten smoke-free cities

ALMATY. June 1. KAZINFORM The World Health Organization has listed Almaty, Kazakhstan's largest city, among the 10 smoke-free cities in the world, health officials said Thursday.

"The WHO has officially included Almaty on its list of smoke-free cities along with Mecca, Medina, Liverpool, Mexico City and other cities," Gulsara Suleimenova, director of the Almaty Center for Healthy Lifestyle, told reporters.

"Only ten cities in the world have been given the honor," she said.

Kazakhstan launched a program called "Almaty: A tobacco-free city" in 2005-2011. The effort has driven the smoking level among the general population down 13.3 percent, 6.9 percent among young people aged 18-24, Suleimenova said, Xinhua reports.

On May 31, the world annually marks No Tobacco Day, a program initiated by WHO to promote no-smoking awareness.

02 June 2012, 13:05

University accreditation system to improve quality of Kazakh higher education

ASTANA. June 2. KAZINFORM The work on comprehensive integration of Kazakhstan's higher education institutions into the global education is held in Kazakhstan, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Kazakhstan Murat Orunkhanov said at the first sitting of the Accreditation Council of the National Accreditation Center, according to the Kazakh Prime Minister's official website.

"Presently, leading Kazakhstani universities are aimed at climbing up the world rankings and in order to do it, the work on joining the international university organizations and on integration into the European Research Area is held," M. Orunkhanov said.

Besides, he noted that the universities of Kazakhstan were aimed at fulfillment of tasks which were set before the education systems of the leading countries of the world. The participation of the delegation of Kazakhstan in the work of the Bologna Process Ministerial Conference in Bucharest will also give an impetus for further development of Kazakhstan's higher education.

According to the Deputy Minister, Kazakhstan is currently ready for establishment of independent accreditation system. The National Accreditation Council under the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan was established. "The institutions meeting the requirements of the national and international laws will make big contributions to ensuring the quality of higher education of Kazakhstan," M. Orukhanov emphasized.

It is worth noting that the universities of Kazakhstan are interested in receiving objective assessment of their activity from acknowledged accreditation agencies working in accordance with the Bologna criteria.

"We set as a priority a task on further joining the European system of quality assurance of higher education by these agencies. I believe that the accreditation agencies of Kazakhstan will be soon included into the European Register," the Deputy Minister added.

03 June 2012, 11:10

Kazakhstan's Arman Kamyshev claims a narrow victory

QUEBEC. June 3. KAZINFORM A bunch sprint decided the opening stage of the Coupe des Nations - Ville de Saguenay with Kazakh Arman Kamyshev first across the finish line. He narrowly defeated Dane Patrick Clausen, who claimed the yellow leader's jersey by virtue of time bonuses, which confer him a slight lead of two seconds over the stage winner. Italian Thomas Fiumana rounded out the podium.

"It was a difficult day. There was a lot of wind and the rain was annoying, so we had to slow down the pace at the end," Kamyshev said through an interpreter. "At the end of the last lap, I attacked several times in order to stay well positioned for the sprint." Second overall last year, he believes his chances are good this year. It is indeed an admitted goal, Cycling News reports.

It was under an uncertain sky that the 88 riders started the 140.7 kilometres race taking Jonquiere's streets. Early in the race, a breakaway of three cyclists animated the stage. The fugitive trio was however caught

before completing the first lap. A few attacks were conducted during the next two laps, but none were successful.

Halfway into the race, two competitors took off from the peloton. Four cyclists who went to their pursuit soon joined them. The lead group had to surrender against a peloton at full blast. With less than 40 kilometres to complete, many attempted to breakaway, but on the seventh and decisive lap, all escapees had reintegrated with the bunch. A crash that occurred in the last kilometres blew the chances of some and tainted the event's outcome, which was finally determined in the sprint.

05 June 2012, 10:00

Kyrgyz President condoles with Kazakhstan over tragic death of border guards

BISHKEK. June 5. KAZINFORM President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev expressed his condolences to President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev over the tragic death of Kazakhstani border guards at the Arkankergen border outpost in Almaty region.

"We extend our sincerest condolences to the families and friends of the dead frontiersmen and deep sympathy to the fraternal people of Kazakhstan," the telegram reads.

05 June 2012, 11:53

Kazakhstan mourns death of Arkankergen border guards

ASTANA. June 5. KAZINFORM in Kazakhstan the national flags are put at half mast as a sign of mourning and respect for the frontiersmen died at the Arkankergen border outpost.

As earlier reported, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev declared June 5 a day of national mourning in connection with the death of border guards.

05 June 2012, 13:04

Kazakh President's visit to China to give new impetus to strategic partnership, China's MFA

BEIJING. June 5. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is expected to arrive today in the afternoon in China for an official visit.

Nursultan Nazarbayev will meet with his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao to debate a wide range of issues concerning deepening of bilateral relations, exchange views on international and regional issues of mutual interest. The parties are expected to sign a scope of bilateral cooperation documents, as well as Joint Declaration of Kazakhstan and China.

According to official spokesperson for the Kazakh MFA Altai Abibbulayev, the upcoming visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to China will be a milestone in further promotion of Sino-Kazakh all-round strategic partnership.

In its turn, China's MFA assesses the visit of Nursultan Nazarbayev to China as an opportunity to extend good-neighborly relations, friendship and contribute to mutual beneficial cooperation in building dynamic, all-round, strategic partnership between the two countries.

"Hope, thanks to joint efforts of both sides the visit of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev will be successful and give a new impetus to the development of Sino-Kazakh strategic partnership," the China's MFA said.

05 June 2012, 05:41

EU should support Kazakhstan and Belarus in accession to WTO - Putin

ST. PETERSBURG. June 5. KAZINFORM The EU should take into account the decision of Kazakhstan and Belarus to commit to conditions agreed as part of Russia's accession to the WTO in its consideration of their applications to join the World Trade Organization, Russian President Vladimir Putin said, Kazinform has learned from RIA Novosti.

"Concerning the Customs Union and Single Economic Space, and our process of rapprochement with the European Union, we see no contradictions, I spoke about it today. First of all because we formulate the rules of the customs union and single economic space entirely, I'd like to stress it, we prepared and signed documents entirely on the principles of the World Trade Organization. Moreover our partners Kazakhstan and Belarus took the unprecedented decision and agreed that the terms and conditions of Russia's accession to the WTO would be taken by these states," Putin said at a press conference following Russia-EU summit.

The accession package of the Russian Federation to the WTO was signed on December 16, 2011 at the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the world trade

body. The Russian Federation becomes a member 30 days after the WTO is informed that the accession package has been ratified domestically.

05 June 2012, 10:52

Road Show Kazakhstan: an attractive investment destination for British business

ASTANA. June 5. KAZINFORM The Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan will be holding a Road Show in London, focusing on the investment climate in Kazakhstan.

It 's organizers are Kazakhstan's National Export and Investment Agency Kaznex Invest and the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the UK

This Road Show is the first event that is entirely devoted to the presentation of investment opportunities in priority sectors of Kazakhstan. The Road Show will be dedicated to the main sectors of the economy: agriculture, chemical, machinery, and pharmaceuticals, Kaznex Invest press service reports.

The Road Show will feature a real-time exchange of information on investment projects, state programs and various state investment incentives (import tax exemptions, state in-kind grants and tax investment preferences). Companies interested in starting, or expanding, business operations in Kazakhstan will benefit from an explanation of the application procedures for the various investment incentives.

04 June 2012, 08:53

Kazakhstan to show its investment opportunities in The Hague

BRUSSELS. June 4. KAZINFORM Kaznex Invest National Agency for Export and Investments and Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of Kazakhstan together with the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce and the Kazakh Embassy to the Netherlands will hold a road show demonstrating the investment opportunities of Kazakhstan in The Hague on Thursday (June 7).

According to Kaznex Invest, this show will be the first event that will be fully dedicated to Kazakhstan's investment opportunities and priority areas attractive for foreign investors. The reps of foreign companies will have an

opportunity to familiarize with the economic development of the country and our plans for the future. Also they will be able to carry out direct negotiations with the Kazakh authorities responsible for the development of key areas.

During the event the participants will discuss the following issues: why direct investments into Kazakhstan are so profitable; what is so special about the investment climate in Kazakhstan; what actions, measures and legal steps does Kazakhstan take to improve the business environment; what areas are the most attractive for implementation of foreign investors' projects; why choosing Kazakhstan for direct investments among other Customs Union member states and so on.

JSC "Samruk-Energo", JSC "KazAgroFinance", JSC "Kazakhstan Engineering", the Kazakh National Agency for Technological Development and JSC "NC "Kazakhstan Temir Zholy" are expected to demonstrate their projects to foreign investors.

04 June 2012, 18:10

Putin to visit Kazakhstan

ASTANA. June 4. KZINFORM Russia President Vladimir Putin will arrive for official visit in Astana at the invitation of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the official representative of the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs A. Abibullayev informed at a briefing.

According to A. Abibullayev, the status and perspectives of Kazakhstan-Russia cooperation in economic, political, trade, cultural and humanitarian spheres, and a wide range of international issues as well as cooperation within the regional integration structures are on agenda.

In addition, the heads of the two states are planning to sign a protocol on amendments and additions to the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance between Kazakhstan and Russia as of 25 May 1992.

06 June 2012, 10:10

Kazakh, Chinese leaders sign Joint Declaration

ASTANA. June 6. KAZINFORM President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev met with President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao in expanded format on Wednesday (June 6) in Beijing.

Upon completion of the negotiations, the Kazakh and Chinese leaders signed the Joint Declaration of Kazakhstan and China.

The Agreement between the Government of Kazakhstan and the Government of China on checkpoints on the state border was inked by Transport and Communications Minister Askar Zhumagaliyev of Kazakhstan and Director of General Administration of Customs Yu Guangzhou of China.

06 June 2012, 10:59

Kazakhstan, China map out new plan of cooperation

BEIJING. June 6. KAZINFORM Within the framework of his official visit to China President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev met with Vice President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping on Wednesday (June 6).

"You are an old friend of Chinese people and go to great lengths to develop friendship and cooperation between our countries. We highly estimate your great contribution to the strengthening of Kazakh-Chinese friendly ties," Xi Jinping said at the meeting.

Vice President of the People's Republic of China noted that Kazakh and Chinese leaders had mapped out a new strategic multilateral plan of development of cooperation between Kazakhstan and China. "I am confident your official visit will give a new great impetus," Xi Jinping added.

"Kazakhstan is a relatively young country that has recently celebrated 20 years of independence. China was one of the first powers to recognize our independence. We started our relationship from ground zero. 20 years ago we had nothing, no economy at all. The inflation rate amounted to 2100 per cent per annum," President Nazarbayev stressed.

"However, within a short period we implemented intensive reforms in economy and politics. We created free market economy. Thanks to our actions, over the last 15 years our economy has witnessed a surprising surge," Nursultan Nazarbayev added.

It was the first meeting of Nursultan Nazarbayev with Xi Jinping.

06 June 2012, 14:53

Kazakhstan, China to establish Business Council

BEIJING. June 6. KAZINFORM The Memorandum on establishment of the Kazakh-Chinese Business Council was signed within the SCO business forum on Wednesday (June 6) in Beijing.

The document was signed by CEO of JSC "National Welfare Fund "Samruk-Kazyna" Umirzak Shukeyev of Kazakhstan and CEO of CITIC Capital Yichen Zhang of China.

The main theme of the SCO business forum is the strengthening of regional economic integration and finding new opportunities for development.

Reps of SCO governments and business circles and SCO business partners take part in the event.

CEO of JSC "National Welfare Fund "Samruk-Kazyna" Umirzak Shukeyev represents Kazakhstan at the forum.

06 June 2012, 18:00

Nazarbayev puts forward proposals on deepening SCO security cooperation
BEIJING. June 6. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan welcomes the adoption of the cooperative program on fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism for 2013-2015, President Nursultan Nazarbayev stated at the sitting of the SCO Council of Heads of State in Beijing on Wednesday.

Nazarbayev emphasized the importance of better coordination of antiterrorist efforts between the competent bodies of the Organization's member states, observer countries and partners.

With the purpose of deepening cooperation in the field of security the President of Kazakhstan put forward the following proposals:

First, to establish conference on regulation of territorial and regional conflicts between the SCO member states. "This idea was partially reflected in the revised SCO Regulations on Political and Diplomatic Measures and Mechanism of Response to Events Jeopardizing Regional Peace, Security and Stability," Nazarbayev noted.

Second, to establish a special agency, cyberpol that will provide protection from Internet aggressions.

Third, to establish SCO Prognosis Center that will significantly increase the effectiveness of our Organization.

Fourth, to consistently implement the SCO Anti-drug Strategy for 2011-2016 adopted at the summit in Astana.

07 June 2012, 21:28

Nazarbayev: Kazakhstan considers Russia important political, economic partner

ASTANA. June 7. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan considers Russia as important political and economic partner, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said during the bilateral meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Thursday.

The Head of State noted that the visits of Putin and Medvedev demonstrated the highest level of cooperation and interstate contacts.

"Taking this opportunity I wish once again to congratulate Vladimir Vladimirovich on election as President of Russia and the upcoming Day of Russia on June 12," Nazarbayev said.

07 June 2012, 22:55

Nazarbayev, Putin sign protocol on amendments to Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance

M Kazakh and Russian presidents Nursultan Nazarbayev and Vladimir Putin have signed a protocol on amendments to the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between Kazakhstan and Russia as of 25 May 1992.

In addition, the presidents signed a protocol on amendments to the intergovernmental agreement on order of crossing the Kazakh-Russian state border by the residents of border territories dated 3 September 2006. Some other agreements were signed as well.

07 June 2012, 23:28

Kazakhstan and Russia intend to increase trade turnover up to USD 40 bln

ASTANA. June 7. KAZINFORM "Trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Russia has reached historical maximum," Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev told a briefing following the meeting with Russia's Putin in Akorda.

"We have discussed serious issues of our relations and pointed out that Kazakhstan - Russia commodity circulation has reached its historical maximum - USD 25 billion. Our task is to increase it up to USD 40 billion, " N. Nazarbayev said.

07 June 2012, 08:53

Turkey condoles with Kazakhstan over Arkankergen tragedy

ANKARA. June 7. KAZINFORM Turkey took the news of the tragedy at Arkankergen border outpost with pain and sympathy, press release of the Kazakh embassy to the country reads.

Reps of the Turkish public and governmental organizations and foreign diplomatic missions, accredited in Turkey, visited the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Ankara and Consulate General in Istanbul on Tuesday-Wednesday (June 5-6).

The diplomats of Turkey, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Morocco, India and Ethiopia expressed their condolences over the tragedy and wrote in a special open book of condolences.

The Embassy of Kazakhstan to Turkey expressed gratitude to all who came to condole or sent letters of condolences.

08 June 2012, 08:25

Kazakhstan, Russia discuss future of space coop

ASTANA. June 8. KAZINFORM The Kazakh-Russian top-level negotiations on the state and prospects of cooperation in the space sphere were carried out on Thursday (June 7) in Astana within the official visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

According to press service of the Kazakh President, both leaders commended many years' experience of successful cooperation in the space sector and joint use of Baikonur Space Center.

The heads of states agreed it was necessary to improve legal base of Baikonur joint use and instructed the Kazakh and Russian space agencies to develop a new bilateral agreement regulating the use of the space center and providing creation of joint rocket stations, and staff training.

08 June 2012, 10:38

Kazakhstan will enrich uranium in Russia, studies power station

ASTANA. June 8. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan plans to start enriching uranium at a processing center in the Russian town of Novouralsk, **Sergei Kiriyyenko**, head of Moscow-based Rosatom Corp. told reporters yesterday in Astana.

Kazakhstan may start building a nuclear power station jointly with Russia next year, President **Nursultan Nazarbayev** said yesterday in Astana after

meeting his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, Kazinform has learnt from Bloomberg.

Russia is also considering entering the Horizon project to build nuclear-power stations in the U.K., Kiriyenko said, according to Interfax.

1 June 2012, 11:02

Arkankergen chief Kereyev buried in native village

WEST KAZAKHSTAN REGION. June 11. KAZIFORM The funeral service for Captain Altynbek Kereyev, chief of Arkankergen border post was held June 10 in Meray village, West Kazakhstan region.

Akim of the region Nurlan Nogayev, friends, classmates and parents of Altynbek Kereyev gathered for the memorial service at school where he graduated.

The regional administration allocated KZT 1 million of financial assistance to the relatives of Kereyev, deputies of the Majilis and the West-Kazakhstan branch of "Nur Otan" Party helped the family of the deceased with KZT 200 thousand. In addition, Minister of Education and Science Bakhytzhan Zhumagulov on behalf of his family sent the Kereyev's family one thousand dollars.

11 June 2012, 13:01

Kazakhstan wins the arbitration proceeding versus Caratube company

ASTANA. June 11. KAZIFORM On 5 June 2012 the arbitral tribunal of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) adopted the decision on the case initiated by Caratube International Oil Company LLP (CIOC) against the Republic of Kazakhstan.

According to the press service of the Kazakh Justice Ministry, the amount of CIOC's claims was in excess of USD 1.2 billion. The ICSID rejected these claims and ordered CIOC to pay USD 3.2 million in favor of Kazakhstan as a compensation for arbitration costs.

The arbitral proceeding was initiated 4 years ago. The main hearings took place in Paris.

The dispute was related to the termination of the contract for the exploration and production of hydrocarbons in the Caratube oil field, which was result of CIOC's breaches and non-performance of the contract.

According to CIOC the grounds for this arbitration were the ICSID Convention and the US-Kazakhstan Bilateral Investment Treaty because of the US nationality of Devincci Hourani, the alleged owner of CIOC.

Although formally CIOC is owned by Devincci Hourani, the Tribunal rejected CIOC's arguments and found that it lacked jurisdiction. The Tribunal ruled that there was no proof that Devincci Hourani actually made investment and controlled CIOC.

The coordination of work on representation and protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan's interests in this arbitration was conducted by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

11 June 2012, 14:50

Kazakh President received Supreme Court Chairman

ASTANA. June 11. KAZINFORM Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has received Chairman of the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan Bektas Beknazarov, the Presidential press service said.

Beknazarov told about the current activities of the judicial bodies.

"In his state-of-the-nation address the President of Kazakhstan touched upon the necessity to improve judicial system. Today I've reported on the work in this area. All steps aimed at reforming the judicial system comply with the Presidential instructions," the Chairman said.

Nazarbayev gave specific instructions to the Supreme Court Chairman.

11 June 2012, 21:11

Kazakhstan, Germany to debate economic coop

ASTANA. June 11. KAZINFORM The economic delegation from the Federal Republic of Germany arrived for a working visit to Kazakhstan.

Kazakh MFA's official spokesperson Altay Abibullayev told a briefing on Monday (June 11).

The delegation is expected to hold negotiations with Kazakhstani authorities on further commercial and economic cooperation and organization of the exchange market involving reps of Kazakhstan and Germany business circles.

The last year's sales turnover between Kazakhstan and Germany hit the mark of USD 3.7 billion. The Federal Republic of Germany is the eighth

largest business partner of Kazakhstan. The commodity turnover between Germany and Kazakhstan amounted to USD 993.2 million in January-April 2012.

2 June 2012, 01:45

Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus plan to boost sugar production 20%

MOSCOW. June 12. KAZINFORM Sugar producers of the Customs Union of **Russia**, Kazakhstan and Belarus plan to increase output of the sweetener 20 percent to 6.7 million metric tons by 2020 from 2011, Russia's Sugar Producers' Union said on its **website**.

The increase will be achieved through better sugar-beet growing and storage technologies, the union said, citing its Chairman Andrei Bodin, Kazinform quotes Bloomberg.

12 June 2012, 03:40

Unemployment rate in Kazakhstan hit 5.3% in May

ASTANA. June 12. KAZINFORM According to official statistical data, 8.5 million of citizens of Kazakhstan were employed in May 2012. This rate was 3.6 per cent lower in May 2011.

The number of jobless Kazakhstanis in May 2012 amounted to 473 600 people. The unemployment rate hit 5.3 per cent.

It's estimated that hidden unemployment made 0.3 per cent in May 2012.

2 June 2012, 12:40

Two projects of green economy to be launched in 2012

ASTANA. June 12. KAZINFORM The plants on waste processing and tire recycling will be launched in Astana in 2012, Minister of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan Nurlan Kapparov said Monday at the Government Hour in the Majilis, Kazinform refers to the Prime Minister's official website.

"The plants on waste processing and tire recycling will be opened in Astana. These projects are a beginning of green business in the sphere of waste processing in Kazakhstan," the Minister said.

Besides, he informed that "Zhasyl Damu" Program for 2010-2014 was currently implemented. Within this Program, construction and reconstruction of waste water treatment plant in Aktobe, Uralsk, Aktau, Zhanaozen, Beineu, Kuryk and in Tugyl village in East Kazakhstan region

completed. Besides, implementation of the project on cleaning of the Komendantka river and the bed of the river Pionerskaya in East Kazakhstan region was completed.

Besides, the initiative on reforming the National Hydrometeorological Service - "Kazgidromet" into the company of global monitoring of soil, air and water including the Caspian Sea is being developed.

In this regard, the Ministry of Environment Protection of Kazakhstan plans to cooperate with non-governmental organizations which include more than 200 environmental ones. They take active part in development and implementation of environment policy, participate in the meetings held in the regions and their representatives are the members of the public environmental council under the Ministry of Environment Protection of Kazakhstan.

Besides, the Minister also informed about improvement of the legislation in this sphere. Thus, the Laws "On support of using renewable sources of energy" and "On energy saving" have been adopted and they will allow to increase the number of environmentally sound energy sources in the energy structure such as gas and renewable energy sources.

N. Kapparov also told about preservation of fertility of soil, water and biologic recourses. Moreover, using formerly inaccessible renewable energy sources will allow farmers to have always available energy and water independently which is also to increase export of meat, dairy products, fruits, vegetables and the other types of agricultural products.

"Woodlands play invaluable role for preserving environmental stability, water quality and water supply for the population. Protection and restoration of forests are priority directions they are supported at the international level by special financial mechanisms due to increasing demand for environmental services from woodlands for preserving climate and biodiversity," he added.

2 June 2012, 17:57

Kazakhstan and Germany to focus on economic cooperation priorities - Issekeshv

ASTANA. June 12. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan and Germany will focus on two priorities of their economic cooperation, Kazakh Minister of Industry and New Technologies Asset Issekeshv stated after the meeting with the delegation of Eastern Committee of German Economy.

The first priority is the implementation of joint industrial projects with high performance, energy efficiency in industries such as metallurgy, machinery, chemicals and building materials under the Kazakhstan Forced Industrial Innovative Development Program.

The second one is the practical implementation of the partnership agreement between the governments of Kazakhstan and Germany in the fields of raw materials, industry and technology (on the principle of raw materials in exchange for investment and technology). "Right now we are making the list of projects, continue the negotiation process," Asset Issekeshov said.

Presently, Germany is one of the main partners of Kazakhstan in Europe, and Kazakhstan is Germany's leading economic partner in Central Asia. The great impetus to the development of bilateral relations has been given by the visit of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Berlin early this year. The result of the visit was the signing of the partnership agreement in the raw materials, industrial and technological fields, and about 50 agreements totaling more than USD 3 billion.

12 June 2012, 18:43

Kurmangazy monument to be unveiled in Astana

ASTANA. June 12. KAZINFORM The unveiling ceremony of the monument to Kurmangazy will be an important part of celebration of the 14th anniversary of Kazakhstan's capital.

The monument was created by sculptor Assan Moldabayev. This is not his first work, he has already contributed to design of the ethno park in Karaganda.

The 10-meter high monument to Kurmangazy will be erected near Duman Hotel in Astana.

Kurmangazy is a Kazakh national musician, composer, and dombra player. He started playing dombra when he was a little child.

3 June 2012, 11:59

MFA should explain Kazakhstan's' policy in religious field

ASTANA. June 13. KAZINFORM "Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs should include an explanation of the country's policy in the religious sphere to the international community in its foreign policy issues' range," Deputy Head of the Administration of the Kazakh President Baglan Mailybayev said.

B. Mailybayev noted that the effective dialog between the state and religious associations has been built in Kazakhstan. It is based on non-interference in internal affairs of the religious associations and on the equality of all confessions before the law.

According to him, religion is an integral part of international relations, and the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays a significant role in explaining the Kazakhstan's policy for strengthening tolerance.

In general, all state authorities should take all necessary measures to develop harmonious relations between the state and confessions. Religion requires the most objective attitude, the solution of key issues needs to be based on close cooperation, including through non-governmental organizations.

"The success of collaboration depends on mutual trust. Our main task is to timely raise and solve relevant problems of interfaith dialogue," B. Mailybaev concluded.

3 June 2012, 13:51

579 small religious groups stop their activity in Kazakhstan

ASTANA. June 13. KAZINFORM 579 small religious groups stop their activity in Kazakhstan, Chairman of the Agency for Religious Affairs Kairat Lama Sharif told a meeting of the Council for Relations with Religious Associations under the Government of Kazakhstan.

"As a result of joint efforts with the local executive authorities, in accordance with the law, we halt the activities of 579 small religious groups that do not have signs of a legal entity," the head of the agency said.

According to him, before the adoption of the Law "On religious activity and religious associations," they were only registered in the account of the local executive bodies. The biggest number of such religious groups operated in Akmola (17.9%), Karaganda (19.2%), North Kazakhstan (19.5%) and South-Kazakhstan (19.7%) regions.

"At present, most of them stopped their activity," Lama Sharif added.

13 June 2012, 17:09

102 Kazakhstani athletes qualified for Summer Olympic Games in London

ASTANA. June 13. KAZINFORM 102 Kazakhstani athletes performing in 24 sports have qualified for the upcoming Summer Olympic Games in London, Chairman of the Agency for Sports and Physical Culture Talgat

Yermegiyayev said, according to the Kazakh Prime Minister's official website.

Speaking at today's press conference, the Chairman of the Agency said that the preparation of Kazakhstan national team for the main sport event was at the high level. Presently, 102 Kazakhstani athletes performing in 24 sports were qualified for the Olympic Games.

According to T.Yermegiyayev, last year, Kazakhstani sportsmen won 15 medals including 2 gold medals, 7 silver and 6 bronze medals and were ranked 14th in the global ranking in terms of the number of won medals and 22nd in terms of won gold medals. This was an essential increase in the performance of the athletes.

For example, in 2007, Kazakhstan team took the 42nd place in the global ranking.

Upon the completion of the press conference, Chairman of the Agency for Sports and Physical Culture Talgat Yermegiyayev and CEO of "Samruk-Kazyna" Fund Umirzak Shukeyev signed a memorandum of cooperation within the process of preparation for and participation in the 30th Summer Olympic Games in London.

In accordance with the memo, the Fund was named the official partner of the national team of Kazakhstan at the upcoming 30th Summer Olympic Games and the 14th Paralympic Games in London.

13 June 2012, 19:18

Kazakhstan plans to increase gold's share to 20% of reserves

ASTANA. June 13. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan plans to raise the amount of gold it holds as part of its international reserves to 20 percent from 15 percent.

The central bank is buying 24.5 metric tons of gold this year, Bisengaly Tadzhiyakov, deputy chairman of the country's central bank, told reporters today in the capital, Astana. Its 98.2 tons held by April made Kazakhstan the 35th largest official sector owner of gold, between Poland and Australia, according to the World Gold Council, citing International Monetary Fund data.

Kazakhstan's gold holdings expanded by 16.2 tons this year through April, IMF data show. Central banks added 456.4 tons last year, the most in almost

five decades, and will buy as much as 400 tons this year, the London-based World Gold Council says, Kazinform has learnt from Bloomberg.

The banks are expanding reserves after the metal climbed the past 11 years and holdings in exchange-traded products are about 1 percent below March's all-time high. Investors have 2,386.717 tons in ETPs, exceeding official reserves in all but the U.S., Germany, the IMF, Italy and France. Gold makes up more than 70 percent of their reserves, except for the IMF, according to the World Gold Council.

3 June 2012, 21:50

Kazakhstan's permanent rep takes part in UNWTO session in Spain
ASTANA. June 13. KAZINFORM Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Permanent Representative of the country in the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Bakhyt Dyussenbayev took part in the 93rd session of the UNWTO Executive Committee on June 12-13 in Madrid.

Felipe, Prince of Asturias and José Manuel Soria, Spanish Minister for Industry, Energy and Tourism participated in the UNWTO session together with the delegations of the member countries.

The session focused on the current situation in the sphere of tourism. The participants learnt about positive shifts in international tourism. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of UNWTO, told about the work done to integrate the tourism topic into the global agenda and cooperation with UN organizations.

Upon results of the session, it was decided to hold the next 94th UNWTO Executive Committee meeting in Mexico in autumn 2012.

14 June 2012, 09:54

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan discussed bilateral cooperation
TASHKENT. June 14. KAZINFORM Kazakh Ambassador to Uzbekistan Boribay Zheksemin met with Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Komil Rashidov, the press service of the Kazakh diplomatic mission informs. Perspectives of further bilateral relations' enhancement, cooperation development and the issues of mutual relations in the international organizations were discussed at the meeting.

14 June 2012, 12:28

Kazakh Deputy PM to hold sitting on Zhanaozen development

ASTANA. June 14. KAZINFORM On the instruction of Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov, his First Deputy Serik Akhmetov pays a working visit to Mangystau region, the Kazakh Prime Minister's official website said.

S.Akhmetov is expected to visit the town of Zhanaozen where he will inspect the progress in construction of houses within the Complex Plan of socio-economic development of Zhanaozen for 2009-2012 and familiarize with the projects on landscaping of "Samal" micro district of the town within the program on single-industry towns development.

The First Deputy Premier is also expected to visit "KazGPZ" LLP where he will get acquainted with the process of reconstruction of the plant's technological process.

Besides, Serik Akhmetov will chair a session of the working group on Zhanaozen development. The issues regarding the current situation in the town as well as implementation of the Complex Plan of socio-economic development of Zhanaozen will be addressed at the sitting.

Later in the day, S.Akhmetov will participate in a ceremony of launching a drilling barge of Daewoo Shipbuilding&Marine Engineering Co., LTD designed for geological prospecting works on a part of Kazakhstan shelf.

14 June 2012, 15:58

Foreign ambassadors donate blood in Astana

ASTANA. June 14. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan celebrates the World Day of Donor today.

Deputies of Majilis, Lower Chamber of the Kazakh Parliament, and heads of foreign missions donate blood within the framework of the campaign organized by the Research Center of Transfusiology in Astana.

The motto of the campaign is 'Each blood donor is a hero!'

According to Director of the Research Center of Transfusiology Zhandos Burkitbayev, each blood donor commits a feat and can save somebody's live by donating his or her blood.

14 June 2012, 17:58

King of Spain wants to visit Kazakhstan

ASTANA. June 14. KAZINFORM Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bakhyt Dyussenbayev presented credentials to King Juan Carlos I of Spain on Wednesday (June 13) in Madrid.

According to press service of the Kazakh MFA, after the ceremony the Kazakh envoy had a talk with the King of Spain and Foreign Affairs Minister of the country José Manuel García-Margallo. King Juan Carlos I of Spain welcomed the Kazakhstani diplomat and congratulated him on the appointment, wished him success in promoting the strategic partnership between Spain and Kazakhstan.

The sides discussed the prospects of all-round development of Kazakh-Spanish relations. The Kazakh ambassador informed of the work done to deepen cooperation in various spheres between the countries.

Juan Carlos I of Spain conveyed the best wishes to President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and confirmed his wish to pay a visit to Kazakhstan again.

The sides also noted the high potential and prospects of further development of the Kazakh-Spanish cooperation.

This year Kazakhstan and Spain celebrate 20 years since they have established the diplomatic ties.

4 June 2012, 19:40

Kazakhstan may aid to develop Afghanistan's railway network

ASTANA. June 14. KAZINFORM Kazakhstan is eyeing the possibility of participating in the development of Afghanistan's railway network. Our goal is to bridge the Central and South Asia via sustainable commercial and transport routes.

Kazakh Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov made it public while giving a speech at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of "The Istanbul Process" member states on Thursday (June 14).

15 June 2012, 09:24

European Investment Bank ready for cooperation with Kazakhstan within G-Global

BRUSSELS. June 15. KAZINFORM European Investment Bank (EIB) is willing to cooperate with Kazakhstan in the framework of the initiative G-Global.

This was stated in Luxembourg during the meeting of the EIB representatives with the head of the department of social and economic monitoring of the Kazakh Presidential Administration Serik Nugerbekov and Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Belgium and Luxembourg, head of the Kazakhstan's mission to the EU and NATO Yerik Utembayev.

It should be noted that the European Investment Bank is one of the operators of the European Union's anti-crisis program. In this regard, the Kazakh side held a meeting with EIB Executive Director of the Division of Operational Relations with the Eastern countries, the South Caucasus and Central Asia Heinz Olbers and Deputy Advisor in Economics Geoffrey Frewer.

"The world today needs a new financial system with better fiscal policy, competent management of bank resources, predictable growth. To develop solutions to combat the crisis it is important to involve the entire world community, and a virtual communication platform G-Global can become a dialogue platform," Serik Nugerbekov said at the meeting.

The representatives of the EIB agreed with the opinion that the G-20, G-8 should be expanded because of the need to find an answer to the questions of who and how to influence the world economic processes, as well as what should be the Institute for global strategic leadership. They expressed their willingness to study the opportunities of cooperation on the issue, including the establishment of a venture capital fund, as well as take part in the World Anti Crisis Conference in 2013 in Astana.

In addition, during the meeting the representatives of the EIB expressed readiness to start long-term financing and implementing projects in Kazakhstan in the fields of support for small and medium enterprises, combating climate change, infrastructure and innovations. The Bank also identified the criteria for identification of such projects on the feasibility and relevance, reliability of financial partners and guarantees of the state.

15 June 2012, 13:37

Revival of Great Silk Road starts from Kazakhstan

ASTANA. June 15. KAZINFORM Workers of culture, art and science of the CIS have gathered for the International Forum "Eurasian Culture in the New World" in Astana to contribute to the revival of the Great Silk Road.

"Cultural integration is irreversible process, which needs 5 or 10 years for the full establishment," said movie director Ali Khamrayev from Uzbekistan in his interview on the sidelines of the Forum.

"Real revival of the Great Silk Road is underway now. Previously, the peoples of Central Asia had no time to trade, to develop cultural ties. They thought only how to earn a living for their children.

"Today Kazakhstan gives a bright example of a wonderful approach to the historical development," A. Khamrayev noted.

This forum is one more step to ensure that people in the arts, culture and science help Eurasian people to love and respect each other even more," A. Khamrayev concluded.

Kyrgyzstan

The chairman of the Russian Government receives the President of Kyrgyzstan

16/05-2012 15:32, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

The chairman of the Russian Government has received the President of Kyrgyzstan.

As his press-service reports, Almazbek Atambayev met with Dmitry Medvedev.

The head of the Russian Government noticed the recent growth of commodity turnover between our countries.

“We have enough issues to discuss therefore I suggest deliberating on social and economic interaction of our countries. I hope we will exert necessary effort to address issues,” the Kyrgyz presidential press-service quotes Dmitry Medvedev as saying.

According to its information, they discussed topical issues on trade, humanitarian and cultural cooperation.

President of Russia accepted Almazbek Atambayev

16/05-2012 08:20, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

President of Russia accepted Almazbek Atambayev. As Kremlin press service reports, Vladimir Putin met with Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev in framework of the 20th anniversary summit of CIS.

“During the conversation two leaders discussed actual issues of the bilateral cooperation,” the press service informs.

Earlier Vladimir Putin met with leader of Ukraine, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Interparliamentary youth assembly to be established in CIS

17/05-2012 15:26, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia BENGARD

Interparliamentary youth assembly will be established in CIS. It was announced after the 37th meeting of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) Interparliamentary Assembly (IA). It was reported by Kyrgyz Parliament press service.

According CIS IA Chairman and Head of Federation Council at Federal Assembly of Russia Valentina Matvienko, the youth assembly will open new opportunities for joint youth projects. Currently, code project is developed. As expected they will be accepted on next meeting of IA CIS (autumn 2012).

Parliament ratifies Agreement on Eurasian Group against Money Laundering and Financing Terrorism

17/05-2012 14:41, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Aizada KUTUEVA

Parliament ratified Agreement on Eurasian Group against Money Laundering and Financing Terrorism. Such decision was accepted on today's session of Parliament.

Financial Intelligence State Service had Melis Mambetzhannov said that the agreement aim is to promote effective cooperation on regional level and Eurasian Group countries integration into international system of struggle with money laundering and terrorism financing. "One of the key dimensions of Eurasian Group is technical assistance for recruiting and training of financial intelligence squads. The group includes 9 states. The amount of Kyrgyz membership fee is 1.95 per cent at minimal fee in \$15K," he added.

ADB allots \$ 10 M for development of small and medium businesses in Kyrgyzstan

17/05-2012 14:24, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Irina DUDKA

ADB allots \$ 10 M for development of small and medium businesses in Kyrgyzstan. The relevant loan agreement was signed today between the Asian Development Bank and the Kyrgyz Investment and Credit Bank.

The ADB Vice-President Lakshmi Venkatachalam arrived in Kyrgyzstan especially for this.

As the parties noted, this is the first project of the ADB's Private Sector Operations Department in Kyrgyzstan. "With the credit line for 8 years KICB will increase opportunities for lending to small and medium businesses in various sectors of the economy: manufacturing, tourism, agriculture," Lakshmi Venkatachalam said.

According to her, use of received funds will allow the bank to expand its activities in rural areas and introduce mobile banking.

\$ 63.7 million have been attracted through the bank for 11 years of KICB existence in Kyrgyzstan. Now its capital stock is \$26.3 million. 90 percent of bank's shares belong to international financial institutions, including the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development, Habib Bank Limited, German Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Finance Corporation.

Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Minister proposes to consider the issue on the country's external debt in exchange for assistance to Afghanistan

18/05-2012 12:07, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Minister proposes to consider the issue on the country's external debt in exchange for assistance to Afghanistan. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev voiced the statement the day before in New-York (USA) delivering the report at the UN High-Level Thematic Debate on the State of the World Economy and Finance in 2012.

The official underlined the necessity to take unconventional decisions "which, first of all, will meet interests of several sides at once". According to the Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry, "one of such decisions is proposed to consider exchange of Kyrgyzstan's external debt for aid to Afghanistan".

Ruslan Kazakbaev also informed about measures taken for further development of international and regional integration, in particular, he mentioned the project on construction of Chinese – Kyrgyz – Uzbek railway with forming the southern corridor of Eurasian transcontinental railway. As noted, the official paid special attention on realization of projects in water-power sphere, CASA-1000 project on development of electric power sector amid Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other potential trade partners in countries of Central and Southern Asia.

Ruslan Kazakbaev told about idea of Kyrgyz authorities to create a civil air cargo center to serve regional traffic, including Afghanistan.

The Kyrgyz Foreign Minister urged to pay special attention to “states with specific geographic location that are more vulnerable economically, especially mountain landlocked countries.”

For the first time Kyrgyzstan to participate in the annual parade of the Turkic peoples held in New York City (USA)

18/05-2012 07:31, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

For the first time Kyrgyzstan will participate in the annual parade of the Turkic peoples, which will be held in New York City (USA). The Kyrgyz Club’s head Aibek Khakimov reports.

According to him, tomorrow the annual parade of the Turkic peoples, where Kyrgyzstan will be represented for the first time is to be held in New York.

“The international association of Kyrgyzstan’s citizens organizes a coordinated march of our compatriots. We will be dressed in national costumes. But those who do not have them will be given T-shirts with the picture of tunduk and the inscription of Kyrgyzstan, as well as kalpak and our country’s flag,” he said.

It is noted this is the second parade in New York, where Kyrgyz Club represents Kyrgyzstan. In April, Kyrgyz citizens took part in a parade devoted to Nooruz holiday. Its participants carried a big flag of our country through the central streets of the city.

Low rating of Vladimir Putin won’t influence on Kyrgyz-Russian relations – Ishenbay Abdurazakov

18/05-2012 07:19, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Islam DUVANAEV

“Low rating of Vladimir Putin won’t influence on Kyrgyz-Russian relations,” said Political Research Fund head Ishenbay Abdurazakov commenting Levada Center (Russia) social studies center data on Putin’s rating decay.

According Ishenbay Abdurazakov Vladimir Putin’s rating is falling because of current political and social reality in Russia. “Previous sanctity of power disappears. If earlier everyone thought that everything depends from

leader, today such opinion has changed. Russia is not some exception. Power vertical built around Putin can't "cover" all Russian citizens and solve their problems. The country is too big. Even a magician can't help everyone as well as Putin," consider the expert.

As he noted that some part of society will always wait from his leader much more. "Despite all his will and character Vladimir Putin can't realize all the expectations," said the fund head.

"In any case it won't reflect on us. We are dealing with the leader who will rule for a long period of time and we have to take it into account," he concluded.

Note, today Levada Center has published the results of sociological quiz taken place in previous years. As Kommersant newspaper writes the Russian President's rating fell down to 2000 index. Though, his popularity in ratings is rather high. Experts explain it with inaction of mass consciousness. Respondents give right answer on right question about elections or trust. When questions are out of policy a true mood of society reveals. Levada Center head Lev Gudkov notes that falling popularity of Putin doesn't mean disappointment in him of Russia's population. Only image of powerful and only leader disappears slowly.

Foreign Affairs Minister assured OSCE that Kyrgyzstan "is open for discussion and suggestions on ethnic harmony"

21/05-2012 15:30, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Foreign Affairs Minister Ruslan Kazakbaev assured OSCE that Kyrgyzstan "is open for discussion and suggestions on ethnic harmony". The minister said it during his meeting with OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek in USA.

According the MFA (Foreign Affairs Ministry) press service they discussed current ethnic situation in Kyrgyzstan. Ruslan Kazakbaev informed his opponent that ethnic and cofessional tolerance development is top priorities for Kyrgyzstan. It was developed by former President Rosa Otunbaeva and is being supported by current President Almazbek Atambayev.

According to the MFA head, a special working group on ethnic policy joint concept has been established in Kyrgyzstan on basis of two ideas which had been formulated by Ata Zhurt parliamentary faction.

It is worth to be mentioned that despite the authorities' promises on the tolerance experts noted ethnic tensions. Recall, human rights activist and ethnic Uzbek Azimzhan Askarov was sentenced to life-long imprisonment. Today a trial against ethnic Russian Vladimir Farafonov has been initiated. Prosecutor demands 8-years imprisonment for him. Vladimir Farafonov is accused in stirring up national hatred.

Kalykbek Sultanov: The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development will allot \$15 millions to Kyrgyzstan

22/05-2012 13:42, Bishkek - 24.kg news agency, by Tolgonai OSMONGAZIEVA

“Under a loan agreement with Abu Dhabi Fund for Development Kyrgyzstan will receive \$15 millions to repair Dolon – At-Bashy section of Bishkek – Torugart road,” the Minister of Transport and Communications, Kalykbek Sultanov, said today at the session of the parliamentary Committee on Economic Advancement.

According to him, the total mileage of Bishkek – Torugart highway is 530 kilometers. “5 major donors of the Arab Coordination Group allot funds to repair 93 kilometers of a road sector. Agreements with the Saudi Fund for Development and the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development are ratified. The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development is a third donor that will allot \$15 millions at 2 percent interest per annum for 15 years to repair Dolon – At-Bashy road sector. First 5 years will be grace period for Kyrgyzstan,” said Kalykbek Sultanov.

MP Nurbek Alimbekov decided that 2 percent interest per annum is too high interest rate. But the Minister argued that all members of the Arab Coordination Group allocate \$72.35 million for highway repair. “We derive the average interest rate for the sum total. For example, interest rates make up 1.25-1.5 percent under two loan agreements ratified earlier,” he explained.

MPs endorsed a draft project on ratification of loan agreement between the Kyrgyz Government and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.

Kyrgyzstan gets ahead of Russia in the global Enabling Trade Index 2012

24/05-2012 14:04, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anton LYMAR

Kyrgyzstan gets ahead of Russia in the global Enabling Trade Index 2012, Lenta.ru news agency reports with reference to the World Economic Forum.

According to its information, Kyrgyzstan took 111th place out of 132. Russia ranks 112th place while the Kingdom of Lesotho took 113th place.

Experts of WEF underlined following shortcomings in external economic activity of Kyrgyzstan: high level of corruption and longstops at the Customs, crime, raiding, and violation of commodities' delivery time.

Singapore holds 1st rank in the global Enabling Trade Index. Hong Kong, Denmark, Sweden and New Zealand take from second to fifth places respectively.

Kyrgyzstan intends exporting meat to Saudi Arabia from September, 2012

29/05-2012 12:41, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Kyrgyzstan intends exporting meat to Saudi Arabia from September, 2012. Recently the Minister of Agriculture and Melioration Askarbek Dzhanybekov who met with this country's representatives said about this.

Reportedly, the purpose of the visit of Saudi Arabia's delegation is to review the agricultural sector of the Kyrgyz Republic in order to determine the further cooperation. Kyrgyz officials presented investment projects in the field of animal husbandry.

According to the head of the agency, Kyrgyzstan adheres to the principle of "open doors". "We have developed regulations that improve investment conditions. Preferential tax system is provided for small and medium businesses. Exports are exempt from VAT. Free export of currency is provided as well," he said.

“To create conditions for livestock exports development the Ministry intends establishing two logistics centers in the northern and southern regions of the country in which meat processing complexes will be built. They are expected to place near the airports of Bishkek and Osh cities. The country has over 9 million hectares of pasture and a favorable environment for the development of animal husbandry. Farmers need investments. Having funds they would be able to develop their farms. This would help increase the republic’s export potential,” Askarbek Dzhanybekov noted.

The members of Saudi Arabia’s delegation said that they are interested in mutton first of all. “Later on it will be possible to export beef and poultry,” the investor concluded.

It is specified that the parties have agreed on cooperation in the field of sheep breeding and to establish a working group that would work through these issues. Now they are visiting livestock farms of the republic.

Turkish Airlines refuse to work in Kyrgyzstan due to the fact that officials of the Ministry of Transport demand free tickets

29/05-2012 07:11, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Irina DUDKA

Turkish Airlines had refused to work in Kyrgyzstan due to the fact that officials of the Ministry of Transport demanded free tickets. Vice Prime-Minister Zhoomart Otorbayev stated at yesterday’s Government session during the discussion of the project “Open air”.

According to him, Turkish carriers wanted to open a flight “Istanbul - Bishkek - Ulan Bator”, but abandoned it and decided to work through Novosibirsk, because the Kyrgyz Civil Aviation Department had not given permission in violation of the instructions of the President and Government. “I heard this from Mongolian representative. Then I was confirmed this by Turkish carriers. They said the officials of Ministry of Transport and Communications demanded free tickets,” Zhoomart Otorbayev said.

He stressed that this is a defiant fact and “they should not simply dismiss these people, but raise the question of responsibility”.

Premiers of Russia and Kyrgyzstan talk over issue on visits exchange

31/05-2012 08:16, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Prime Ministers of Russia and Kyrgyzstan talked over issue on visits exchange. Dmitry Medvedev and Omurbek Babanov met yesterday during the summit of CIS heads of governments in Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan.

As the Kyrgyz Spokesman Office of the Cabinet reports, they talked out in details issues on power industry, transport and infrastructure development. After discussion of a range of foreground issues of bilateral cooperation, parties decided to exchange visits in the near future and encharged relevant foreign departments with a task to begin working out an agenda for visits.

Omurbek Babanov and Dmitry Medvedev made pointed reference that it is necessary to switch from discussion to solution of accumulated problems and improve working relations between Cabinets of two countries.

Today Omurbek Babanov has started out with official visit for the Republic of Korea. His Spokesman Sultan Kanazarov refused to name aim of his trip and requested to ask questions in written form. His request was complied with but the official didn't answer the question of 24.kg news agency.

Kyrgyz and Georgian officials negotiate areas of further cooperation

31/05-2012 07:25, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia BENGARD

As Kyrgyz Vice-Premier Gulnara Asymbekova stated at the panel discussion “Prospects and progress of the reform in the social sphere”, a working group of the representatives from the State Register Service, Ministries of Justice, Finance, Social Development, Customs Service and other agencies would be formed. “The Kyrgyz Republic is interested in joint projects of school security assurance, creating teachers’ career development centers, linguistic component development,” she said.

Besides, the republic is ready to adopt Georgia’s practices in deinstitutionalization of children’s boarding establishments, as well as in identification of rich and poor people, middle class, those who live in poverty and other social units.

Turkey

Turkey Activates 100 mln Euro Loan Program for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Turkey started to implement 100 million Euro loan program for Bosnia and Herzegovina's development.

The loan program aims to finance sustainable return of people to their homelands which they had to leave during the war, agriculture, production and tourism and develop Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy.

The loans will be granted through Turkish Ziraat Bankasi and Bosnia Bank International. Loans can be repaid in ten years, and the interest will be 0-3.99 percent.

During Third Sarajevo Business Council, Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan had announced Turkey's decision to grant 100 million Euro finance to Bosnia and Herzegovina through Ziraat Bankasi under reasonable conditions to finance sustainable return, agriculture, rural development and tourism projects. 13/06/2012

Turkish FM Says Trilateral Mechanism with Azeri, Georgian Counterparts Important for Regional Peace, Stability

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on Friday said a trilateral mechanism between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia would make important contribution to stability, peace and prosperity in the Black Sea, Caucasus and the Caspian regions.

"Our trilateral foreign ministers' mechanism will constitute an important step for peace, stability and prosperity in the region," Davutoglu told reporters after the tripartite meeting of the foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia in Turkey's north-eastern province of Trabzon.

Davutoglu said the three countries took "a historic step" with Friday's meeting, adding that within the past 20 years, the three countries had achieved major projects in several areas.

The mechanism's next meeting will be held in the second half of next year in Batumi, Georgia, adding that in the mean time technical committees would work on an action plan for the period between 2012 and 2015. 09/06/2012

Turkey Assigned "Dialogue Partner" for SCO

Turkey has been selected as "a dialogue partner" for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Chinese president said Wednesday.

Hu Jintao said the dialogue partner status for Turkey was unanimously approved during a meeting in Beijing by Chinese, Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek presidents, adding that the organization gave Afghanistan an observer status.

SCO's other dialogue partner countries are Belarus and Sri Lanka. 07/06/2012

Turkey Concerned over Azeri-Armenian Clashes

Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on Wednesday said that they were watching with deep sadness and concern the spread of incidents from Azerbaijani territory under occupation to the common border of Azerbaijan and Armenia and that resulted in death of soldiers.

In a written statement released Wednesday, the Turkish MFA stressed that the latest incidents that caused loss of lives showed once more that a deadlock in the Upper Karabakh issue may cause serious and irreversible results.

The continuation of the status quo sitting on sensitive and fragile balances does not help the interests of any side, the MFA noted adding that such a continuation only deepened wounds.

We renew our call to relevant sides to act with common sense, refrain from utilizing force and take steps to solve the Upper Karabakh issue peacefully. Within this frame, Turkey will continue efforts to help normalization in the region with determination, the MFA also said. 06/06/2012

President Gul Receives Kyrgyz PM Babanov

Turkish President Abdullah Gul received the Kyrgyz Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov and an accompanying delegation in Istanbul.

Gul's meeting with Babanov took place at the Tarabya Palace and lasted around one hour. The meeting was closed to the press corps.

Turkish presidential sources said that President Gul told Babanov that Turkey's support to Kyrgyzstan in all fields would continue.

Babanov, in his part, thanked President Gul for receiving them.

Our two brotherly countries entered the 21st century together with democratic structures, Babanov said as he met President Gul.

Babanov came to Istanbul to attend the World Economic Forum.
06/06/2012

Turkish Finmin Calls for Urgent Action on Eurozone Crisis

Turkish Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek warned Tuesday that "a great fire" had engulfed countries using euro, saying the scope of the crisis called for urgent measures.

Speaking at a session at the World Economic Forum in Istanbul, Simsek said the crisis made banks in Europe "very fragile" which he said were already in peril due to toxic assets, adding that governments also faced a difficult financial bottleneck.

"Both governments and banks are weak. And you cannot expect banks to handle the situation on their own. The fire is spreading and it can hurt everyone. There is a need to contain the basic reasons of the fire," Simsek said.

Simsek said eurozone partners needed to take joint action and individual governments should take their own measures "in a structural transformation that could take years. And those measures need Germany to shift its stance on Europe." 06/06/2012

Turkey Uneasy over Release of Suspects in German Neo-Nazi Murder

Turkey has expressed its concern over the release of three suspects in an ongoing case on the murder of eight Turks by an extremist right-wing group in Germany and called on the authorities to properly punish the criminals.

Releasing a written statement Tuesday, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign

Affairs said Turkey had been closely monitoring the investigation process launched by German authorities following the unveiling of the killing of eight Turks by the far-right German group National Socialist Underground (NSU) between the years 2000-2006.

The ministry said three of the suspects in the murder case had been recently released as they were deemed unlikely to escape, adding that such development had given rise to concerns over the potential release of other suspects in the future.

"It is our rightful expectation from the German authorities to conduct the investigation attentively and punish the criminals as deserved following a fair judicial process," the statement said.

In the same statement, the foreign ministry also condemned the recent attack against a mosque in the German city of Delmenhorst.

"It is a humanitarian duty and responsibility to preserve the sacredness of places of prayer regardless of the religion they belong to," it said.

The presence of the neo-Nazi cell called the National Socialist Underground was revealed last November when two members of the group were found dead after a suspected joint suicide and another surrendered to security forces.

It was unveiled that the cell had committed murders in several German cities without being detected by the German authorities for years.

The group is being held responsible for the death of eight Turkish and one Greek immigrant, as well as a German policewoman. 05/06/2012

Turkey Wins Two Prizes in 2012 Europa Nostra Awards

Turkey won two prizes in the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards in Lisbon, Portugal.

Turkey's Miletos Ilyas Bey Complex won award in "conservation" category, while Allianoi Initiative won award in "dedicated service" category.

28 projects, which were selected among 226 projects from 31 European countries, won awards in four categories.

The award ceremony was held in Jeronimos Monastery which takes place UNESCO's World Heritage List and where EU's new Constitution had been signed in 2007.

"Education, training and awareness-raising", "Dedicated service", "Research", and "Conservation" are the categories of Europa Nostra Awards.

The ceremony was held in the presence of Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, and Plácido Domingo, the world-renowned tenor and President of Europa Nostra.

The European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards highlight some of Europe's best achievements in heritage care, and showcase remarkable efforts made in raising awareness about EU's cultural heritage. 02/06/2012

Turkish PM Calls for Financial Support for Alliance of Civilization

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday urged countries to extend financial support to the UN-led Alliance of Civilizations Forum, an initiative to galvanize international action against extremism through international, intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

"We consider Alliance of Civilizations as a most important initiative for our children and for the future. Turkey as a founding country of the Alliance, has always supported it. And now I hope you will extend support to the Alliance by making generous contributions," Erdogan told the Partners Forum for the Alliance in Istanbul.

Erdogan said High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations Jorge Sampaio had devised a financial support mechanism, adding that Thursday's meeting was the first donors' conference under the new financial plan.

"I am confident that the Alliance will emerge much more powerful from this conference with generous contributions from individual countries as well as global companies. This will be a process to completely eliminate the clash of civilizations," Erdogan said.

"Alliance of Civilizations is a response to the global conscience. The project is an attempt to read history and future not over wars but peace, friendship and prosperity," Erdogan said.

Erdogan said global challenges needed global mobilization of solutions, adding that no country had the privilege to turn away from global economic crisis, global poverty and global conflicts.

"Children who were killed in Libya were our children as well as. Children who were killed in Norway were our kids as well as. And the Palestinian children too. Babies killed in Hama, in Homs and in Houla were our babies too," Erdogan said. 01/06/2012

Turkey's Competitiveness Higher than Some EU Countries

Turkey's competitiveness is higher than some EU countries such as Spain and Italy.

According to 2012 report of IMD (International Institute for Management Development), Turkey, in competitive strength, rose one step to the 38th rank by having 62.24 points.

Countries such as Spain, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Brazil, Russia and South Africa remained behind Turkey in the ranking.

Hong Kong ranked the top with 100 points and followed by the US with 97.75 points and Switzerland with 96.68 points.

IMD is a nonprofit business school located in Lausanne, Switzerland. It is widely considered one of the world's pioneers in business education and consistently ranked as top and very elite business school worldwide.

IMD World Competitiveness Center has been a pioneer in the field of competitiveness of nations and enterprises since 1989. It is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge on world competitiveness by gathering the latest and most relevant data on the subject and by analyzing the policy consequences. 01/06/2012

FM Davutoglu and Tatar President Minnikhanov Attend "Tatarstan Culture Days" Event

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and Tatarstan's President Rustam Minnikhanov on Wednesday attended the "Tatarstan Culture Days" event in Ankara.

The event took place at the Ankara State Opera and Ballet Arena and included the performance of various songs, opera and ballet shows.

Speaking at the event, Davutoglu said that Turkey was the home of all Tatars.

Also speaking at the event, President Minnikhanov said that "our language, religion, history and culture are same and are identical. Our aim is to strengthen the ties that come from history".

Tatarstan is getting stronger with the support of Turkey and the Russian Federation, Minnikhanov also said. 31/05/2012

Turkish Support for EU Membership Drops Further

Turks have grown less enthusiastic in the past six years over prospects to become the first-ever Muslim member of the European Union, data showed.

According to a collection of surveys by Turkey's statistics authority, support for the EU among young Turks plunged to 47.2 percent in 2011 from 74 percent in 2005. Among adults, support as well dropped from 63 percent to 44.3 percent.

Opposition to EU membership among young Turks almost doubled from 16.8 percent to 30.8 percent, and 27.6 percent of the adults said they would have voted against the accession if a referendum was held today.

Young Turks who said they had "no idea" about the issue was up from 9.2 percent to 22.1 percent.

Turkey applies for associate membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959. Turkey is a candidate country for EU

membership following the Helsinki European Council of December 1999. Accession negotiations started in October 2005.

So far, only one chapter (science and research) has been provisionally closed. Twelve more have been opened, but eight remain blocked by France, Austria, Germany, and Greek Cypriot Administration. 30/05/2012

Turkey Considers Six-point Plan of Annan Last Chance

Turkish President Abdullah Gul said that the six-point peace plan by UN-Arab League Special Envoy to Syria Kofi Annan was a last chance for the orderly transformation of Syria.

During his visit to Chicago for NATO Summit, President Gul replied to questions by Christiane Amanpour on CNN International.

In regard to the situation in Syria, Gul said, "We just wish to see people over there happy and prosperous. So we think that six-point Annan plan is a last chance for the orderly transformation of Syria. So that for we wish that this plan should be fully implemented. If it is not then unfortunately the problems will get even worse over there."

When Amanpour said, "It's not actually being implemented right now. Many, many more people are being killed," Gul said, "You are right."

Amanpour said, "So my question is how much longer, how many more deaths, how much longer do you think it'll take for Turkey to intervene or to persuade the rest of the world to intervene-" Gul said, "Well, it's a financial issue. That's why it has been taken in the U.N. Security Council and we have to be altogether and they think we should support legitimate right of the people and all of us, we have to stand behind the people's demand."

She said, "You know, Turkey talked about humanitarian corridors, buffer zones, all of those kinds of things. There's been a lot of talk from Turkey, but no real action in this regard. Are you waiting for something- Do you have to see the United States take the lead- What is it that you need before you can act-" President Gul said, "Well, I think United States is the most important country. They should engage more in this issue and we have to very closely follow the implementation of the Annan plan fully. Therefore, we need more

observers. This 300 is not enough. In fact, there should be several thousands over there."

Amanpour asked, "Are you trying to persuade Iran to try to talk to President Assad and convince him to step down-" Gul said, "Well, we are telling them that they should not keep the eyes blind, what's happening in Syria, because every day, many people are being killed and so far, even since the cease-fire is declared, more than 1,500 people lost their lives. So Iran should not carry the burden of this. So we are telling them that you should not support that. I think there is no any way that President Assad can lead the country any more."

Replying to a question on a resolution, Gul said, "Well, then of course the people of Syria, they will decide for this at the international committee will support them and will stand with them."

Upon a question on Turkey's relations with Israel, Gul said, "Well, you know, it was not our preferences and it was not because of us that the relationship deteriorated. So it's up to Israel. If the Israeli government, they want to correct, they pay some attention on the relationship with Turkey, they have to take some steps, which is known very well by them."

President Gul said Israel attacked the international humanitarian aid convoy and they killed nine people, stating that Turkey's legitimate demand was to get the apology and compensation.

Replying to a question on talks regarding nuclear program of Iran, Gul said, "The last meeting was held in Istanbul and it made some progress. There was a good climate at the both sides. They listened to each other and they understand after long time and they decided to go further. And I hope they will take some further step, because there is no alternative than the political solution of this problem."

Amanpour said, "And do you think the U.S. and its partners should allow Iran to continue enrichment or what- Or should it do what Israel wants, which says no enrichment, even for peaceful purposes- Gul said, "Well, I think it's their right, if it is peaceful and if it is transparent enough then it's their right, of course."

Asked what could be told the military in Egypt that it should leave the power, Gul said, "Well, the military is well aware that they cannot continue forever. I went to Egypt. I met with military officials and they know that it is not their job to run the country. They are going to hand over the authority to the civilians governments but I think it needs some time. They will have the election and then there will be authority there. So I think the Egyptian army is ready to hand over the authority when the time is proper."

Asked "do you really want to join the European Union, when you see the trouble that it has right now-" Gul said, "We are the part of the European custom union for 16 years. And we are negotiating country with the EU and we want to make progress in the process and we expect more reasonable understanding from our friends in Europe. The economic outlook in many countries in Europe is not good. We have a sound economy. Our cooperation will be helpful."

When she said, "So do you expect that now that President Sarkozy is gone and President Hollande is there that you will have a fairer, warmer hearing-" Gul said, "I think so. President Hollande is very reasonable and he has a very wide view. I hope the things will move smoothly." 26/05/2012

Bulgaria, Turkey, Qatar Agree to Build Highway

Bulgaria, Turkey and Qatar have agreed to form a common project company to build a highway on Bulgarian territory, the Bulgarian minister of regional development and public works said after a trilateral meeting May 24.

The cost of the four-year project is estimated at \$965 million.

The highway is planned to connect the city of Ruse by the Danube River bordering Romania to the city of Svilengrad right by the point where the borders of Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria meet.

"As decided at the meeting of the prime ministers of Bulgaria, Qatar and Turkey, we held a technical meeting over the construction of the Ruse-Svilengrad highway under the principle of the public-private partnership," Construction Minister Lilyana Pavlova told a news conference.

Last week, the premiers of the three countries agreed to study joint infrastructure projects, including construction of a new motorway that

would connect the Danube River Bridge to Istanbul, Turkey's largest city.

Pavlova said the road is expected to be completed in four years, and will cost around 1.5 billion leva (\$965.03 million).

"This is not an EU-backed project," said Bulgarian Prime Minister Boiko Borisov. "It will be realized as a joint project with the participation of the three countries."

Last Thursday, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim al-Thani said the cash-rich country would deposit \$200 million into the Bulgarian central bank as a guarantee that it is serious about investing in the Balkan state.

Qatar said it would invest 100 million euros (\$127.08 million) over a year in agriculture, tourism, infrastructure and other projects in Bulgaria, the European Union's poorest member state. 26/05/2012

Turkey Willing to Host a Center for Mediation and Coordination among Countries

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said that Turkey was willing to host a center which would help coordination and mediation among regional organizations and states.

Speaking at the opening of a high-level meeting in New York on Wednesday, Davutoglu said that effective mediation was very important in preventing and solving the clashes.

Recalling that he, together with Finnish foreign minister, initiated "mediation for peace" 1.5 years ago, Davutoglu said that a resolution about this initiative had been adopted at UN in June, 2011 which was the first UN resolution accepted about mediation.

Davutoglu said that Turkey exerted many mediation efforts in Balkans, Middle East, Africa and Central Asia in the past ten years, and those efforts had a direct influence on the stability and prosperity of the countries.

Political outlook has completely changed after cold war, September 11 attacks, global financial crisis and political transformation process in the region, said Davutoglu, adding that Turkey, as a country in the middle of

these "earthquakes", felt responsible to undertake a more active role in order to better manage the course of events.

Our interest in undertaking a role of mediation is the natural result of these events, he added. 24/05/2012

Fitch Says Turkish Incentive Program to Support Strategic, Large Scale Investments

International credit rating agency Fitch Ratings said Wednesday that an investment incentive program the Turkish government's recently announced would be beneficial for current strategic and large scale investments in Turkey from Turkish and foreign groups and provide further impetus for new or postponed investment plans in the slowing economic environment.

Fitch said, however, it would take time before the full effect of the new system on the competitiveness of Turkish corporates becomes evident.

Fitch said the government would provide strategic support through VAT exemption, export tax exemption, tax deduction, employment insurance support, interest rate support and VAT refunds and that the incentives could enhance some Turkish corporates' competitive advantage by providing lower labour and financing costs.

Fitch said the new incentive system differed from previous programs by aiming to reduce Turkey's dependency on imports, rather than providing financial support based solely on a geographic basis aiming to support under-developed regions in the country.

"It will focus mainly on sectors like energy, mining, auto, and tourism, which are considered the main sources of Turkey's wide current account deficit. As intermediate goods imports constitute 43 percent of Turkey's total production, the government is aiming to provide Turkish manufacturers with a competitive edge to reduce the portion of imports," Fitch said.

"Fitch believes the new incentive system could provide some support to petro-chemical companies, which are on the verge of making new investments. Petkim Petrokimya Holdings A.S. (Petkim; 'B+' / Stable) could be one of the companies that utilise the new incentive system, as

management is planning to increase capacity of its ethylene and PTA facilities capacity. The incentives could also support Turkey's AKSA's new carbon fibre investments, which are planned to reach USD1bn in the long term," the agency said. 23/05/2012

Turkish Deputy PM Chairs OECD Ministerial Council

Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan is chairing the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Ministerial Council meeting in Paris, France on Wednesday.

Turkey has been elected the rotating president of the OECD Ministerial Council in 2012. This is the first time Turkey is chairing the council in 26 years.

New approaches to fight against economic crisis, free trade system and employment-based growth, investments in employment, cooperation with strategic regions particularly North Africa and Middle East, development strategy, gender equality, skills and education, skills strategy are main topics of the meeting.

One of founders of OECD, Turkey is among countries making active contribution to the organization. 23/05/2012

Turkish President Meets Afghan, Azerbaijani, Macedonian Presidents

Turkey's president held talks on Saturday with his Afghan, Azerbaijani and Macedonian counterparts on the sidelines of a NATO summit to take place in Chicago.

President Abdullah Gul met Hamid Karzai, the president of Afghanistan- which is one of the main topics of the NATO summit to begin on Sunday.

Gul later met Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

During his meeting with Karzai, the two leaders referred to a friendship agreement signed between the two countries in 1921 and decided to speed up efforts to update the agreement.

Karzai thanked Turkey for its role in Afghanistan, and expressed concerns of his country to Gul, while Gul said he would express those concerns to leaders of other NATO members.

Gul highlighted Afghan-Pakistani relations, and Karzai thanked Gul for the trilateral meeting held in Istanbul in November among Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

President Gul later met Macedonian President Ivanov, who thanked Turkey for its support to his country's NATO membership bid.

Gul said Macedonia's membership process had to speed up after a ruling of the International Court of Justice that supported Macedonia's bid.

President Gul said Turkey would always support Macedonia, and underlined importance of accession of all Balkan countries to NATO.

Lastly, Gul met Azerbaijani President Aliyev, and congratulated him on his country's being elected the rotating president of the United Nations Security Council for May.

Gul and Aliyev discussed Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project, and they debated an article to be added to NATO final declaration on "long term disputes". Sources said the two leaders assumed a common stance on this issue. 21/05/2012

Turkey Close to Azeri Gas Deal

Turkey's energy and natural resources minister said on Friday that it would not be appropriate to say that the Nabucco project was over.

Taner Yildiz said the project would probably survive as "Nabucco West" - a smaller, shorter pipeline, widely thought likely to begin at the Bulgarian-Turkish border rather than in Azerbaijan.

"In the end I believe whatever the name of the project is, it is more important that it is do-able," Yildiz told an interview with the Financial Times.

Yildiz said it was more realistic to begin with the Azeri-Turkish route - named the Transanatolian Pipeline, or Tanap - which could be linked up

with another pipeline to bring gas to other European markets.

By the end of next month Ankara would conclude an agreement with Azerbaijan to set up a new pipeline to transport gas from the Caspian state's giant Shah Deniz field, Yildiz said.

"There is now no obstacle to the Shah Deniz project," he also said.

Yildiz's comments follow an announcement last month by Viktor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister, that Mol, the Hungarian oil and gas company, was pulling out of the Nabucco consortium. Mr Orbán said Nabucco was "in trouble", largely because of a rival pipeline promoted by Russia. Other companies in the Nabucco consortium, which include RWE of Germany and OMV of Austria, have already floated the idea of the slimmed down Nabucco west scheme.

Nabucco is the new gas bridge from Asia to Europe and the flagship project in the Southern Corridor. It will be a pipeline to connect the world's richest gas regions - the Caspian region and Middle East - to the European consumer markets. The pipeline will link the Eastern border of Turkey, to Baumgarten in Austria - one of the most important gas turntables in Central Europe - via Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. When completed the 3,900 km pipeline's annual capacity will be 31 bcm. 18/05/2012

Turkish President Approves Law on Sale of Real Estate to Foreigners

Turkish President Abdullah Gul approved on Thursday a law which envisages sale of real estate to foreign nationals.

According to the law, foreigners will be able to buy real estate in Turkey in line with the interests of the country.

The new law has raised the area of land a foreign buyer can purchase to 30 hectares from 2.5. The Turkish Council of Ministers may raise the amount of land a foreign buyer can purchase to 60 hectares.

Under the new legislation, foreign buyers must provide construction plans before a purchase is made.

Individuals and businesses will need to submit project proposals for vacant land to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization within two years. If

approved, the project will be sent to the local land registry office.

The draft law also allows for the purchase of up to 10 percent of the total area of densely populated towns.

Foreign companies may purchase land only as allowed by laws.

The Turkish Council of Ministers may decide on which country's citizens or companies may be able to buy property and will determine the location and the size of the real estate. 18/05/2012

Turkey to Pay Off Debt to IMF by April 2013

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday that Turkey would pay off all its debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by April 2013.

Delivering a speech at his ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party's parliamentary group meeting, Erdogan said that Turkey attracted an international direct investment worth 22 billion U.S. dollars in 2007 during the term of his party and it was a significant amount. Later Turkey attracted international direct investment of 18.5 billion USD in 2008, 8.4 billion USD in 2009, 9 billion USD in 2010 and 16 billion USD in 2011, he said.

In regard to Turkey's debt to IMF, Erdogan said that the country's debt to the Fund dropped to 2.3 billion U.S. dollars from 23.5 billion USD during the term of AK Party. "We will pay off all debt to IMF," he said. 16/05/2012