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A Z E R B A I J A N

Year 2012 announced as Year of Sport in Azerbaijan

(AzerTAc). President Ilham Aliyev issued an executive order announcing 2012 as the “Year of Sport” at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on the socio-economic outcomes in 2011 and tasks defined for 2012. Mentioning that London will host Summer Olympic Games in 2012, the President said: “This year which will host the international competition is important also for our country, 10 Olympic Sport complexes will be built in Azerbaijan and the construction of the Olympic stadium, gymnastic complex will enter an active stage and the overhaul of Tofiq Bahramov Stadium will continue”. The Ministry of Youth and Sports, Cabinet of Ministers and other relevant departments were tasked to develop the actions plan on declaration of 2012 as the Year of Sport in the Republic of Azerbaijan and submit it to the Azerbaijani President within a month.

Azerbaijan`s President receives Georgian delegation led by deputy chairman of parliament

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has received today deputy chairman of the Georgian parliament, chief of Georgia-Azerbaijan interparliamentary friendship group, Fridon Todua and his accompanying delegation. The Head of State expressed satisfaction with successful development of bilateral relationship between Azerbaijan and Georgia in all spheres. The President noted Azerbaijan and Georgia had high-level cooperation in political and economic spheres. The Head of State also underlined the importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation in development of bilateral relationship. Fridon Todua, in turn, expressed satisfaction with his second visit to Azerbaijan. The deputy chairman of the Georgian parliament noted he saw great development processes in Azerbaijan since his first visit to the country.

Azerbaijani President: “We achieved a record level of investment in 2011”

(AzerTAc). “We achieved a record level of investment in 2011. The amount invested in the economy increases very rapidly every year,” said President Ilham Aliyev in a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on the results of the socio-economic development in 2011 and future tasks in 2012. According to the Head of State, “In 2010, a total of \$17.6 billion was invested. And in 2011 the investment reached \$20 billion for the first time. A total of \$37 billion was invested in our economy in just two years. If we add to that the investment made in previous years, we can see how much work is done in Azerbaijan. Both local and foreign investors are interested in our economy. Foreign investors believe in the successful development of our country – just as we do. At the same time, of course, a crucial role in the organization of this investment is played by public

policy. Because state investment is quite large. It will stay that way this year. At the same time, the steps taken by the state to encourage investors are bearing fruit. Of the \$20 billion of investment \$13 billion is domestic investment, while \$7 billion is foreign. And I can say that this balance, i.e. this ratio, is positive. Foreign investors carry on investing in Azerbaijan, while local investors, businessmen and the state of Azerbaijan are doing everything for a comprehensive and diversified development of our country.” “In 2011, we implemented a major investment program, and most of the figures I have cited were achieved at the expense of the state. Our foreign reserves have increased. For the first time, our total currency reserves have reached \$40 billion. According to the latest information, we have \$41 billion now. These are our strategic reserves. We are receiving revenue from the management of these reserves. A concept for the next period has been developed and we must manage our foreign exchange reserves in a more diversified way. In this regard, appropriate instructions have been issued,” the President added.

Azerbaijani President receives co-chair of Turkey-Azerbaijan interparliamentary friendship group at Turkish parliament

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has received co-chair of the Turkey-Azerbaijan interparliamentary friendship group at the Turkish Grand National Assembly Necdet Unuvar. The Turkish MP recalled his meeting with national leader Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan in 2003. Unuvar said he would spare no efforts to contribute to expanding the interparliamentary relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. President Ilham Aliyev and Necdet Unuvar praised the two countries` relations, describing them as friendly and brotherly. They explored ways of expanding the bilateral ties.

Azerbaijani President receives U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary in Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Eric Rubin.

Eric Rubin expressed pleasure with his visit to Azerbaijan. The U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary said he arrived in the country on the instructions of the U.S. President and Secretary of State. He congratulated the Head of State on election of Azerbaijan as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and victory of the country in the Eurovision song contest.

Eric Rubin expressed hope bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and U.S. would continue to expand even more on the existing basis in 2012. President Ilham Aliyev said the last year was important for Azerbaijan, adding the country

celebrated the 20th anniversary of its independence. The Azerbaijani leader expressed hope the two countries would gain ground in expanding relations in the bilateral format in 2012. The Head of State thanked the U.S. President and Secretary of State for their attention to development of relations between the two countries. During the meeting, they discussed development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and U.S. in various fields in 2012.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Moldovan Prime Minister

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received the Moldovan Prime Minister Vladimir Filat. The Head of State remembered with great satisfaction meetings with Vladimir Filat held in Warsaw. Ilham Aliyev said history of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Moldova is `positive`. President of Azerbaijan stressed the importance of developing relations between the two states. The Head of State said the political relations were successfully developing adding there was good potential for boosting cooperation in the economic sector. President Ilham Aliyev expressed his hope the visit of Prime Minister Vladimir Filat to Azerbaijan would further the bilateral relations. Vladimir Filat said relations between Azerbaijan and Moldova have been always based on the principles of friendship. Mr. Filat expressed his confidence the relations between the two countries would be further developed. The Prime minister hoped his visit would create good opportunity for discussion of the issues linked with further development of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Moldova.

`Six billion dollars invested in foreign countries`

(AzerTAc). "Azerbaijan succeeded both in foreign economic cooperation and integration to the world economy last year," said Minister of Economic Development Shahin Mustafayev at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on outcomes of the country`s socio-economic development in 2011 and outline priorities for 2012. The minister said Azerbaijan invested 6 billion dollars to the foreign countries over the last some years. Minister underlined 11 loan agreements worth 1.7 billion dollars for development of transport, energy, telecommunication, agriculture, social insurance and other sectors were signed within the cooperation with International Financial Institutions.

Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan mull prospects of cooperation

(AzerTAc). In the frame of his visit, SOCAR`s president Rovnag Abdullayev has discussed here expansion of bilateral relations among the two countries with the Premier of Kyrgyzstan Omurbek Babanov. In meeting, Premier Babanov said the two countries have close bilateral relations, which develop intensively. Rovnag Abdullayev said the current visit of Azerbaijani delegation is being

realized in the frame of agreement reached between the heads of state Ilham Aliyev and Almazbek Atambayev in Moscow. As earlier reported, Azerbaijan State Oil Company SOCAR is to build an oil refinery in Kyrgyzstan. In meeting, construction of the oil refinery was widely discussed. Azerbaijani side is interested in realization of this project, Abdullayev said, and a special group will visit Kyrgyzstan recently to closely be engaged in this deal. Premier Babanov said the government of Kyrgyzstan will render necessary assistance in investing by Azerbaijan in his country's economy. "We want Azerbaijan to invest not only in oil sphere, but also other perspective fields", the Kyrgyz Premier emphasized.

President Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs of 20 January tragedy

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on Friday arrived at the Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody January tragedy. The President laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame monument as a military orchestra of the defense ministry played the national anthem of Azerbaijan. Attending the commemoration ceremony were state and government officials, religious leaders, ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations functioning in Baku.

Azerbaijani President in The Times' Top 100 to watch in 2012

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has been included in the Times's Top 100 most influential people to watch in 2012. "Azerbaijan's President claims his country is the most rapidly developing one in the world and Britain is starting to feel it," the Times says. "Shopping malls and five-star hotels are springing up in Baku to lure us to the future Dubai of the Caspian, while a plush Azerbaijani restaurant has just opened in Knightsbridge and Conde Nast has started publishing an international version of the glossy magazine." The Times' Top 100 to watch in 2012 also includes U.S. President Barack Obama, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British PM David Cameron, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Queen Elizabeth II and Sarkozy's main opponent in the upcoming presidential polls, Francois Hollande.

Presidents of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia meet in Sochi

(AzerTAc). Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan have held a trilateral meeting at the Grand Hotel Polyana on 23rd of January 2012, in Sochi. The meeting discussed settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia adopt joint statement on settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

(AzerTAc). President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, Dmitry Medvedev of Russia and Serzh Sargsyan of Armenia issued a joint statement on the outcomes of Sochi talks on the settlement of Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. The statement reads: "The presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation met January 23, 2012 in Sochi at the invitation of the President of Russian Federation and discussed the course and prospects of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict's settlement. The Heads of State emphasized much should be done to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and also emphasized a progress achieved since their meeting on November 2, 2008, when the Moscow Declaration was adopted. The presidents said as a result of intense negotiations the sides achieved progress in basic principles of the conflict's settlement. Taking into consideration the importance of the transition to the development of the Peace Agreement, the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia expressed readiness to accelerate the achievement of the agreement on basic principles. The two Presidents highly appreciated the mediation efforts of the Russian Federation and other countries and expressed hope that Russia, France and the USA will continue to play an active role in the settlement of the conflict. The Presidents reaffirmed that one of the confidence-building measures for the settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh dispute is the development of cultural contacts between the sides of the conflict. In this regard, Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia declared their readiness to promote the dialogue between intellectuals, scientific and social circles."

Azerbaijani, Russian presidents meet in Sochi

(AzerTAc). Presidents Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Dmitry Medvedev of Russia have met in the Grand Hotel Polyana on 23rd of January 2012, in Sochi. Prior to the meeting, the Heads of State posed for photographs. The presidents made a speech at the event.

Azerbaijan sees 9.2% growth in foreign trade

(AzerTAc). Azerbaijan's foreign trade increased 9.2% to reach \$33.2bn in eleven months of 2011, the State Statistics Committee said. According to the official figures, the share of the country's exports made \$24.7 billion in the total volume of foreign trade, while imports made \$8.5 billion. Azerbaijan's main trade partners in 2011 were Italy, France, Russia, the USA, Turkey, Ukraine, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Malaysia, Belarus, South Korea, China and Georgia.

Russian "Gazprom" increases twice purchases of the Azerbaijani gas

(AzerTAc). On 23rd of January 2012, in the presence of the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev and the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the head of "Gazprom" Aleksey Miller and the President of the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) Rovnag Abdullayev have signed additional contract on purchase and sale of the Azerbaijani natural gas. Under the document, in 2012 the volume of purchase of gas from Azerbaijan will increase by 1,5 to 3 billion cubic meters a year, and since 2013 it will exceed 3 billion cubic meters. Aleksey Miller and Rovnag Abdullayev gave appreciation to dynamically developing interaction of the companies in oil and gas sphere, also noting that strengthening of cooperation of "Gazprom" and SOCAR is adequate to strategic interests of both countries.

Azerbaijan`s Foreign Ministry summarizes 2011 outcomes and outlines 2012 foreign policy priorities

(AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s Foreign Ministry has issued a report summarizing the outcomes of 2011 and outlining foreign policy priorities for 2012. On the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Foreign Ministry said last year marked the continuation of peace talks to find a peaceful and international legal norm-based solution to the dispute. "Azerbaijan`s key priorities in the peace talks have included the restoration of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country, the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories, the return of forcibly displaced persons to their homelands, the peaceful coexistence of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno-Karabakh and the determination of the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region with the participation of both communities." The Foreign Ministry said that Azerbaijan hoped for greater resolve and consistency from the international community on a just resolution of the conflict, which would create lasting peace, security and cooperation. "Azerbaijan would like the international community to compel Armenia to start working on a final peace agreement based on the basic principles for a resolution of the conflict set out by the countries co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group." "The Azerbaijani side continued consistent and targeted activity to give an international legal and political status to the plunder of natural resources and cultural heritage in the occupied territories, illegal settlement and the violation of the property rights of forcibly displaced persons." The Ministry described Azerbaijan`s joining the United Nations Security Council as one of the country's greatest foreign policy triumphs in 2011.

"Last October Azerbaijan won the votes of 155 countries to be elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2012-2013." "This victory

was one of the biggest achievements of Azerbaijani diplomacy and can be seen as a brilliant indication of Azerbaijan's growing image in the world." The report also highlighted Azerbaijan's accession to the Non-Aligned Movement. "Another important achievement in 2011 was Azerbaijan's accession to the Non-Aligned Movement at the organization's Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia. Azerbaijan was supported by the movement's 118 members "who have confidence that Baku will contribute to effective cooperation and will increase its constructive role in the system of international relations," the Foreign Ministry noted. Azerbaijan was supported by all the members of the Non-Aligned Movement in the elections of non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. The Foreign Ministry touched upon Azerbaijan's relations with the European Union, saying last year marked high-level reciprocal visits by officials of the country and the organization. The report also highlighted the country's relations with NATO, saying the Azerbaijan-NATO partnership continued in 2011. "Following discussions, the third round of the NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with Azerbaijan was adopted on 20 December 2011. Political dialogue during the year focused on defense reforms, practical cooperation, regional security, the development of Azerbaijan-NATO relations, including IPAP, operations and energy security." "A 28+1 meeting (NATO member countries plus Azerbaijan) on energy security was held in NATO headquarters last year. Azerbaijan continued its active involvement in the international political process on Afghanistan. Azerbaijan attended an informal meeting of foreign ministers of the countries contributing to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and international conference on NATO in Bonn, as well as a foreign ministers' meeting at NATO headquarters of non-NATO member countries that contribute to ISAF," the report noted. The Ministry said Azerbaijan also continued its cooperation with several regional organizations in 2011, including CIS, GUAM, ECO and BSEC. The report also touched upon high-profile international events hosted by the Azerbaijani capital, including World Intercultural Dialogue Forum, a meeting of the UNESCO International Bioethics Committee and Baku International Humanitarian Forum.

The report noted Azerbaijan opened an embassy in South Africa and a representation in Bosnia Herzegovina in 2011, while Serbia and the United Arab Emirates opened embassies in Baku. "Diplomatic relations were established with the Solomon Islands and Trinidad and Tobago." The Ministry touched upon the Head of State's foreign visits last year: "President Ilham Aliyev made official visits to nine countries last year - Latvia, Russia, Italy, Serbia, Slovenia, Belgium, Kazakhstan, Poland and Switzerland." "The heads of 20 different states and governments visited Azerbaijan during the reporting period - Bulgaria, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Austria, Palestine, Montenegro, Poland, Slovenia, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Romania, Lithuania, Greece, Switzerland, France, Belarus, Dominica and St Vincent and the Grenadines." The report noted that

“nearly 120 bilateral documents had been agreed and signed as a result of these visits and of the meetings of intergovernmental commissions”. The ministry also outlined Azerbaijan’s key foreign policy priorities for 2012, saying they include strengthening the country’s international image and increasing its influence, as well as effectively using the country’s diplomatic potential. “All this will be mobilized to liberate Azerbaijan’s lands, which have been under the Armenian occupation as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, to continue the diversified policy, to strengthen the international cooperation platform and to ensure the country’s involvement in global processes,” the Ministry concluded.

Azerbaijan’s population increases 1.4

(AzerTAc). An overall population of Azerbaijan increased 123,900 people as of 1 January 2012, a 1.4% growth against the past year. The population was 9,235,500 at the start of the year, according to preliminary data from the State Statistical Committee. 53% of the population lives in towns and cities and 47% in rural areas. Of the total population 49.6% are men and 50.4% are women. This means there are 1,017 women for every 1,000 men.

Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry issues statement on French Senate’s bill criminalizing denial of so-called Armenian genocide

(AzerTAc). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan has issued a statement on the bill adopted by the French Senate criminalizing denial of the so-called Armenian genocide. The statement says the Republic of Azerbaijan expresses deep sorrow for the adoption of the bill “Considering the criminalization of denial of existence of genocides recognized by law” by French Senate on January 23, 2012 and condemns this decision. The French Senate’s unilateral steps, which are contrary to the principles of democracy, human rights, freedom of speech and expression, can seriously damage this country’s participation in some regional processes and cause several unpleasant consequences. The statement goes on to say that French parliamentarians, who are turning a blind eye to the violation of the rights of about one million Azerbaijanis and occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijani lands as a result of aggression by Armenia in the end of the 20th century, use this decision for their political goals and cast doubts on the objectivity of France. The Republic of Azerbaijan once again condemns this step of the French Senate and calls France to view historical events impartially and not to turn such issues into political game.

President Ilham Aliyev starts his working visit to Switzerland

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today arrived in Switzerland to participate in the annual meeting of World Economic Forum in Davos.

President Ilham Aliyev left Zurich for Davos.

Azerbaijani President meets US Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs in Davos

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met US Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs Robert Hormats in Davos.

Robert Hormats conveyed the US President's and Secretary of State's greetings to the Azerbaijani leader. The Under Secretary said the White House praised development processes in Azerbaijan, in particular successful economic and industrial sector reforms.

They expressed confidence that anti-corruption measures in Azerbaijan as well as investments in the country's non-oil sector would be a success. They exchanged views over a range of regional issues. The Azerbaijani President and the US Under Secretary of State also stressed the importance of a forthcoming meeting of an Azerbaijan-US intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation.

President Ilham Aliyev meets Israeli counterpart in Davos

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres in Davos. During the meeting, the presidents discussed bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Israel. They also discussed prospects for cooperation in various fields, in particular economics and scientific researches.

Azerbaijani President meets Swiss counterpart in Davos

(AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met with Swiss counterpart Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf in Davos. President of Switzerland Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf welcomed President Ilham Aliyev. During the meeting, they praised the development of the bilateral relations between the two countries, and underlined the necessity of expanding them even more. The presidents noted the importance of energy and environmental cooperation between Azerbaijan and Switzerland. They also discussed a number of other issues of mutual interest.

Azerbaijani President meets Pakistani Premier in Davos

January 26 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met here with Prime Minister of Pakistan Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani. The Pakistani Premier congratulated President Ilham Aliyev on election of Azerbaijan as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. During the meeting, they praised bilateral relations between the two countries. The parties stressed the importance of these ties. The Head of State and Premier said Azerbaijan and Pakistan have always supported each other in the bilateral format and within international organizations. They underlined the importance of continuing this support. They also exchanged views on development of cooperation between the two countries in the fields of oil and gas, infrastructure and agriculture.

Azerbaijani President meets Ukrainian counterpart in Davos

January 26 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yanukovych in Davos. During the meeting, they underlined bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Ukraine were successfully developing in various fields, including political and economic ones. The presidents discussed prospects for energy cooperation. The parties said the two countries have good potential to expand cooperation even more. They expressed confidence the Azerbaijan-Ukraine relations would continue to develop. The Heads of State stressed the importance of high-level reciprocal visits and meetings for expansion of ties.

President Ilham Aliyev meets Georgian Prime Minister Nika Gilauri

January 26 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met here Georgian Prime Minister Nika Gilauri. Development of relations between the two countries in various spheres, including economy was praised at the meeting. The sides exchanged views on further development of the relationship between the two states.

President Ilham Aliyev meets Polish counterpart Bronislaw Komorowski

January 27 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met here with Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski. During the meeting, the presidents praised development of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Poland in all fields. They said constant meetings of Azerbaijani and Polish presidents in different events contribute to expanding the bilateral relations. The Heads of State discussed the development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Poland in a range of fields even more, in particular energy sector.

Russian and Turkish foreign ministers discuss Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

January 25 (AzerTAc). Russian and Turkish foreign ministers-Sergey Lavrov and Ahmet Davutoglu met in Moscow. At the meeting, the foreign ministers discussed the relations between Turkey and Russia, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the developments concerning the Middle East, Iran and Syria, the issue of cooperation in the frame of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, fighting terrorism and other questions of mutual concern. Both countries decided to increase their efforts towards solution of these problems. The ministers signed a Declaration. Sergey Lavrov underlined the existing high-level dialogue and mutual relations between Russia and Turkey in other spheres, appreciating activity of the group for strategic planning. Davutoglu said that the creation of Russian-Turkish Strategic Alliance and the activity of the group for strategic planning had special significance in the history of relations of the two countries.

Azerbaijan welcomes Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, Ambassador Agshin Mehdiyev

(AzerTAc). Azerbaijan welcomes Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and hopes for fair and continuous settlement of the problem, said permanent representative of Azerbaijan to UN Agshin Mehdiyev in the UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday. The Ambassador pointed out that unlike forces who raise baseless and illegal territorial claims, Palestinian people's rights to self-determination and statehood were recognized. Mehdiyev stressed that Azerbaijan supports peace in Palestine and this country's UN membership. He called on all sides to respect international humanitarian law and human rights, adding UN Security Council has to take relevant steps to put an end such illegal acts. Azerbaijani representative also touched on latest situation in Syria and expressed anxiety over the facts of human rights abuses and violation of stability in this country. UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco said in spite of tension, Israeli-Palestinian meetings create opportunity to achieve stable peace. Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations stressed that Palestinian people hope to achieve freedom, justice, peace, and security. Permanent representative of Israel to the UN underscored that danger and human rights abuses are continuing in the region and Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not the only problem in the region. The other speakers also pointed out importance to increase support to the Arab League's efforts towards Syrian problem.

Turkish MP publishes article on Azerbaijan`s support towards genocide denial bill

(AzerTAc). An article by Turkish parliamentarian and chairman of the Turkish Centre for International Relations and Strategic Analysis narrated on Azerbaijan`s support over French parliament`s bill criminalizing denial of the so-called Armenian genocide was posted in the center`s web-site. The article highlights the statements by Azerbaijan President Administration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, address of Milli Majlis of the Azerbaijan Republic to the Senate of the French Republic, notification to French ambassador to Baku, instructions to Azerbaijani and Turkish ambassadors to campaign in French Senate, chairman of the Caucasian Muslims Office, Sheikhulislam Allahshukur Pashazade`s letter to French President, Azerbaijani non-governmental organizations` protest rallies in front of the French Embassy and active participation of Azerbaijanis with Turkish people in the demonstrations in Paris. The article also said that delegation of Turkish parliament saw this support in the visit to Azerbaijan. The author also emphasized that all this events are the results of shared policy of Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev with Turkey.

Azerbaijan is one of the countries most severely protesting the Senate of France, Ertogrul Gunay

January 27 (AzerTAc). After the meeting with his colleague from Azerbaijan Abulfaz Garayev, Turkey`s Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertogrul Gunay has answered the questions of journalists. Ertogrul Gunay said that "Azerbaijan is one of the countries most severely protesting the Senate of France for the bill penalizing negation of the so-called "Armenian genocide". The Turkish minister noted that Azerbaijan has protested the notorious decision at the highest level. The men of art of the fraternal country have also expressed their support for Turkey. Minister of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan Abulfaz Garayev has called the decision of the French Senate as "erroneous", stressing that "Azerbaijan is always beside fraternal Turkey". The two ministers said the relations, including the cultural ones, between Turkey and Azerbaijan are at high level and will widen even much in the years to come.

British Premier: Nagorno-Karabakh problem should be solved based on agreed principles

(AzerTAc). British Premier David Cameron has said the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be solved on the basis of agreed principles. Cameron responded to questions from Armenian MPs following his speech at a session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He said: "The OSCE Minsk Group is engaged in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The UK supports its activities. This means that we support the current process, which can lead to resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.” The British Premier called on the OSCE Minsk Group and other international organizations to increase efforts towards finding a solution to the dispute.

World Economic Forum features interactive session on Azerbaijan

January 28 (AzerTAc). An interactive session on Azerbaijan has been held as part of the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) annual meeting in Davos. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the event. Moderator Borge Brende, WEF’s Managing Director, said Azerbaijan had a geographically and strategically important location. Brende hailed Azerbaijan’s development, saying the country managed to record a 9% growth in the non-oil sector despite the ongoing global crisis. President Aliyev highlighted Azerbaijan’s economic achievements, saying “they were really impressive”. “Our economy has grown 300% since 2004. Of course, we well realize that this growth has been achieved mostly thanks to our oil and gas industry. And this is natural for a country, which has been independent for 30 years.”

“By attracting multi-billion investment to oil and gas industry we are diversifying our economy. And now we have set ourselves a new task: we want to double our economic growth, which has already seen a three-fold increase so far. We want to achieve this by developing our non-oil sector.” The President said: “Las year our non-oil industry grew 11%, while the non-oil sector saw a 9% increase.” President Aliyev said his country had a very favorable investment climate: “110 billion dollars have been invested in our country in the past 15 years. Last year alone Azerbaijan saw 20 billion dollars in investment, of which 7 billion dollars came from foreign sources.” The Azerbaijani leader said: “According to the rankings of the World Economic Forum, Azerbaijan is 55th in the world in terms of the competitiveness of the national economy, while we are the first in the Commonwealth of Independent States.” The President highlighted the country’s energy potential.

“Our oil production is 50 billion tons. This year our gas production is forecast to be 30 billion cubic meters, and this figure can reach 50 billion thanks to new projects and investment.”

President Aliyev said Azerbaijan played an important role in ensuring Europe’s energy security.” He also emphasized the governemnt’s work to ensure transparency in energy sector. “Eight years ago we joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and today we are its full member.” Other speakers, including Azerbaijani minister of finance Samir Sharifov, communications and information technologies minister Ali Abbasov, ecology and natural resources minister Huseyngulu Baghirov highlighted the country’s

achievements in economic and banking and financial sector. The event ended with a question-and-answer session with the Azerbaijani President.

Number of Baku-Ankara-Baku flights to be increased

(AzerTAc). Azerbaijan Airlines, AZAL, has said the number of flights between the capitals of Azerbaijan and Turkey will be increased in March. According to the company, starting from March 25 the Baku-Ankara-Baku flight will be operated on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey marked

January 30 (AzerTAc). The 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey was marked at the Embassy of Turkey to Azerbaijan on Monday. The event was attended by members of the Azerbaijan Parliament (Milli Majlis), historians, members of the general public, culture industry workers and Turkish business leaders working in Azerbaijan. Ambassador of Turkey to Azerbaijan Hulusi Kilich addressing the event described development of many-sided cooperation and friendly relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Turkey to revere memory of Khojaly Genocide victims

(AzerTAc). Azerbaijani Students and Alumni International Forum (ASAIF) will hold a march to commemorate victims of Khojaly Genocide committed by Armenians. The march will be held with support of dozens of young people and students, the public associations, Turkish organizations.

Azerbaijani MP named Turkic world's parliamentarian of the year

(AzerTAc). Turkic World Research International Academy of Sciences has named Azerbaijani MP Eldar Guliyev the parliament of the year in the Turkic world. A letter sent to Guliyev by the chairman of the Academy in Ankara Hayrettin Ivgin says he was honored for his successful activity in 2011.

Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry now on Twitter

(AzerTAc). Keeping up with the times, the Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry is opening a Twitter account (www.twitter.com/AzerbaijanMFA) – both in Azerbaijani and in English. The aim of the MFA_Press Service is to explain the essence of the ministry's statements to a wide audience. The Twitter account will present Azerbaijan's official view on world events, meetings held by the Foreign Ministry, Azerbaijan's FM statements and regularly updated news.

Construction of Khazar Islands to be completed by 2022-2023

(AzerTAc). The construction of the Khazar Islands, a city to be built on a manmade island in the Caspian Sea, will be completed by 2022-2023, Sales and Marketing Director Kenan Guluzade said. "In general, the construction of the main part of the project requires \$ 60 billion. Of these, \$ 30 billion will be attracted from external sources - foreign investment, another 30 billion dollars will come from the sale of apartments," he noted. "Sale of apartments has already begun. According to the project, the price of apartments to be sold with a complete renovation, will be AZN 3500 - 4100 per square. Apartments can be bought on mortgage loans for a period of 15 years. Over the past 45 days since the start of sale AZN 50mln-property has already been sold," Guluzade added. Khazar Islands will cover 3,000 ha area. It will consist of 41 different sized islands and 19 districts, APA reports. The archipelago will cover 24 sq/km by 8km in length and 3km in width. Total length of the line of boulevard islands will be 50 km. Distinguishing feature of the project also includes construction of 1 km-high "Azerbaijan Tower", an airport to be built on separate island, Formula-1 highway and camps for universities. In future, it is expected to create administrative management system of the Island - Mayor`s Office and city status.

SOCAR to issue 500 million USD of Eurobonds

(AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s state-owned company SOCAR`s Eurobonds will be included in a UK listing and on the London Stock Exchange, the company said in a statement. Eurobonds will be placed beyond Azerbaijan and the United States, the statement says. SOCAR hired Citigroup Inc., Deutsche Bank AG (DBK) and the Royal Bank of Scotland Plc to sell 500 million USD in Eurobonds. Nomura International Plc and Societe Generale (GLE) SA will also help manage the sale. SOCAR is in the final stages of issuing the bonds, the company`s President Rovnag Abdullayev said January 28 in an interview in Davos, Switzerland, where he was attending the World Economic Forum. He named Citigroup among the "major" banks working on the sale. "We will be active in the capital markets," Abdullayev said. SOCAR is planning new projects for this year, he added, without elaborating. State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic SOCAR includes the Azneft production association, Azerkimya and Azerigaz industrial associations. The company carries out oil trading in various regions through SOCAR Trading.

Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan to cooperate in youth policy

February 1 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s Minister of Youth and Sport Azad Rahimov today met with the visiting delegation led by Youth, Employment and Labor Minister Aliasbek Alymkulov of Kyrgyzstan. The sides have signed a youth

policy cooperation agreement. The agreement was signed by the Ministers. Rahimov said the youth policy agreement will be particularly important to Azerbaijan. Two programs have been developed in connection with the policy, the second of which encompasses all the priority issues related to the state's youth policy, he added. "We have also recently established the Youth Foundation which we hope will play an important role in youth development. About 66 percent of Azerbaijan's population is composed of people under the age of 35. Young people are also a priority in Kyrgyzstan, and we intend to boost cooperation between our countries in this sphere," Rahimov said. Alymkulov, in turn, stressed Azerbaijan's long history and culture and its experience in the sphere of youth policy. "We would like to benefit from that experience and strengthen relations between our countries," he said. A delegation led by Kyrgyz Minister Aliasbek Alymkulov visited Azerbaijan yesterday as part of the move to boost relations between the countries. The visit will last until Feb.3.

Pakistani Senate's Foreign Relations Committee approves Khojaly genocide

February 1 (AzerTAc). The Pakistani Foreign Relations Committee of Senate met on February 1 to discuss "Pakistan's relations with Azerbaijan". The Committee unanimously passed a resolution which is as follows: The Foreign Relations Committee condemns the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia and the genocide committed by Armenian armed forces in the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly on February 26, 1992 against civilian population. The Committee re-affirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within internationally recognized borders. The Committee demands implementations of resolutions of the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly on immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and calls upon the international community and international organizations to urge Armenia for implementations of these decisions. The international community may also fix responsibility for this genocide. The Committee supports the efforts of the Republic of Azerbaijan to resolve the Armenian-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by peaceful means.

Parliament of Azerbaijan appeals IOC

(AzerTAc). Milli Majlis of the Azerbaijan Republic (Azerbaijan Parliament) has adopted an appeal to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. An appropriate decision was adopted at the February 1 meeting of Parliament. The Parliament states its positive stance on hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Azerbaijan and calls on the International Olympic Committee to give OK to this end, Speaker of Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov emphasized.

Qatar Airways opens new service on Doha-Baku route

February 1 (AzerTAc). Qatar Airways announced on Wednesday an opening of a new flight, which will connect Doha and Baku via Tbilisi, Georgia. Originally slated to start operations last year on November 30, the new services to the capital cities of Baku and Tbilisi respectively, began February 1. The first aircraft on the Doha-Tbilisi-Baku route landed in Baku on Wednesday. The inauguration of a new service took place Wednesday at the Baku International Airport named after Heydar Aliyev with participation of Chief Executive Director of Qatar Airways Company Akbar Al Bekir, Azerbaijani Ambassador to Qatar Eldar Salimov and high-ranking aviation officials. A new service between Baku and Doha is a huge boost for Azerbaijani tourism and business, Akbar Al Bekir said at the inauguration ceremony. "Via Doha Azerbaijani travelers can also fly to the Far East, Africa, Asia, including Dubai, Shanghai, Singapore, Bangkok and other places," he stressed. The flights will be operated daily by the Airbus A-320 aircrafts. The passengers may use services of two service cabins – 12 seats in the business class and 132 seats in the economy class.

Azerbaijani ambassador presents credentials to South African president

(AzerTAc). Azerbaijani ambassador in South Africa Elkhan Polukhov has handed his credentials over to the country's president Jacob Zuma. The Azerbaijani diplomat conveyed President Ilham Aliyev's greetings to the South African leader. Polukhov said he was pleased to be appointed the first ambassador of Azerbaijan in South Africa. The ambassador hailed the Azerbaijan-South African relations, saying they were rapidly developing. Polukhov said he will spare no efforts to contribute to strengthening the bilateral ties. The South African leader welcomed Polukhov and wished him successes in his new position.

Azerbaijani President attends Munich Security Conference's "Energy, Resources, and the Environment: New Security Parameters?" panel discussion

February 3 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has attended Munich Security Conference's "Energy, Resources, and the Environment: New Security Parameters?" panel discussion. Azerbaijan's first lady Mehriban Aliyeva was among the participants in the event. The panel discussion's moderator introduced the Azerbaijani President as the keynote speaker. President Aliyev highlighted Azerbaijan's oil production traditions, saying the country was first to produce industrial oil. The President said Azerbaijan attached a particular emphasis to diversifying energy transportation routes. The Azerbaijani leader said Azerbaijan was also known as a country with huge gas reserves, adding the

country's proven gas reserves were more than 2.5 trillion cubic meters. President Aliyev said Azerbaijan placed a particular significance to ensuring energy security. He noted Azerbaijan with its diversified oil and gas pipelines played key role in ensuring energy security of its partners. The President stressed the importance of an agreement on the Southern Gas Corridor which he signed with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso in Baku in 2011. He said the agreement opened up wide opportunities for Azerbaijani gas to enter European markets through Turkey.

The Azerbaijani leader said energy security already became an important issue of national security.

President Aliyev said his country attached a particular emphasis to environmental protection and to creating and developing alternative energy sources. The President said Azerbaijan would continue playing its role in ensuring energy security of its partners. Other speakers at the panel discussion included European Union Commissioner for Energy Gunther Oettinger, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and others.

Russia-Azerbaijan to be in talks on Gabala Radar Station

(AzerTAc). Russia intends to complete Gabala Radar Station lease extension talks with Azerbaijan by June 2012, Deputy Minister of Defense Anatoly Antonov told Russian journalists. According to him, the delegation of Azerbaijan is expected to arrive in Moscow within the next two weeks to conduct the next round of negotiations on the issue.

Antonov pointed out the new deal should be struck no later than six months ahead of expiry of the old agreement. "We have all necessary instructions from the leadership. The remaining issues are the matter of technicality," he said.

CNN broadcasts "New port could open `gateway to the world`" reportage on Baku

(AzerTAc). CNN TV Channel has broadcasted a reportage on Azerbaijan's capital Baku titled "New port could open `gateway to the world`". It says "Azerbaijan is a nexus of trade routes from Asia to Europe. Now, a new port for the capital Baku and huge investment in transport routes mean new potential for the region's exports." "The Caspian Sea and its shipping lanes were once vital to the region's exports, part of what was known as the maritime Silk Way. The port of Baku is beginning a new phase, moving away from the old historic center, shifting south to Alat, 80 kilometers along the coast." "Baku's new port will feature a rail ferry system - ships with tracks, which transport trains across the water and into Central Asia. It's part of a masterplan to carry railway freight from

China's eastern ports through to Europe. China currently exports 10 million containers of cargo a year to Europe and the United States, mainly by sea. If Baku can entice just a small percentage of that cargo through the new port, the economic benefits for the region would be huge. Not least for its carpet exports."

Azerbaijani President meets U.S. Secretary of State

February 4 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Munich. They praised the Azerbaijan-U.S. relations.

They expressed confidence that the bilateral ties would continue to expand. Azerbaijan's participation in peacemaking operations in Afghanistan as part of the anti-terror coalition was hailed during the meeting. The Azerbaijani leader and the U.S. Secretary of State also had a broad exchange of views on the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Park "Azerbaijan" and monument to Azerbaijani martyrs opened in Turkey

(AzerTAc). A park "Azerbaijan" and monument erected to Azerbaijani martyrs have been opened in the city of Elazig, Turkey. The opening ceremony brought together Elazig Governor Muammer Erol, Turkish MP Shuay Alpay, chairman of Union of Azerbaijani Writers, People's Writer Anar, chairman of the Union of Eurasian Authors, Yakup Deliomeroglu, rector of Firat University Feyzi Bingol, officials of the Culture and Tourism Ministry of Azerbaijan. Speaking at the event Deliomeroglu said this monument, erected to the memory of Azerbaijani and Turkish martyrs, who gave their lives for the independence of Azerbaijan is the first as such in Turkey. People's Writer Anar spoke of mutual support Azerbaijan and Turkey render to each other. The participants put flowers at the monument.

Azerbaijan's President: 'I am much more optimistic about the future of Southern Gas Corridor'

(AzerTAc). "I am much more optimistic about the future of Southern Gas Corridor," said President Ilham Aliyev in his remarks at the 48th Munich Security Conference.

The Head of State noted "There are several reasons which increase this optimism. First of all, the new gas discoveries and already existing transportation infrastructure, though it is not in very big quantities. Second is a growing demand for our energy resources in Europe and very fruitful cooperation between European institutions and Azerbaijan, which transformed during the last several years into relations of real partnership." "The visit of President of the European Commission to Azerbaijan in 2011 and signing of the Declaration on Southern Gas

Corridor and creation of the working group, which is co-chaired by distinguished Mr. Oettinger – all these factors create a very positive picture about our future plans.”

Azerbaijan`s President receives deputy chairperson of France-Caucasus friendship group, senator Nathalie Goulet and her accompanying delegation

February 6 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has received today deputy chairperson of the France-Caucasus friendship group, head of the France-Azerbaijan working group, member of the Centrist and Republican Union political group at the Senate, senator Mrs. Nathalie Goulet and her accompanying delegation. The delegation includes senators Sylvie Goy-Chavent, Jean-Marie Bockel, Hervé Marseille, André Reichardt and Jeanny Lorgeoux. President Ilham Aliyev thanked Mrs. Goulet and other senators for their just position during the discussion of the law criminalizing the denial of the so-called “Armenian genocide” at the French Senate. The Head of State described the law as an initiative, which distorts the history, contradicts democracy and freedom of speech. President Ilham Aliyev expressed hope this law based on false information would not come into force. For her part, Mrs. Nathalie Goulet said she and visiting senators would spare no efforts to contribute to expanding relationship with Azerbaijan. She added they would inform the Azerbaijani community in this direction during the meetings they will conduct in Baku.

“One of the important events which took place last year was the signing of initial transit agreements between Azerbaijan and Turkey,” President Ilham Aliyev

(AzerTAc). “One of the important events which took place last year was the signing of initial transit agreements between Azerbaijan and Turkey, which will actually open the big door for Azerbaijani gas reserves to European market,” said President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in his remarks at the 48th Munich Security Conference. “We are now in a very unique situation where we need European market because, first, it is a big market, second, because it is the market regulated by legislation and law norms, and, of course, because this is a growing market and a market of our partners. And European market needs an alternative source of supply,” the Head of State noted.

Baku-Doha airlines to open

(AzerTAc). The Qatari airline is planning to open a direct flight from Doha to Baku in autumn, Chief Executive Director of Qatar Airways, Akbar Al Baker said. Qatar Airways has already launched Doha-Baku-Tbilisi flights on February 1.

Qatar Airways organizes business and tourism flights to Europe, Middle East, Africa, Asia, North and South America and Pacific Ocean.

Azerbaijani President receives Chief of General Staff of Turkish Armed Forces

February 7 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received a delegation led by Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Necdet Ozel. Chief of the General Staff Necdet Ozel conveyed Turkish President Abdullah Gul`s and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan`s greetings to the Head of State. During the meeting, they underlined friendly and fraternal relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey were developing successfully in all fields, including military one. It was noted that Necdet Ozel`s visit to Azerbaijan would contribute to expanding the two countries` military cooperation even more. The Azerbaijani leader asked the Chief of the General Staff to deliver his greetings to the Turkish President and Prime Minister.

Azerbaijan, Turkey discuss military cooperation

February 7 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s defense minister, colonel-general Safar Abiyev has today met Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Necdet Ozel. Abiyev briefed the Turkish Chief of the General Staff on the military and political situation in the region and the problems caused by the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Azerbaijani minister reiterated Baku`s position, saying “as the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to resolve the conflict have not produced concrete results, Azerbaijan is forced to take back its occupied territories by other means and is, therefore, strengthening its armed forces”. Abiyev and Ozel discussed the Azerbaijani-Turkish military cooperation, stressing the importance of deepening it even more. They also emphasized the importance of the two countries` military cooperation within NATO.

Construction of Azerbaijan-Russia friendship bridge launched in Astrakhan

(AzerTAc). Construction of Azerbaijan-Russia Friendship Bridge started in Astrakhan. The customer of the project is All-Russian Azerbaijani Congress`s office in Astrakhan.

The construction of the bridge, which is to connect the Heydar Aliyev Park with Peter I square, will end late 2012.

Azerbaijani President receives Albanian Premier

February 9 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received Prime Minister of Albania Sali Berisha. The Head of State recalled his meetings with the Albanian Premier at different international events. President Aliyev said Mr. Berisha's first visit to Baku would contribute to expanding the bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Albania.

The Azerbaijani leader expressed hope the two countries' ties would further develop. President Aliyev stressed the importance of the decisions to be made and documents to be signed during the visit in terms of bringing the two countries closer to each other.

The Prime Minister of Albania said it was a great honor for him to be visiting Azerbaijan.

Mr. Berisha said Albanians considered Azerbaijan a friendly country. He said his visit was aimed at developing the existing friendly relations between Azerbaijan and Albania.

The Albanian Premier stressed the importance of high-level reciprocal visits in terms of strengthening the bilateral relations, expressing hope such visits would continue in future. Following the meeting the Azerbaijani President and the Albanian Premier responded to a question from a journalist of the Public Television. President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Sali Berisha then had a joint dinner.

EU-Azerbaijan visa talks to begin in March

(AzerTAc). Negotiations between the European Union and Azerbaijan on easing the visa regime will begin in March, Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmud Mammadgulyev said. According to the Deputy Minister, the talks are part of the implementation of the Eastern Partnership program.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry creates YouTube channel

(AzerTAc). A press-service of Azerbaijani Foreign Affairs Ministry created the "YouTube" channel (Azerbaijan MFA-Press Service). The audience will be able to continually watch the events taking place in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, important meetings and statements at www.Youtube.com/MFAAzerbaijan.

Bill on recognition of the Khojaly massacre as genocide presented to Turkish Parliament

(AzerTAc). Member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) Sinan Ogan has presented the bill on recognition of the Khojaly massacre as genocide to the Turkish Parliament. The bill substantiates necessity of recognition of the massacre the Armenians committed in Azerbaijani city of Khojaly, proposing to mark the 26th February as the day of commemoration of the victims of Khojaly genocide, Sinan Ogan told AzerTAc correspondent. The bill also suggests election of the monuments in large cities of Turkey to eternalize memory of the Khojaly genocide victims, not to forget the happenings in Khojaly. In the preamble of the bill, it is stated that the Khojaly massacre is a genocide according to the international law, in particular, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN's legislative acts on genocide. The Paris Avenue in Ankara is proposed to name as "Khojaly Avenue", while the De Gaulle Avenue is offered to name in memory of one of the Khojaly victims.

Azerbaijani President receives NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Caucasus and Central Asia

February 10 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia James Appathurai. During the meeting, they discussed cooperation as part of existing programmes between Azerbaijan and NATO.

February declared "Month of Khojaly" in Ukraine

(AzerTAc). At the initiative of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYFDC) and Ukrainian Azerbaijani Youth Union (UAYU), February was declared "The month of Khojaly" in Ukraine. The UAYU has organized a meeting on the occasion, where several Ukrainian youth organizations announced that they have joined "Justice for Khojaly" campaign. Speaking at the meeting, chairman of the Union Anar Tahirov briefed the participants on what have been done in several countries of the world since 2008 as part of the "Justice for Khojaly" campaign, initiated by Vice-President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mrs. Leyla Aliyeva. He said these events had great role to increase the awareness of the world community about the genocide committed by Armenians in Khojaly 20 years ago. Tahirov noted as in various countries, Azerbaijani youths in Ukraine also bear great responsibility in this regard. Activists of the Union said at the meeting within the framework of "The month of Khojaly", a lot of events will be organized in different provinces and cities of Ukraine. Chairwoman of the Ukrainian Youth Assembly, Yuna Sheykhaliyeva and chairman of the Kiev Youth Center, Roman Grigorishin described the events

happened in Khojaly as a crime and real genocide against the humanity. The said their organizations joined “Justice for Khojaly” campaign to raise the awareness of the Ukrainian community about the Khojaly genocide.

Azerbaijan`s President receives Argentina`s Minister of Tourism

February 11 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received Tourism Minister of Argentina Carlos Enrique Meyer. The Head of State hailed successful development of Azerbaijan-Argentina relations. President Ilham Aliyev stressed the importance of Azerbaijani Embassy`s starting operations in Argentina for expanding cooperation. The Head of State underlined significance of reciprocal visits for strengthening bilateral ties, and expressed assurance that Argentine Minister`s visit would contribute to deepening relations. For his part, Carlos Enrique Meyer said Argentina is interested in boosting ties with Azerbaijan. The Minister highlighted the importance of mutual experience exchange to develop cooperation and drew the attention to the visit of representatives of Azerbaijan`s tourism industry to Argentina. Meyer pointed out that Argentine tourism companies wish to attend the annual tourism fair in Azerbaijan. The sides underscored the importance of Azerbaijani Culture Days which will be held next year in Argentina to boost bilateral relationship.

Heydar Aliyev park to be laid in Bishkek

(AzerTAc). In accordance with executive order of mayor of Bishkek city Isa Omurkulov, 5.5 hectares of area was allocated for Turkish Speaking States Policy Support Foundation to lay the Heydar Aliyev Park. The monument to the Heydar Aliyev will be erected as well as rare trees planted here. The Turkish speaking nations` culture center after Zarifa Aliyeva is expected to build here. The Chairman of the foundation Nusrat Mammadov said the contest on construction of the park will be announced between the Azerbaijani and Kirgizstan architects.

Azerbaijani government provides humanitarian aid to people suffering from heavy snowfall and stormy weather in Romania

(AzerTAc). In accordance with the instructions of President Ilham Aliyev, the Azerbaijani government has provided humanitarian aid to the people suffering from heavy snowfall and stormy weather in remote regions of Romania. The Heydar Aliyev Foundation`s representation in Bucharest, Romania – Azerbaijan Bilateral Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Azerbaijani companies operating in Romania presented food, medicines and warm clothes to those suffering. Azerbaijan`s this action is highly appreciated in Romania.

Azerbaijan always considers interests of neighboring countries, top official

(AzerTAc). 'Azerbaijan always considers interests of neighboring countries in its foreign policy and in its relations with various organizations of foreign countries,' said Chief of the Social and Political Affairs Department at the Presidential Administration Ali Hasanov.

He stressed Azerbaijan has nothing to do with any terror organization, adding "Iran`s statement is groundless". "And it is unknown what they blame our country for."

He said: "Citizens of all countries can come to our Republic, as Azerbaijan is a democratic country." "We think that under current circumstances Iran must be careful with neighboring countries, and act in accordance with the bilateral relations." According to Hasanov, the ongoing processes in the region have an impact on Azerbaijan. "The straining of Iran`s ties with Europe and the USA will also have an impact on Azerbaijan."

Azerbaijani President meets leader of European People's Party

February 14 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today met President of European People`s Party Wilfried Martens in the Belgian capital. During the meeting, they stressed the importance of expanding cooperation between European People's Party and the New Azerbaijan Party even more. They noted such relations would contribute to Azerbaijan`s integration into the European Union. They underlined the importance of "EU-Azerbaijan: new horizons for the Partnership" conference organized by European People's Party in the European Parliament last week. They also noted the importance of strengthening cooperation as part of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev meets NATO Secretary General in Brussels

February 15 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on Wednesday met with Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen in Brussels. Rasmussen highly appreciated Azerbaijan-NATO partnership and congratulated Azerbaijani leader on election of Azerbaijan as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Chief official of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization said the Azerbaijan`s Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) is one of the key elements of NATO-Azerbaijan cooperation. Rasmussen also praised Azerbaijan`s involvement in peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force. President Ilham Aliyev, in turn, emphasized Azerbaijan will continue to contribute actively to Euro-Atlantic security by supporting NATO-led peace-support operations. The Azerbaijani

leader said Azerbaijan is seeking to achieve Euro-Atlantic standards and to draw closer to Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Ilham Aliyev also dwelled on Azerbaijan's contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. He insisted Azerbaijan's cooperation with NATO will improve even more. NATO-Azerbaijan relations date back to 1992, when Azerbaijan joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (later renamed the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997). Cooperation has steadily increased since Azerbaijan joined the Partnership for Peace programme in 1994 and its participation in the PfP Planning and Review Process since 1997. The focus on supporting Azerbaijan's domestic reform process has intensified since the development of Azerbaijan's first IPAP with NATO in 2005.

Karabakh Foundation popularizes Azerbaijani culture in US schools

(AzerTAc). The Karabakh Foundation has organized "Cultural Holiday" for students, teachers and parents at the US, Longfellow Middle School, Virginia. The participants have got an opportunity to familiar with the Azerbaijani culture. The Karabakh Foundation has received a grant from the AXA Foundation to implement the project. Aids about Azerbaijani culture and Azerbaijani national costumes have been demonstrated to the participants. In the next stage of the project, the Karabakh Foundation will develop a new webpage for the Longfellow Middle School and open the Azerbaijani Culture Centre here. The Karabakh Foundation plans to promote Azerbaijani culture through the "Take Your Family to School" project in 50 US state schools. The Karabakh Foundation is a US cultural charity foundation.

The foundation aims to introduce Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh and The Southern Caucasus to US. The Foundation is preparing proposals to include learning aids about Azerbaijani and Caucassian culture into the school syllabus.

`Azerbaijan makes large-scale investments in Turkey`

(AzerTAc). "There is no gas problem between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan develops its economy and makes the large-scale investments in Turkey," said Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Mr. Erdogan said the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) made the large investments in Aliaga region of Izmir city. This big economic project will strengthen relations between the two countries even more, said the Prime Minister.

17 January 2012

U.S. looking forward to working with new multi-party Kazakh Parliament



The United States of America is looking forward to working with new multi-party Parliament of Kazakhstan, according to a statement by the U.S. State Department.

"We look forward to engaging with the new multi-party Parliament as we continue our cooperation with the government and people of Kazakhstan to implement our broad-ranging strategic partnership. We recognize the government's stated ambition to improve the political climate and to conduct more inclusive and transparent elections in line with both its international commitments and the aspirations of the Kazakhstani people. In addition to improving the transparency of operations on election day, we hope that the Government of Kazakhstan follows through on its stated goal of strengthening the overall conditions necessary for genuine political pluralism," the statement reads

Nur Otan Party won 80.99% of votes, Ak Zhol - 7.47%, CPPK - 7.19% - CEC



Secretary of the Central Election Commission Bakhyt Meldeshov read out final results of the early elections of deputies of the Majilis and regular elections of deputies of maslikhats.

"80.99 percent of voters casted their votes for Nur Otan Party, 7.47 percent - for Ak Zhol Party, 7.19 percent - for Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK), 1.19 percent - for Auyl Party, 1.68 percent - for All-National Social-Democratic Party, 0.66 percent - for Adilet Party, 0.38 percent - for Party of Patriots," he said.

According to him, Nur Otan Party receives 83 seats, Ak Zhol Party - 8 and Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK) - 7.

CASPIAN TELECOMS 2012 Conference & Showcase to take place Apr 19-20

Main telecommunication conference Caspian Telecoms 2012 will be held on 19-20 April 2012 in Hilton Istanbul Hotel. Conference has been organised since 2002

and annually brings together world telecoms leaders in the telecommunication market.

Caspian Telecoms is recognised by branch community a leading forum on telecommunication and IT sector for the Caspian Region, the CIS Countries, Turkey and the Central Asia.

Then Conference and Showcase will take part more than 500 Delegates from 25 countries world-wide that represent Telecommunications, Satellite, Mobile, Cable, Wireless, IT companies, Fibre Optics, Broadband, Software, Computer Technologies, TV-Radio-Broadcasting, Internet, as well as International Associations, Organisations, Financial Institutes and Banks in the sphere of Telecommunications, etc.

Kazakhstan to host 46th int'l Mendeleev Chemistry Olympiad

"The 46th annual international Mendeleev Chemistry Olympiad will be held this April 23-29 at the Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan," Kazakh Vice Minister of Education and Science M. Sarybekov told visiting head of the international Olympiad steering committee Valery Lunin.

The Olympiad brings together students of 10-11 grades, the winners of the national chemistry Olympiads of the CIS and the Baltic states

EU High Representative C. Ashton made statement on parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan



The fact that three political parties are to be represented in Parliament is a positive step towards the development of a pluralistic and democratic political culture in Kazakhstan.

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made the following statement; the Commissioner' press service reports.

Kazakhstan is a key partner for the EU, and we are ready to continue our support to the implementation of further political reforms," the statement reads.

Kazakhstan will no longer invite the paid experts - Nazarbayev



"We will no longer invite to Kazakhstan the paid experts who criticize our elections," Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said addressing the bureau of the political council of Nur Otan People's Democratic Party.

The President emphasized that most international observers and experts acknowledged that the January 15 elections to the Majilis and maslikhats were honest, fair and transparent

19 January 2012

Kazakhstan's GDP growth made 7.5% in 2011

Kazakhstan's GDP growth made 7.5% in 2011, the information on the Kazakh Prime Minister's official website reads.

237 industrial projects worth KZT 1 trl were put into effect in 2011. As a result 45 000 workplace were created.

Details also at www.pm.kz

National Fund assets made USD 43.3 bln in December 2011



The funds are actively concentrated in the National Fund of Kazakhstan, which is very relevant now amid the unfavorable situation in the global economy, according to Kazakh Prime Minister's website <http://pm.kz>

Despite the fact that during the hardest period of the financial crisis the funds of the National Fund were involved for preserving economic stability the assets of the Fund did not reduce but increased and made USD 43 bln in December 2011.

In accordance with the forecasts of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Kazakhstan, the assets of the National Funds will increase to USD 72 bln.

Kazakhstan's international reserves increased by 39.3% in 2009-2010



Despite the impact of the global financial crisis, the international reserves of the National Bank of Kazakhstan increased by 39.3% and reached 32.1 billion U.S. dollars in 2009-2011, according to Kazakh Prime Minister's website <http://pm.kz>

20 January 2012

Kazakhstan's state grain trader buys 4.6 mln tons of cereals



Kazakhstan's state grain trader bought 4.6 million metric tons of cereals from last year's harvest for state stockpiles as of Jan. 11.

Total purchases from the harvest will be 5 million tons, at 25,000 tenge (\$168.50) a ton, JSC National Co. Food Contract Corp., the state grain trader, said in a statement on its website.

According to Bloomberg, Kazakhstan's grain harvest was 26.9 million tons last year, Alihan Smailov, the head of the State Statistics Agency, said on Jan. 13.

23 January 2012

Standard&Poor's and Fitch improved sovereign ratings of Kazakhstan in 2011

The positive tendencies in the economy, macroeconomic stability allowed to improve sovereign ratings of Kazakhstan by international agencies Standard&Poor's and Fitch to 'BBB+' и 'BBB' levels respectively. Prime Minister Karim Massimov has posted this on his Facebook page.

To learn more go to www.pm.kz

Kazakhstan moves up 11 positions in Doing Business rating

In 2011 Kazakhstan moved up 11 places to 47th position in the «Doing Business» rating of the World Bank. Prime Minister Karim Massimov has posted this on his Facebook page.

For the first time our country headed a list of 10 countries, which achieved the most success in creation of favorable conditions for entrepreneurial activity in 2010. There was conducted a huge work on reduction of administrative barriers.

For details go to www.pm.kz

24 January 2012

Turkic-speaking countries should jointly fund TV channel



The common channel of Turkic-speaking countries should be funded by Turkic-speaking countries or countries that are members of TurkPA, Director of Ataturk Center in Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani-Turkish co-chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group Nizami Jafarov said, Kazinform refers to [Trend](#).

Jafarov said, the issue of creating a common channel was discussed at a recent meeting of the Standing Committee on Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Affairs of TurkPA, but there is no concrete decision yet.

This issue will be raised at the plenary session of TurkPA in the near future, Jafarov said.

"If only one side take the obligations on implementation of this project, it will be difficult to complete it, some problems will appear. It can be implemented by the support of a businessman, but with a condition that the project wouldn't express his own interest, but the interest of all Turkic world." Jafarov said.

The financing of the common channel by the parliaments or governments on a proposal from the parliaments would be the best practice, Jafarov said.

27 January 2012

We should prepare the country's economy to meet crisis, N. Nazarbayev



"We should prepare the country's economy to meet crisis," President Nursultan Nazarbayev told delivering his annual State of-the-Nation Address at a joint sitting of the Parliament in Astana.

"Kazakhstan enters confidently the third decade of its independence. The newly-formed Government and Parliament have started their work. The country's

economic growth made 7.5%, per capita GDP exceeded USD 11,000 in 2011, " Nursultan Nazarbayev said.

"As you see, the forecasted global crisis becomes a reality. According to the experts, the new crisis may last for 5-6 years," the President noted.

27 January 2012

Nazarbayev gives instructions to carry out big industrial and infrastructure projects

Delivering his annual address to the people of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev instructed the Government to implement a number of large industrial and infrastructure projects.

The President instructed the Government to start construction of the first module of Balkhash Thermal Power Plant with capacity of 1300 MW this year. "Next year it is necessary to complete construction of the transit corridor "Western Europe - Western China" with length of 2,700 kilometers, to begin construction of two new rail lines - Zhezkazgan-Beineu and Arkalyk-Shubarkol, to continue the project for the production of fertilizers in Zhambyl region, to establish integrated refining the Atyrau oil refinery."

In addition, the President instructed to provide operation of Atyrau gas chemical complex at full capacity, to begin construction of a gas processing plant at Karachaganak, to begin construction of gas pipeline system to provide gas supply in the central region of the country, including the capital.

In 2012, Astana is the cultural capital of CIS and Turkic world - President



In 2012, Astana is the cultural capital of the CIS and the Turkic world. It is necessary to properly carry out these activities, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said at the joint sitting of Parliament on Friday.

31 January 2012

Zhanaozen: state of emergency lifted, lesson to be drawn



The state of emergency imposed in the town of Zhanaozen, Mangystau region, by the President's Decree on December 17 last year was completed. As President N.Nazarbayev noted in his Address to the Nation "The socioeconomic modernization - the main vector of development of Kazakhstan", the situation in Zhanaozen has normalized; hence it was decided not to prolong the state of emergency. The life in the city and in the region returns to normal, and this shows the stability of our state, our society's ability to remain calm and patience in the difficult situations.

As the President emphasized in his Address, it is necessary to draw a lesson from the last year's events in Zhanaozen and remember it.

"The situation in Zhanaozen showed that single industrial little towns are subject to risks. The country was forced to declare a state of emergency in the town to stabilize the situation," N.Nazarbayev said.

Mass disturbances broke out in Zhanaozen due to protracted labor dispute on December 16, 2011 when the country celebrated the 20th anniversary of independence. As was found out later, the organizers of the disorders used the discontent of the residents fired out from the local branches of JSC KazMunayGas Exploration Production as well as the general socio-economic situation in the town, and pushed a part of the urban youth to illegal activities.

The riots proved costly for Zhanaozen. The town suffered economic disbenefit amounting to about KZT 2 billion. Many buildings, including two akimats (administrations), offices of banks, a hotel, a building of Ozenmunaygas Company, shops and malls, private houses, were looted and set on fire. Looters damaged power and communication lines, as a result phones and Internet stopped working. Harmless residents of the town suffered at the hands of the rioters.

The town's police were forced to use military weapons to stop the disorderly crowd, resulting deaths of several people and dozens were injured.

On December 17, the Security Council held a session, at which President N.Nazarbayev declared the state of emergency and gave instructions to the Government to take all necessary measures on speedy solution of the problems that have arisen in connection with the disorders in Zhanaozen.

There was formed a governmental commission. Special attention was paid to ensuring stable operation of the oil companies and employment of the Zhanaozen oil workers rendered idle after the reduction in production branches of JSC KazMunayGas Exploration Production. President N.Nazarbayev adopted a number of personnel decisions, including at the regional level, visited Zhanaozen and gave specific instructions at the scene.

The residents who were in need of work and the authorities had an active dialogue from the first days of the commission's functioning in Zhanaozen. There were no attempts to destabilize the situation during the state of emergency; the calm remained in the town.

31 January 2012

GDP in real terms grew by 7.5% in 2011, Kazakh Minister



"Kazakhstan's GDP in real terms grew by 7.5% in 2011," Economic Development and Trade Minister of Kazakhstan Bakhytzhan Sagintayev told an enlarged board meeting of the Ministry.

01 February 2012

Cargo transit totaled 16.5 million tons in 2011 - Kazakh Transport Minister



The volume of cargo transit totaled 16.5 million tons in 2011, Kazakh Minister of Transport and Communications Askar Zhumagaliyev told the ministry board meeting on Wednesday.

He told about the reconstruction of the international transit corridor "Western Europe - Western China". Today, 780 kilometers of roads can be used for transportation. 439 kilometers of new rail roads were built. 10 airports operate in conformity with ICAO standards.

The capacity of sea ports reached 13.5 million tons, Zhumagaliyev said.

Kazakhstan to open ten int'l air routes - Transport Minister



Kazakhstan plans to open more than 10 international air routes, Minister of Transport and Communications Askar Zhumagaliyev told Wednesday.

It is expected to open flights from Astana to Baku, Tashkent, Ulan Bator, etc.

According to the Minister, 37 airlines operate in Kazakhstan. Eight of them provide regular passenger air service. 4.1 million passengers were transported in 2011. This is by 20.5 percent more than in 2010.

02 February 2012, Kazakhstan increased gas transportation by 18% last year

Kazakhstan has increased transportation of gas by 18 percent in 2011. Minister of Oil and Gas Sauat Mynbayev has announced at the Ministry's board meeting.

According to him, the increase was achieved mainly due to transit of the Turkmen gas to China.

KMG expects to mine over 21 mln tons of oil and gas condensate in 2012 - Berlibayev



Consolidated production of oil and gas condensate by KazMunayGas National Company (KMG) should make 21.9 million tons in 2012.

KMG Managing Director Daniyar Berlibayev has told a board meeting of the Kazakh Ministry of Oil and Gas.

As the company's press service reported earlier, the consolidated volume of oil and gas of KMG made 21.1 million tons in 2011.

03 February 2012 Agricultural gross output reached KZT 2.2 trln in 2011



"Inflow of fixed investments into the country's agriculture grew by 22.7% in 2011 to make KZT 107.4 bln," Agriculture Minister Assylzhan Mamytbekov told an extended board meeting with the participation of 1st Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Serik Akhmetov.

"2011 was the second year of the agro-industrial sector industrialization resulting in 27% growth of the agricultural gross output," he added.

08 February 2012

Kazakh President invites German companies to work in Kazakhstan



At the opening of the Berlin Eurasian Club Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev invited German companies to work in Kazakhstan.

"It's a great honor for Kazakhstan to cooperate with Germany, the leading European country," Nazarbayev said.

He noted that the Kazakh program of industrialization contained carefully prepared measures of what should be done in each region and city. "This program offers many benefits and privileges. The first goal is to process our raw materials, our oil. This year, together with the South Korean company, Kazakhstan will build a USD 6 billion powerful petrochemical complex. In addition, this year at the center of Kazakhstan - in Balkhash - we will begin construction of a large thermal power plant," Nursultan Nazarbayev said.

Kazakhstan has begun construction of a 1.5 thousand km railway, annually builds 2000 kilometers of highways, implements large-scale projects in the field of housing, the President also said.

As the President of Kazakhstan said, the last year Kazakhstan harvested 30 million tons of grain, and intends to export 12 million tons. In this regard, he stressed that our country needed agricultural machinery and German companies may assembly harvesters in Kazakhstan.

13 February 2012

Kazakh foreign trade turnover made up \$ 101bln last year



Kazakhstan's foreign trade turnover amounted to USD 101.6 billion in 2011, Deputy Chairman of the Customs Control Committee of Kazakh Finance Ministry Nurzhan Ashikhanov told the Committee's board meeting on Monday.

In comparison with 2010 it increased by 40.1 percent. The volume of export made USD 80.5 billion, import - USD 21.1 billion.

14 February 2012

Kazakh Ministry plans another 11 industrial zones



The Industry and New Technologies Ministry of Kazakhstan plans to create another 11 industrial zones," Minister Aset Issekeshov told the Government sitting in Astana.

The zones will be set up in 8 regions, and Almaty and Aktobe cities. Kazakhstan has already 5 industrial zones in South Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan and Almaty regions.

Kazakhstan to implement 6 strategic enterprises modernization projects in 2012

"Realization of the projects on modernization of six strategic enterprises will begin in 2012," told Kazakh Minister of Industry and New Technologies Aset Issekeshov at the Government session.

According to him, such enterprises as "Aluminum Kazakhstan" JSC, The Sokolovsko-Sarbaisk ore mining and enrichment plant" JSC, "Kazchrome" JSC, "Kazakhmys Corporation" Ltd., "Sat & Company" JSC, "Kazphosphate" LLP have already defended their package plans to start their implementation in 2012.

Annual inflation in Kazakhstan made 7.4%



The coordinated actions of the Government and National Bank of Kazakhstan in ensuring price stability have significantly slowed the rate of inflation. As a result the annual inflation made 7.4% and was within the planned corridor of 6-8%, Chairman of the National Bank Grigory Marchenko told reporters on Tuesday.

Kazakh gross international reserves made \$ 33.2 billion

In January 2012 there was an increase in international reserves of the National Bank of Kazakhstan. Gross international reserves grew by 13.1% up to USD 33.2 billion, Chairman of the National Bank Grigory Marchenko told reporters on Tuesday.

The net international reserves increased by 15.2% and made USD 33.1 billion. Government's external debt servicing and replenishment of the National Fund's assets from the accounts of foreign exchange reserves were more than compensated for by currency supply to the accounts of the Government in the National Bank and growth of balances on correspondent accounts of banks in foreign currency. Thus, the net foreign exchange reserves for January 2012 increased by 14.3%. Gold assets increased by 20.6% as a result of the operations and the rise in gold prices in world markets.

15 February 2012

Since 2000 Kazakhstan's machine-building industry increased output 11-fold

Since 2000, machine building industry in Kazakhstan increased production eleven-fold, Meiram Pshembayev, Chairman of the Union of Machine-Builders of Kazakhstan told a board meeting in the Majilis.

According to preliminary data, the volume of production in the machine building industry in Kazakhstan in 2011 amounted to KZT 500 billion, which exceeds the output of machine building industry in 2010, when it amounted to KZT 376 billion, by more than KZT 120 billion or almost 33 percent, Pshembayev said.

He recalled that in 2000 the volume of production in the machine building industry in Kazakhstan was KZT 45.8 billion.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Russian frontier guards hand over equipment worth around 500 million roubles to Kyrgyz counterparts

18/01-2012 08:34, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Ivan MARCHENKO

Russian frontier guards handed over equipment worth around 500 million roubles to Kyrgyz counterparts, the vice chief of the Frontier Service of Federal Security Service of Russia Vladimir Pronichev told journalists today. According to him, equipment must help in clean-up of transfrontier threats challenging the region.

Let's note that Russians handed over 32 vehicles to counterparts; they are KamAZes, Niva cars and UAZes. The transfer is made on the basis of the agreement of presidents of two countries. This is the first consignment of help.

Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan reach “agreement in principle on the construction of an oil refinery with capacity of 2 M tons per year”

19/01-2012 09:27, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan have reached “agreement in principle on the construction of an oil refinery with capacity of 2 M tons per year”. This was stated at today's meeting of President Almazbek Atambayev and the head of the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) Rovnag Abdullayev. The expected time of the introduction of a refinery in operation is the end of 2013.

The parties discussed the issues on supply of crude oil and petroleum products from Azerbaijan, as well as prospects for oil exploration and production in Kyrgyzstan.

The head of state charged the Energy Minister with rendering full assistance in refinery construction. This will “diversify the supply of petroleum products on the market of the country”.

Rovnag Abdullayev noted soon a group of specialists would be sent to consider the issues of construction and start of the company's activities in the energy sector of Kyrgyzstan. He also emphasized that the present issue is under personal control of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

Kyrgyzstan and Great Britain to make a contract in energy development

19/01-2012 09:03, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

Probably Kyrgyzstan and Great Britain will make a contract in sphere in energy development. It has been announced today by Ambassador of Great Britain in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan David Moran to reporters.

According him cooperation in sphere of bilateral policy will increase with the opening of full-fledged British embassy. “It is possible that visits of our [British] ministers will intensify and probably an agreement in energy sphere will be signed. Also a number of businessmen in London are interested in investment to mining, financial sector and engineering in Kyrgyzstan,” noted the Ambassador.

He also stressed that commodity circulation between Kyrgyzstan and the UK should increase. “At present day the circulation is about on the level in \$3M annually,” Said David Moran.

The World Bank to increase funding for infrastructure of cities in Kyrgyzstan

25/01-2012 09:11, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia BENGARD

The World Bank will increase funding for infrastructure of cities of Bishkek and Osh in Kyrgyzstan. Assistant Public Relations of WB Office in Kyrgyzstan Natalya Iosipenko says.

According to her, the bank will additionally allot \$ 15.8 million. “\$ 7.1 million of this amount are provided in the form of a grant, \$ 8.7 million - as a soft loan. This will improve the living conditions of residents of new buildings and other urban communities, as well as continue to invest in municipal and social infrastructure of 23 small towns supported by the WB,” the report says.

As noted, the city infrastructure project is a main program of the World Bank aimed at solving problems related to urban poverty in the country. Over 100 micro projects will be implemented by means of this money. These projects will improve water supply, roads, and people’s availability to social services. We also purchase equipment maintenance and repair social, educational, medical and cultural facilities.

Kyrgyzstan “achieved the region’s best ranking” in Worldwide Press Freedom Index

26/01-2012 08:55, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anton LYMAR

Reporters Without Borders in its Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2011-2012 says Kyrgyzstan “achieved the region’s best ranking”.

As noted Kyrgyzstan significantly improved on press freedom against 2010 and shifted from 159th rank to 108th. The republic gained 40 scores and joined such countries as Montenegro, Bolivia, Liberia and South Sudan.

This year Finland occupied the first rank while Norway, Estonia, Netherlands and Austria topped the list. They followed by Iceland, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Cape Verde and Canada.

Russia lost its positions and took 142nd rank out of possible 179 (between Gambia and Columbia). In Russia, “the media freedom panorama continues to be gloomy,” the press freedom watchdog says. Attacks at journalists continue. Numerous facts of putting pressure on mass media, facts of censorship and tacit bans of publications are recorded. Plurality of views is absent especially on TV; national media outlets are virtually under control of the state. The positive moments are “tougher sentences for” attacks at journalists and “decriminalization of media offences” in Russia.

Latvia occupies 30th rank, Lithuania – 50th. Reporters Without Borders notes the best situation with press freedom among CIS countries is in Moldova – 53rd rank. Armenia is on 77th rank, Georgia on 104th.

Ukraine held 116th rank, Tajikistan – 122nd. Kazakhstan, stepping aside for Afghanistan, turned to be on 154th rank. Uzbekistan is on 157th rank, Belarus – on 168th. This is one of worst positions amid post-Soviet countries.

Countries in bottom of the list are countries with dictatorship where press freedom is absent. Turkmenistan (177th), North Korea (178th) and Eritrea (179th) are in bottom of the list.

“The Reporters Without Borders index, which is published each year, measures the state of media freedom throughout the world. It reflects the degree of freedom that journalists, news media and netizens enjoy in each country, and the efforts made by the authorities to respect and ensure respect for this freedom,” says the press freedom watchdog.

The index rests upon expert estimations. “To compile this index, Reporters Without Borders prepared a questionnaire with 44 main criteria indicative of the state of press freedom. It asks questions about every kind of violation directly affecting journalists and netizens (including murders, imprisonment, physical attacks and threats) and news media (censorship, confiscation of newspaper issues, searches and harassment). And it establishes the degree of impunity enjoyed by those responsible for these press freedom violations.” “It also measures the level of self-censorship in each country and the ability of the media to investigate and criticize. Financial pressure, which is increasingly common, is also assessed and incorporated into the final score.” “The questionnaire takes account of the legal framework for the media (including penalties for press offences, the existence of a state monopoly for certain kinds of media and how the media are regulated) and the level of independence of the public media. It also reflects violations of the free flow of information on the Internet.”

Turkish Weekly: OSCE PA urges Kyrgyzstan to improve prison conditions

27/01-2012 07:45, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Zhanna KHUSAINOVA

Matteo Mecacci, Chair of the OSCE PA human rights committee urged Kyrgyz authorities to respect human rights and improve conditions in prisons after inmates embarked on hunger strike throughout the country. Turkish Weekly reports.

“Human rights do not stop at the prison gate,” Turkish Weekly quotes Matteo Mecacci as saying. “Basic rights must still be respected, including in pre-trial and detention facilities. I hope the authorities will reconsider the closure of common cells so prisoners are assured some freedom of movement during their incarceration,” he said.

Recall, inmates of all holding facilities in Kyrgyzstan went on hunger strike on January 17. Later some of them gave up while other sewed their mouths shut.

Negotiations on Kazakhstan's exit from the United Energy System, which includes Kyrgyzstan, started in Uzbekistan

31/01-2012 08:14, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

Negotiations on Kazakhstan's exit from the United Energy System, which includes Kyrgyzstan, have been started in Uzbekistan. **24.kg news agency** was told by the Spokesperson for the Kyrgyz National Electric Network JSC.

According to company's data, the negotiation will be held in Tashkent today. After them, the fate of the Single Energy Ring in Central Asia will be decided. Kyrgyzstan is presented by the director general of the Kyrgyz National Electric Network JSC Medetbek Aitkulov.

As it was reported earlier, if Kazakhstan refuses to work in parallel, the north of Kyrgyzstan will have a deficiency of electricity up to 40 percent. However, despite the agreement, Uzbekistan keeps on taking away electricity from Kazakhstan illegally. It owes \$ 15 million. This is the main reason of Kazakhstan's going out.

Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan agreed about parallel word of national energy nets

01/02-2012 15:34, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

"Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan agreed about parallel word of national energy nets," announced vice president of National Electric Net (NEN) OJSC of Kyrgyzstan Alexei Borodin.

According him the negotiations on preserve of United Energy Net (Ring) of Central Asia (UEN(R) CA) have ended. "Current documents were signed and basic principles of work were discussed. Director General of NEN OJSC Medet Aytkulov will report to Government and officially announce conditions of UEN(R) CA function," explained Alexei Borodin.

The head of the World Bank Office leaves Kyrgyzstan

06/02-2012 13:40, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Makhinur NIYAZOVA

The head of the World Bank Office Alexander Kremer temporarily left Kyrgyzstan. This was reported to **24.kg news agency** by the World Bank Office.

According to the public relations office, Alexander Kremer undergoes checkup in London now. His assistant Dinara Djoldosheva temporarily holds office. They said in the World Bank Office this is common practice: when the head leaves the country even for one day his assistant holds office. They emphasized that Kremer's resignation is not at issue.

Recall, last week the head of the World Bank Office Alexander Kremer hurled a glass of water at vice Prime Minister of the republic Dzhoomart Otorbaev during discussion of government programme at donors' meeting.

Ex-President Kurmanbek Bakiyev becomes a citizen of Belarus

08/02-2012 15:50, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anton LYMAR

Ex-President Kurmanbek Bakiyev became a citizen of Belarus. TUT.BY Portal and some other Byelorussian editions inform.

Reportedly, the passport of Belarus citizen was issued to Kurmanbek Bakiyev in august by one of Minsk District Offices of Internal Affaires.

The decision on granting the Belarusian citizenship is made personally by the President of Belarus on the basis of a personal petition. The information has not been confirmed at the official level, said the portal.

Later there was information that the ex-President of Kyrgyzstan obtains a piece of land near Minsk. According to some reports, he bought a house on the outskirts of Minsk for \$ 2 million. Previously, Kurmanbek Bakiyev lived in government residence in the territory of the Berezinsky Reserve.

The former Kyrgyz President was overthrown in a mass opposition protests on April 7, 2010. First he was hiding in his native village in the south of the country. But in mid-April, he left the republic, and went to Belarus at the invitation of Alexander Lukashenko.

In Kyrgyzstan, a criminal case on the fact of protesters' shooting at Ala-Too Square on April 7, 2010, was initiated against him. 80 people died there. Bishkek has repeatedly requested the extradition of the former head of state, but was always refused.

The USA to help Kyrgyzstan to reform mining and subsurface management legislation

09/02-2012 15:49, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

The USA will help Kyrgyzstan to reform mining and subsurface management legislation. The Spokesperson's Office for the U.S. Embassy to the Kyrgyz Republic informs.

Reportedly, the Government of Kyrgyzstan and the U.S.A. join efforts to attract investment in the mining sector. "The first step is to create a favorable environment for investors making additional job places, to improve public-private partnership in the sphere of subsoil and increase social responsibility of mining companies in Kyrgyzstan," Spokesperson explained.

As noted, technical and advisory assistance will be provided to the expert group formed by the Ministry of Economy and Antitrust Policy of Kyrgyzstan within the USAID project "Reform". "The experts plan to conduct meetings in each area for discussion draft laws with the local community, representatives of mining companies operating in the region," added in the Spokesperson's Office.

We should mention that the same Kumtor Gold-Mining Company has been successfully investing in social projects in the Issyk-Kul province, providing this region's residents with work places for many years. Nevertheless, the company is criticized from the top and from below. Why doesn't Kyrgyz Government make any attempts to keep trusted partners in the country, but attract new investors?

Gazprom Russian Company negotiating to buy controlling stake of Kyrgyzgaz

09/02-2012 09:26, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

In Kyrgyzstan, the representatives of Gazprom JSC are negotiating with Kyrgyzgaz JSC to buy its controlling stake. **24.kg news agency** was told in Kyrgyzgaz JSC.

According to company's data, the interests of Russian party are represented by the head of the Gas Production, Gas Condensate and Oil Department Vsevolod Cherepanov and the head of the Gazprom International Valery Gulev. "The Russian company intends to buy 75 percent stake and give the feasibility study on the development of fields," explained in JSC.

Kyrgyzgaz added that yesterday the Gazprom representatives met with the leadership of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Economy and Industry. "The basis issues were to be discussed at the meeting with Kyrgyz Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov. But it has not taken place yet," said in the company.

In Kyrgyzstan, an active member of the Zhaishul Makhdi terrorist group suspected of committing a terrorist act near the Sports Palace detained

10/02-2012 12:23, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

In Kyrgyzstan, an active member of the Zhaishul Makhdi terrorist group suspected of committing a terrorist act near the Sports Palace was detained. The Department of Public Relations and Mass Media under the Kyrgyz State National Security Committee (GKNB) informs.

Reportedly, on February 7, GKNB detained wanted Daniyar Kadyraliev during counterterrorism operation. 1 Kalashnikov gun, six cartridges stores for it, 312 ammunitions, components of improvised explosive devices, ammonite bombs were found and confiscated when conducting operational-search activities in Archa-Beshik residential area.

Recall, the member of the Zhaishul Makhdi terrorist group Daniyar Kadyraliev is accused of committing a terrorist attack near the Sports Palace named after Kozhomkul on November 30, 2010, armed robbery at the citizen of the United States D.Norton on December 24, 2010, attempt of bombing a car near the building of Bishkek General Department of Internal Affaires on December 25, 2010, killing of Kyrgyzstan's citizen Alferov A. and employees of Oktyabr District Office of Internal Affaires on January 3, 2011 and other crimes.

The detained person was sent to the GKNB pretrial detention centre. Operational and investigative activities keep on going.

The implementation of project for China - Kyrgyzstan - Uzbekistan rail road construction will provide the republic with a permanent income of \$ 210 M – Raikan Tologonov

10/02-2012 10:11, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Tolgonai OSMONGAZIEVA

The implementation of project for China - Kyrgyzstan - Uzbekistan rail road construction will provide the republic with a permanent income of \$ 210 M. Deputy Raikan Tologonov stated this at today's Ata-Meken faction session.

According to him, the issue of rail road construction was brought up still in the late 1990s. "By estimates of the Ministry of Transport specialists, rail road will provide a connection between the South and North of Kyrgyzstan, free the republic from transport dependence of northern railroad way, will create 20 thousand work places during its construction and after. Besides, conditions for development of coal, ore, limestone, valuable stone species deposits on the adjoining highway areas will be created, the traffic figures will be increased up to 250 thousand people a year. For today the status of the project was reduced to the level of management within the Kyrgyz Temir Zholu State Enterprise, although this project should be national. And we need to establish the Department under the Ministry of Transport for its implementation," Raikan Tologonov said.

A new monitoring system of food safety implemented in Kyrgyzstan in 2012

15/02-2012 15:45, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Islam DUVANAYEV

A new monitoring system of food safety is implemented in Kyrgyzstan in 2012. The UN World Food Program expert Eduard Shaginayn stated at today's panel discussion.

According to him, if before the food security assessment was carried out in the KRG post factum, this year a new research system will identify the exact data in advance.

Eduard Shaginayn noted that the monitoring will be conducted by polling and forming of Kyrgyzstan's population groups by category. "This classification will include the groups with extremely low, reasonable and satisfactory degree of food safety," he concluded

TURKEY

Turkish Foreign Minister and U.S. Secretary of State Discussed Situation in South Caucasus

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Tuesday discussed the situation in South Caucasus, as well as Azerbaijani-Armenian relations, Anadolu agency reported.

According to Davutoglu, such discussions can strengthen US-Turkish relations, as well as help to stabilize situation in South Caucasus.

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 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. 14/02/2012.

Ankara Not Considering Military Intervention in Syria

Turkey is actively working to resolve the situation in Syria, but Ankara's military intervention in Syria is not a subject up for discussion, the Turkish president's advisor for Middle Eastern affairs Ershad Hurmuzlu told Trend on Monday.

"Turkey is holding talks with the region's countries to stop violence in Syria and peacefully trying to resolve the crisis," Mr Hurmuzlu said.

The Arab League States' foreign ministers decided on Sunday to urge the UNSC to send an observer mission to Syria under the joint control of the UN and the League and suspend activities of the previous mission to Syria. The advisor said the next meeting on the crisis will be held at Ankara's initiative in Tunisia on Feb 24.

It was planned that meeting the 'Friends of Syria' will be held in Istanbul but later it was decided to held it in Tunisia, Mr Hurmuzlu said.

"It is very important that all countries participating in this meeting understand

how important their mission is and do their best to stop bloodshed and establish stability in Syria," he noted.

Anti-government demonstrations have been held in Syria since March 2011. Reports are made daily about killed civilians and law enforcement members being killed.

According to the UN, the total number of victims exceeded 5000. Syrian authorities said that over 2000 military and law enforcement members were killed in the clashes with the armed opposition.

On Feb 4, Russia and China vetoed a U.N. resolution on Syria. It was the second time Russia and China as UNSC permanent members vetoed Syrian resolutions saying they contained unacceptable wording. 14/02/2012

Turkish Warplanes Strike Suspected PKK Targets In Northern Iraq

Turkey's military says warplanes have bombed suspected Kurdish terrorist targets in northern Iraq.

The military said the jets targeted caves and other hideouts in Iraq's Zap and Hakurk regions, near the border with Turkey, on February 11.

The statement said all planes returned to base safely but did not provide any details about damage or casualties.

Fighting between Turkish forces and terrorists from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has escalated in recent months.

The PKK militants, some of them based in northern Iraq, have been fighting for autonomy in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast since 1984 in a conflict that has claimed about 45,000 lives. 13/02/2012

Turkey to Launch Initiative for Humanitarian Aid to Syria

WASHINGTON (A.A) - Turkey's foreign minister said on Friday that Turkey would launch an initiative at the United Nations (UN) Office in Geneva for humanitarian aid to Syria.

Ahmet Davutoglu said Turkey would launch the initiative in order to provide humanitarian aid flow to Geneva.

"We are determined to make the UN system active (regarding developments in Syria)," Davutoglu told reporters in Washington.

Davutoglu said he would have a phone talk with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Saturday, and Turkey would continue its initiatives not only to bring up the issue to the General Assembly but also to launch a humanitarian aid to Syria.

Minister Davutoglu said he believed he could make significant progress on holding an international meeting or establishing an international platform regarding developments in Syria either on Monday or Tuesday. 11/02/2012

Bağış Defiant on Genocide Denial Stance

Turkey's EU affairs minister reiterated his denial of Armenian genocide allegations yesterday in a further challenge to Swiss authorities, who are investigating whether similar comments made last month broke the law.

Bağış said yesterday that Swiss prosecutors should not lose any time in determining whether he made the comments at the World Economic Forum in Davos and at a concert in Zurich.

"I said there on that day that what happened in 1915 was not genocide and I repeat that today. Nobody should doubt that I will give the same answer every time I am asked," Bağış told a news conference. "I don't recognize any power that can detain any minister of the Turkish Republic. I am very much at ease on this subject."

Turkey summoned the Swiss ambassador Feb. 6 to complain about the decision by Swiss officials to investigate Bağış's comments.

"If necessary I will go again to Davos and say the same thing," he said.

Swiss anti-racism laws make genocide denial illegal.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu sought to play down the preliminary investigation against Bağış, saying it was a routine procedure launched upon complaints by Swiss Armenians. "The inquiry was opened following an application by an Armenian association. In Turkey too, a preliminary enquiry is conducted when anyone goes to court," the minister told reporters.

He said the attitudes of the Swiss and French governments on punishing the denial of the Armenian "genocide" were completely different.

"In France, there is a government supporting the law," he said, adding that the Swiss government had opposed a court ruling that convicted Turkish politician

Doğu Perinçek there for denying that genocide took place. "Switzerland has shown that it stands against that by lending support for the creation of a joint history commission with us," Davutoğlu said.

The European Parliament's Turkey rapporteur, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, also lent her support to Bağış yesterday after they met in Brussels. Oomen-Ruijten said everyone must have freedom of expression.

Bağış was expected to meet European Parliamentary President Martin Schulz, Socialist Group leader Hannes Swoboda and members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Brussels. Bağış is also expected to have a meeting with European Commissioner for Enlargement Stefan Füle and European Commissioner for Competition Joaquin Almunia.

Last month, the French Senate approved legislation criminalizing the denial of the 1915 events as genocide, prompting an angry response from Turkey.

Meanwhile, Israel Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Israel would not recognize any genocide by law other than the Holocaust, daily Hürriyet reported yesterday. 8/02/2012

Turkey Regrets Outcome of UN SC Vote on Syrian Issue

Turkey regrets the outcome of the UN Security Council vote that failed to stop the use of force against the peaceful citizens of Syria, Turkish President Abdullah Gul has told the TV channel, TRT.

Gul said, the events in Syria assumed "a dangerous character."

"The Syrian President must recognize the loss of his legitimacy. It will be the right step for the good of the Syrians" Gul said.

Using the veto, Russia and China blocked the adoption of a resolution on Syria at the UN SC last Saturday. This is the second time Russia and China, as permanent members of the UN SC, did not allow a resolution on Syria.

Anti-government protests, which began last March, continue in Syria. Daily reports are received detailing the deaths of both civilians and security forces. According to the UN statistics, the total number of victims in the country exceeds 5,000 people. The Syrian authorities accuse armed militants of the clashes, who receive assistance from neighboring countries. 6/02/2012

European Commissioner says Europe Needs Energy Coming from Russia and Turkey

MUNICH (A.A) - European commissioner for energy said on Friday that Europe needed the energy to come from Russia and Turkey.

Guenter Oettinger said that population in the Mediterranean basin was expected to climb to 80 million by 2030, and this would increase energy need.

Therefore, the European Union (EU) gave priority to energy infrastructural projects and alternative energy supplies in the region, Oettinger said a panel discussion that took place on the sidelines of the 48th Munich Security Conference.

Oettinger highlighted importance of ensuring energy safety, and said Europe needed the energy to come from Russia and Turkey.

The commissioner expressed belief that more cooperation in energy and more energy independence would boost relations among countries. 4/02/2012

Turkmenistan, Turkey Increase Mutual Trade Volume in 2011

Turkey ranks one of the leading places in Turkmenistan's foreign trade, a statistics report of the Strategic Planning and Economic Development Institute of Turkmenistan, published by the local press says.

The volume of Turkmen-Turkish trade turnover in January-November 2011 grew by 20 percent to \$3.2 billion compared to same period of 2010. Import of goods from Turkey is widely diversified and mainly represented by industrial goods.

Energy resources, as well as livestock products prevail in the Turkmen exports to Turkey. It is important for Turkmenistan to expand the range of exports to Turkey and increase its volume.

The intergovernmental Turkmen-Turkish commission for economic cooperation established in 2008 plays an important role in cooperation between the two countries.

More than 600 Turkish companies operating in the priority areas of economy, trade and investment, construction, energy, textile and processing industries are registered in Turkmenistan.

Turkish companies implement more than 1,270 investment projects, including over 1,200 projects - worth over \$15 billion and 26 projects - worth over 2 billion euro and 26 projects - worth over 56 billion manat.

Turkey has extensive experience in international tourism, which is interesting for Turkmenistan actively developing its tourist infrastructure. In particular, Turkish companies contribute to the development of the national tourist zone Avaza.

"Given the characteristics of the geopolitical and geo-economic position of the two countries, one of the most promising and mutually beneficial directions of cooperation is the transport and communications sphere, where Turkmenistan initiates and implements a number of major regional and international projects," the report says. 3/02/2012

Turkey's Population Increased to Almost 75 Million in 2011

Turkey was already one of the most populous nations in Europe, and the country's population increased in 2011, by more than one million since the previous year, a report indicated on Friday.

According to a report released on Friday by the official Turkish Statistics Institute (TurkStat), Turkey's population was 74,724,269 at the end of 2011. The study was conducted through the Address-Based Central Population Registration System (MERNİS), which uses the National Address Database to track the number of people living at a specific address, Today's Zaman reported.

Turkey's population increased by 1.35 percent, when compared to the previous year, to 74.7 million by the end of 2011. The figure was 73.7 million at the end of 2010. Males made up 50.2 percent of Turkey's total population while 49.8 percent was female. There are 37,532,954 men and 37,191,315 women in Turkey's population.

According to the results, 76.8 percent of the population lives in urban areas, provincial capitals and districts. While 57,385,706 people live in urban areas, 17,338,563 live in the country's rural areas.

İstanbul has Turkey's largest population, with 13,624,240 people. İstanbul also takes the lead in terms of urbanization, as 99 percent of the province's population lives in city centers. The city of İstanbul also provides a home for 18.2 percent of the total population. The northern province of Bayburt has the smallest population, at 76,724. In addition, İstanbul also takes the lead with 2,622 people per square kilometer in terms of population density.

There are 50,346,979 people in Turkey between the ages of 15 and 64, or 67.4 percent of the total population. There are 18,886,575 people between the ages of 0 and 14. People who are age 60 and older make up 7.3 percent, or 5,490,715

people, of the total population. 28/01/2012

Cyprus Talks Said 'Robust' But Progress Limited

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says Greek Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu have agreed to exchange data on property within the next two weeks.

Ban was speaking at a January 25 press conference at the UN following two days of negotiations between the parties at the Greentree Estate in Long Island, New York.

Cyprus is divided between Turkish Cypriots in the north and Greek Cypriots in the south.

A UN peacekeeping mission has been manning a cease-fire line between the two communities since Turkish forces invaded the island in 1974.

Ban called the negotiations "robust and intensive" but admitted only limited progress was achieved.

He said he will provide a report to the Security Council in February, and if that report is "positive," will call a multilateral conference in late April or early May.
26/01/2012

Turkey Condemns Adoption of Armenian Bill at French Senate

ANKARA (A.A) - Turkey condemned French Senate's adopting a bill which criminalizes the denial of Armenian allegations about 1915 incidents during Ottoman period.

Releasing a written statement late on Monday, Turkish Foreign Ministry said, "we strongly condemn this decision, which is problematic in every aspect and constitutes an example of irresponsibility, and declare that we will express our reaction against it in every platform."

The ministry stated, "the law proposal presented by deputies of the governing Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), aiming to penalize in France any challenge to genocide allegations regarding the events of 1915 was adopted by a vote in the General Assembly of the Senate on January 23. We strongly condemn this decision, which is problematic in every aspect and constitutes an example of irresponsibility, and declare that we will express our reaction against it in every platform."

"A similar law proposal was rejected earlier by the General Assembly of the Senate on May 4, 2011 by 196 votes against 74, in line with the opinion of the Commission of Laws of the Senate which had concluded that the proposed law was in breach of the Constitution. Although the Commission of Laws of the Senate once again concluded that the latest proposal was in breach of the Constitution, the Senate adopted it. Since there has not been a change in the substance of the matter in the meantime, this development is a blatant indication of how such a sensitive issue can be exploited for domestic political purposes in France. This has been an entirely unfortunate step for French politics. Politicization of the understanding of justice and history through other people's past and damaging freedom of expression in a tactless manner are first and foremost a loss for France," said the ministry.

It noted, "it is obvious that the interpretation of historical events cannot be determined by the attitude of French politicians who see in themselves the right to judge other nations on the basis of one-sided views and declare a judgment on a serious allegation of crime such as genocide, thereby ignoring the principles of international law. In fact, no Parliament has such a right nor such a competence. The decision in question goes further and delivers a blow against the freedom of expression and scholarly research. At a period when we need positive examples for the dissemination of universal values throughout the world, it is disconcerting to see narrow political calculations producing such a result even in a country which plays a role in the advancement of such values and which takes pride in rule of law."

"It is further unfortunate that the historical and multi-dimensional relations between the Republic of Turkey and France have been sacrificed to considerations of political agenda in spite of all our initiatives and warnings, as well as the opinions of prominent French institutions and jurists. It is quite clear where the responsibility for this lies," said the ministry.

"The circles which consider that Turkey has overreacted on this matter or think that its reaction will only remain in words neither comprehend the essence of the matter, nor understand Turkey and the Turkish people. We find it useful to remind all parties that, in case of the completion of the finalization process for the law, we will not hesitate to implement, as we deem appropriate, the measures that we have considered in advance. Similarly, it must be also known that we will continue to strongly use our right to defend ourselves on a legitimate basis against unfair allegations. No one should doubt our Government's principled approach in this issue," the ministry noted.

It said, "on the other hand, we share the calls for common sense of those who, during this process, have admitted the error being committed in French politics,

appealed to return from this error and opposed to damaging relations with Turkey in such a tactless manner."

The ministry said, "it is clear that all avenues need to be explored for the finalization of the present process in a way which will avoid this being recorded as part of France's political, legal and moral mistakes. Turkey is determined to take every step required against this unjust action, which disregards basic human values and public conscience." 24/01/2012

Turkish Surgeons in Country's First Face Transplant

Turkish surgeons successfully performed the country's first-ever face transplant, as well as a triple limb transplant, on Jan. 21.

A team of doctors at Akdeniz University Hospital in the southern province of Antalya performed the operations, using the limbs and face of 39-year-old Ahmet Kaya, who died Jan. 20, for patients Atilla Kavdır and Uğur Acar.

Acar, 19, lost his face when he suffered severe burns in a house fire when he was a baby. "The reason I wanted to have this surgery was because I couldn't get a job and frightened children," Acar said after receiving Turkey's first-ever such transplant.

Kavdır, 34, received two arms and a leg in the transplant on Jan. 21, but doctors said yesterday that they had been forced to surgically remove the leg after his body rejected the transplant.

Before the operation, Kavdır said he most looked forward to holding his children in his arms.

Kavdır lost his arms and right leg when he was 11 years old after he electrocuted himself by hitting a power line outside his home with an iron rod to scare away pigeons.

Dr. Ömer Özkan, who headed a 25-member team conducting the transplants, said both patients were being cared for in the intensive care unit and were "doing well."

The full face transplant lasted nine hours, while the limb transplants took 12 hours, according to reports.

"We have a critical 10- to 15-day period ahead of us for both operations, but if we pull through this period, we will make history," Özkan said.

Özkan also paid tribute to Kaya's family, saying one family had donated a face and limbs at the same time for the first time in Turkey's history.

Kaya fell into a coma after attempting to kill himself Jan. 8. After he died Jan. 20, his family agreed to donate his organs and limbs to patients awaiting transplants.

The world's first double-arm transplant was in Germany in 2008, while the first double-leg transplant took place in Spain in July 2011.

More than a dozen face transplants have been carried out around the world, starting in November 2005 with a French woman who was mauled by her dog. The first face transplant in the United States was in December 2008. 23/01/2012

Turkish Cities Hit the Top 10 Fastest-Growing List

Turkey's three metropolises of İzmir, Ankara and Istanbul were among the fastest-growing metropolitan economies, according to a report released by the Brookings Institution.

Turkey's western province of İzmir was ranked the fourth among the fastest-growing metropolitan economies, the report titled "Global MetroMonitor 2011: Volatility, Growth, and Recovery" said.

Ankara took sixth place, while Istanbul was ranked seventh. These three metropolises are also the largest among Turkey's provinces.

The report served as "an analysis of per capita income and employment changes in the 2010 to 2011 period for 200 of the world's largest metropolitan economies, which account for nearly one-half (48 percent) of global output but contain only 14 percent of world population and employment."

The list was based on the Washington, D.C.-based Brookings Institution's analysis of data from Oxford Economics, Moody's Analytics and the U.S. Census Bureau. The institute is one of America's oldest think tanks, which conducts research and education primarily in economics, metropolitan policy, foreign policy and global economy.

Shanghai's economy fastest growing Metropolitan areas in China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia dominated the list's first 10 spots.

The top performer was Shanghai, China's industry, finance, trade and technology center. With an economy the size of Finland's, Shanghai has seen income grow 9.8 percent and employment expand at a 5.8 percent rate in 2010 to 2011, the report

said. Hangzhou, Shenzhen and Shenyang are the other metropolises that made the top 10.

Emerging countries lead Saudi Arabian metropolitan areas, namely Riyadh and Jeddah, ranked second and third on the list. Meanwhile, Greek capital Athens was the bottom performer due to continuing debt woes of the country, which is in the brink of default.

The report said, “90 percent of the fastest-growing metropolitan economies among the 200 largest worldwide were located outside North America and Western Europe. By contrast, 95 percent of the slowest-growing metro economies were in the United States, Western Europe and earthquake-damaged Japan.

“Metropolitan areas specializing in commodities and business and financial services within their countries exhibited the strongest performance,” the report said.

“In Shanghai, per capita income grew by nearly 10 percent in 2011. Ankara, Turkey, saw employment grow nearly 6 percent. Santiago, Chile, posted at least 5 percent growth in income and employment,” said Alain Berube, the co-author of the Global MetroMonitor, in an article for CNN. 21/01/2012

Turkey Fixes President's Term at 7 Years

Turkey's Parliament has set President Abdullah Gül's term in office at seven years after a 2007 amendment appeared to lower it to five.

Gül was elected for a one-time seven-year term in August 2007, but a few months later Turkey enacted constitutional changes that reduced the presidential term to five, with the right to stand for re-election.

The amendments did not specify whether Gül's term would be affected, leading to confusion.

The move, however, has failed to end debate over how long he should serve, with the opposition saying the move is unconstitutional.

Gül said Friday the opposition could seek its cancellation at Turkey's highest court.

Parliament which is dominated by legislators from Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party voted late Thursday to fix Gül's term at seven years. 20/01/2012

Turkey to Fund USD 5 B Bosphorus Bridge with Own Money

Turkey will carry out an estimated USD 5 B road project that includes building a third bridge over the Bosphorus Strait between Europe and Asia with its own resources, the Turkish government announced.

The decision comes after Turkey had to cancel a tender due to the lack of bids. Turkish Transport Minister Binali Yildirim said a tender for the North Marmara Highway project would be issued shortly.

"In a short time a tender will be launched. We plan to use our own resources directly," he was reported as saying on the TV8 channel.

Turkey canceled the tender on Jan. 10 after builders blamed an international funding crunch for scaring off bids for the scheme, which loops north of Istanbul near the Black Sea.

The tender for the 414-km North Marmara Highway project initially drew interest from 18 companies from Japan, Russia, Spain, Austria, Italy and Turkey. The winner would have had operating rights for 25 years.

In a press release published by the Hurriyet Daily News Monday, Turkey's Transport Minister Binali Yildirim clarified the "Plan B" after the failed tender for the Northern Marmara Highway Project, saying that project will be financed from the national budget.

"The bridge and a 65 to 70-km-long highway will be included in the first tender. Then the remaining highways will be put to tender later on," he explained.

The mega transportation project, which spans 414 km from Adapazarı to Tekirdağ, failed to attract any bids from a total of nine Turkish and nine foreign companies Jan. 10.

The project, described as Turkey's second-biggest build-operate-transfer scheme, was decided to be put to tender March 9, 2011.

Some bidders had asked for a three month or six month delay, said the minister. "We did not think it was reasonable and decided not to extend the time [to hold bidding]," he said, adding that "We will finance it from the national project." The build-operate-transfer scheme was tried, Yildirim said.

"We will put the project to tender very soon. We plan to work with local resources. It takes a long time to get credit financing warranty in build-operate-

transfer schemes. ... We are revising the project. We will do it in stages."

The project will begin in 2012, the minister said. It is not a project that only Turkey needs, but it is a transit route that will connect Europe to Caucasus, the Middle East and Far East, he said.

"It will contribute to inner city traffic of Istanbul, but there will not be many connections to the city center."

"A single Turkish firm will not be enough [to handle the entire project] due to its vastness," Yıldırım said. They [Turkish firms] will form groups. Maybe even then that may not be enough. They may have to include a foreign firm as a solution partner." 17/01/2012

Former Turkish Cypriot President Passes Away

ANKARA (A.A) - Former Turkish Cypriot President Rauf Denktaş died at the age of 88 on Friday.

Rauf Denktaş was born in Baf Region of Cyprus on January 27, 1924. Denktaş lost his mother when he was 1.5 years old. His father is judge Raif Bey. He was grown up by his maternal and paternal grandmothers and was sent to Istanbul for education in 1930.

He began to study at in Fevzi Ati High School giving education in Arnavutköy from primary to high school as a boarding student. He turned back to Cyprus after secondary school and completed high school in Cyprus.

Denktaş went to England for law education. He started to work as a lawyer after he graduated. He began to work as a prosecutor in 1949. He married Aydin Hanim the same year.

He addressed to the public in the first public meeting arranged by Cyprus Turks on November 27, 1948 together with Dr. Fazil Küçük.

In 1948, Denktaş served as a member of the Consultative Assembly and became a member of the Turkish Affairs Committee. In 1949, he started working as a crown prosecutor, where he remained until 1958.

Denktaş helped found the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT), an organization, that was formed to resist EOKA. In 1958, he attended the U.N. General Assembly on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots. Denktaş played an active role in the preparation of the Zurich Agreement in 1959. In 1960, Cyprus won

independence from Britain, and the Republic of Cyprus was established. Denktas was elected as the President of the Turkish Communal Chamber.

On August 16, 1960, a Turkish regiment of 650 people landed on Magosa Port. Denktas went to Ankara to hold negotiations after 1963 events. Denktas returned to Cyprus on a rowboat having completed his contacts, and began to organize Turkish resistance.

He was declared as "persona non grata" by Makarios after 1964 London Conference. His entry to Cyprus was forbidden. He landed on Erenkoy secretly and took part in the war. He was arrested in 1967 while entering the island secretly. He was given back to Turkey as a consequence of intense efforts. In 1968, since prohibition of his entry to the island was lifted, he returned to Cyprus.

He was elected as the chairman of Turkish Community Council in 1970 elections. He was elected as Assistant Cyprus President and President of Turkish Government until February 28, 1973. After proclamation of Cyprus Turkish Federal State on February 13, 1975, he pursued the posts of state and government president, and was elected as the state president in the general elections held in 1976. He became the president of the state for the second time in 1981.

He was elected as the president for the second time in the early elections held on April 22, 1990. He was elected as the president in the elections held in 1995.

Denktas held negotiations with four Greek Cypriot leaders for a solution to the Cyprus issue.

Denktas conducted a campaign against UN solution plan called as Annan plan presented in 2002. He did not run in the presidential election held on April 17, 2005 and handed over the post to Mehmet Ali Talat.

Denktas had a partial paralysis caused by an embolism on May 24, 2011. After his first surgery in Lefkosa, he underwent another operation at Ankara's GATA on August 25.

Rauf Denktas was taken to TRNC on August 30, and his treatment continued at the Near East University Hospital.

Denktas underwent another surgery at the hospital on September 5 due to an increasing cerebral hemorrhage.

Denktas was hospitalized again on January 8 after experiencing diarrhea and asthenia. 14/01/2012

END
