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Astana Believes International Assistance, National Unity Vital for Kyrgyzstan



"I urge all parties to the conflict to lay down their arms, sit down at the negotiating table and give all efforts to resolving all the issues together", President Nursultan Nazarbayev said at the meeting.

Photo by Sergey Bondarenko/Bolatbek Otarbayev

Kazakhstan continues its work on helping restore stability in the violence-hit Kyrgyzstan, both at a bilateral basis and as part of multilateral efforts, particularly through its chairmanship in the OSCE.

On June 15 President Nazarbayev discussed this issue at a special meeting in his official residence of Akorda, as he received Prime Minister Karim Massimov, Secretary of Security Council Marat Tazhin, and Chief of Staff Aslan Mussin.

Nazarbayev noted Kazakhstan as a close neighbour is "absolutely interested" in stabilising the situation in Kyrgyzstan.

"A horrible bloodshed happened. We express our condolences to families of all who perished," he added. "Kazakhstan will extend every kind of assistance needed. We are closely coordinating our actions with the neighbouring states – Russia and Uzbekistan."

Earlier, on June 14, presidential national security advisers of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) members agreed to monitor the situation in Kyrgyzstan in conjunction with the

country's Interim Government to identify necessary actions to take. They also decided to provide Kyrgyzstan with military equipment and non-lethal weaponry to be used by the country's security services in case of new cases of mass violence.

Nazarbayev stressed the focus should now be on efficiently coordinating delivery of humanitarian aid from the international community.

“OSCE Envoy Zhanibek Karibzhanov is already working there, as well as representatives of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and others. Everyone is worried about what is happening there. We hope that inside the country the Interim government and the Kyrgyz people as a whole can manage to stabilise the situation,” he added.

In May, President Nazarbayev appointed experienced diplomat Bolat Utemuratov as his Special Envoy for relations with Kyrgyzstan, who has been in regular contact with the leadership of the Interim government there, to assist in solving the pressing issues in bilateral affairs.

In the meantime, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office's Special Envoy of the Zhanibek Karibzhanov has completed his trip to Bishkek, where he discussed the mechanisms of stabilizing the situation in close cooperation with UN, EU and other relevant international actors, as well as the Interim Kyrgyz Government.

Speaking at a press conference on June 15 with the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative Miroslav Jenca and the European Union representative, Ambassador of Germany to Kyrgyzstan Holger Green, Karibzhanov claimed that the international community's priorities in containing the Kyrgyz crisis are to stop the violence, prevent the escalation of tensions, help to alleviate the humanitarian situation and lay the groundwork for post-conflict rehabilitation.

“Despite the Kyrgyz interim government's efforts in restoring the security in the country, the situation in south Kyrgyzstan remains vulnerable and can seriously regress,” Karibzhanov stressed. “Our main task is to assess the situation and the scale of the tragedy on the ground, and develop concrete measures to stabilize the situation in this region”.

According to the OSCE Envoy the main subjects of the discussions with the Kyrgyz authorities and representatives of international community were ways to stop the violence, stabilize the situation and prevent the spill-over of the conflict to other territories, as well as matters related to ensuring the inalienable rights of people - above all, the right to life.

“Other important issues were about the aggravating humanitarian situation in the zone of conflict and the refugee problem, which require serious care and attention,” he stated.

Regarding the prospects for co-operation on post-conflict rehabilitation of Kyrgyzstan Karibzhanov stated that as in the 1990's the recent events in Kyrgyzstan are being triggered by the difficult socio-economic situation. In this respect “our steps towards post-conflict rehabilitation are as important as our efforts to stop the violence. It is high time to decide what to do further in order to ensure that such events will not happen again.”

The same day he met with Chairman of Kyrgyzstan's Central Election Commission Vladimir Churov. The parties exchanged views on the upcoming referendum in the Kyrgyz Republic and rendering help in organizing voting of Kyrgyz labour migrants in Kazakhstan and Russia.

Despite pessimistic forecasts, the Kyrgyz Interim Government is confident about holding the referendum on time, on June 27. Following an invitation from Kyrgyzstan's authorities, and based on the recommendation of a needs assessment mission, ODIHR has deployed a referendum observation mission (ROM) for the upcoming constitutional referendum. The ROM, led by Ambassador Boris Frlec (Slovenia), comprises a 13-member international core team, based in Bishkek, with members drawn from 10 OSCE participating States. In addition, 14 long-term observers, seconded by OSCE participating States, will be deployed across Kyrgyzstan to follow the preparations for the referendum at the regional level. The day of the referendum will see around 300 OSCE observers watching the vote.

On June 16, on the last day of his latest visit to Bishkek, Karibzhanov issued a joint statement with his colleagues representing the UN and the EU, in which they reiterated restoring security, peace and rule of law were crucial in Kyrgyzstan and stated their agreement to continue working together as they support Kyrgyzstan's efforts to resolve the crisis.

“The preservation of national unity and the restoration of national security are of utmost importance for the stabilization of the situation in the country,” the three Special Representatives said in a joint statement. “We are deeply convinced that the tradition of tolerance of the people of the Kyrgyz Republic will return the country to a peaceful development.”

The Special Representatives supported the authorities' and citizens' efforts to stabilize the situation and developed an urgent action plan, outlining specific steps and areas in which the OSCE, UN and EU can support this work. These include public security; humanitarian assistance; regional security; and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation.

The full statement by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Special Envoy Zhanybek Karibzhanov, the UN Special Representative Miroslav Jenca and the EU Special Representative Pierre Morel is available on: http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2010/06/44653_en.pdf.

The ethnic clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks erupted on June 11 in the city of Osh in south Kyrgyzstan. The death toll of the events (official data for June 17) exceeds 190 people, with more than 2,100 injured. In regions of Osh and Jalal-Abad, the Kyrgyz authorities imposed a state of emergency.

Kazakh Chairmanship Urges More Trust in Dialogue on European Security

The OSCE 8th Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) aiming to enhance the dialogue on security among the Organization's 56 participating States and organized through the efforts of Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship took place in Vienna's Hofburg Congress Center on June 14-16. Konstantin Zhigalov, Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister and Special Envoy of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office led the Kazakh delegation for the Organization's main review event held in the Austrian capital.

Opening the session on Monday, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the OSCE Kairat Abdrakhmanov expressed condolences to the Kyrgyz

people and families of victims in connection with the recent tragic events in Osh and Jalalabad. The participants then observed a moment of silence paying tribute to the deceased.

Deputy Minister Zhigalov read out a statement by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakh Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev in which he called the sides to abstain from force and settle the existing problems through dialogue and compromise.

In his address to the conference, Konstantin Zhigalov stressed Kazakhstan, as an OSCE chairman, pursues the task of ensuring a rapprochement in the positions of the participating States and searching for mutually acceptable solutions in the interest of comprehensive peace and security. At present, however, a crisis of confidence lies at the core of security challenges facing the OSCE region, Zhigalov noted.

"We see the crisis of confidence as our main problem. The stagnation of the arms control regime, the difficulties in resolving protracted conflicts and restoring an OSCE Mission to Georgia, all of which are at the centre of our Conference's discussions, provide graphic confirmation of this crisis of confidence or trust," he said.

Zhigalov also welcomed work to update the 1999 OSCE Vienna Document, saying this would "increase the degree of confidence and the effectiveness of the cooperation among the OSCE countries considerably". The Vienna Document is a confidence- and security-building measure that requires participating States to share information on armed forces and military activities.

Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister noted the OSCE-anchored dialogue on the future of European security known as the Corfu Process was a "unique chance for a renewal of the spirit of cooperation" and the Kazakh OSCE chairmanship hoped this dialogue and the OSCE's work in general would lead to mutual understanding, similar to what was achieved between Russia and the United States with the new START treaty.

He said the conference would contribute to the Corfu Process, which will be further discussed at the informal meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers in Almaty in mid-July.



Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Konstantin Zhigalov, addresses the opening of the Annual Security Review Conference in Vienna, 14 June 2010.

Photo by OSCE/Susanna Löf

Regarding the crisis in Kyrgyzstan, Zhigalov expressed condolences for the loss of lives and said it was “important to continue the active coordination of OSCE activities in efforts to stabilize the situation”.

Despite the measures taken and the support, the Interim Kyrgyz Government was “unable to secure control over the situation”, Zhigalov said. According to him, “political instability has led to more serious consequences and an interethnic conflict has arisen in the south.”

Kazakhstan has helped in resolving the conflict in the neighbouring country since the first days of the crisis and intends to continue taking all necessary efforts to further promote stabilization and settlement of the problem both on a bilateral basis and as the OSCE chairing state.

Discussing Georgia, Zhigalov said the Chairmanship was “in favour of strengthening the OSCE’s role in the region, in particular through the creation of a support group which could pay regular visits to the region. The question of restoring the OSCE’s field presence in Georgia is undoubtedly a matter of importance.”

The three-day working sessions’ agenda focused on a broad range of issues including transnational threats and challenges, the role and perspectives of arms control and confidence- and security-building regimes in building trust in the evolving security environment, threats and challenges stemming from the territory of Afghanistan and the OSCE’s contribution to stability in the region; and a review of OSCE police-related activities.

Annual Security Review Conference (ASRC) was established by the 2002 OSCE Ministerial Council in Porto “to enhance security dialogue among OSCE participating States and review the OSCE’s security work”.

Learning from the Past while Preparing for the Future

(This story by Robert Corzine was originally published in the IHT Kazakhstan section on June 2)



Kazakhstan will focus on expanding trade ties with Asian economies and attracting foreign investment, Prime Minister Karim Massimov says.

Kazakhstan is to strengthen its trade and investment links with high growth Asian economies, according to Karim Massimov, prime minister. He notes that infrastructure links between Kazakhstan and China, in particular, are rapidly expanding. The improved infrastructure links should spur growth and development in Kazakhstan. “They will not only reinforce existing trade channels,” he says, “but also serve as conduit to open new markets for Kazakhstan.”

Massimov says the 3,000-kilometer (1,865 mile) China oil pipeline is carrying Kazakh crude oil from Atyrau on the country’s Caspian Sea to Alashankou in China’s northwestern region of Xinjiang. Xinjiang is also the terminus of a natural-gas pipeline linking China to the prolific gas fields of Turkmenistan via Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. There are plans to link Kazakh gas supplies with the Central Asia pipeline to China.

In addition, Kazakhstan is upgrading the Western Europe-Western China road corridor, a \$7.5 billion, 2,840-kilometer route linking Europe to Western China via Russia and Kazakhstan. The project will upgrade existing roads and construct new bypasses and road alignments to make the route suitable for international traffic. Kazakhstan hopes the upgraded roads will stimulate economic development along one of the country’s main east-west arteries.

Massimov also says that Kazakhstan is seeking to diversify its sources of international capital and is “working to create access for Kazakhstan’s companies in new markets, particularly in Asia.”

As Kazakhstan shifts to a post-crisis strategy, Massimov says it is important to heed the “sobering” lessons of the past several years. “Regulation of the financial sector is being strengthened,” he says, “as are monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.” He adds that future emphasis will be on increasing the stability of the financial sector and the prevention of future crises. Massimov warns that although the worst of the global economic crisis may be over, there is no room for complacency. “The international economy remains fragile,” he says, “and markets are on edge, as evidenced by the unfolding debt crisis in Greece and the sharp loss of confidence in the euro.”

The prime minister says Kazakhstan will continue to follow a conservative fiscal policy while supporting key sectors of the economy. He emphasizes that Kazakhstan has \$55.2 billion in foreign-exchange reserves and in the national fund, into which the country's oil revenues flow, making it a net sovereign creditor. Economic activity is also on the rise, with annualized gross domestic product growth of 7.5 percent recorded during the first four months of this year. He says other positive indicators include low public debt levels, moderate inflation and falling unemployment.

Kazakhstan was one of the first countries to be hit by the global credit and economic crisis. Since 2007, it has spent \$19.3 billion to support and stabilize the economy, with special attention paid to the financial, real estate and agricultural sectors. But Massimov says that extensive state intervention in the economy did not undermine the government's fiscal discipline. He notes that government deficits were at modest levels of 3.1 percent of GDP in 2009 and are forecast at 4.1 percent of GDP for 2010. He adds that international investor sentiment for Kazakhstan has risen recently, with credit rating agencies having upgraded their outlook for the country.

Kazakhstan is taking steps to improve its overall business environment and attract foreign investors to different sectors of the economy, which is heavily dependent on natural resources. These include reduced bureaucracy, increased transparency, a stronger legal framework and tax reductions for non-extractive industries. In the World Bank's 2010 "Ease of Doing Business" survey, Kazakhstan ranks 63rd out of 183 countries, placing it ahead of regional peers such as Russia and Ukraine, as well as the European economies of Italy, Greece and Luxembourg.

In the past three years, Kazakhstan has attracted foreign direct investment of \$56.5 billion, mainly in the extractive industries. Massimov says the government is embarking on a major development and diversification strategy that should attract additional investment in the non-natural-resource sectors. "Kazakhstan is currently engaged in the largest industrialization program in its history," he says, "with 162 projects in both the public and private sectors planned over the next 10 years."

The prime minister says the customs union with Russia and Belarus, which came into effect at the beginning of this year, will also enhance the attractiveness of Kazakhstan as a destination for foreign investment. "As a result of the new single market," he says, "an investment in Kazakhstan will reach beyond its population of 15.6 million to a combined market of more than 170 million people."

Samruk-Kazyna: Our Main Tasks Are Stabilizing and Diversifying Economy

(This story by Robert Corzine was originally published in the IHT Kazakhstan section on June 2)

Samruk-Kazyna, Kazakhstan's state holding company and national welfare fund, is to invest \$24.4 billion over the next five years in more than 40 strategic infrastructure and industrial projects, according to Kairat Kelimbetov, the group's chief executive.

Kelimbetov says the ambitious spending program by Samruk-Kazyna, which is essentially Kazakhstan's sovereign wealth fund, will create 45,000 construction jobs during the five-year period and will result in 10,000 permanent jobs. Samruk-Kazyna, which controls 400 companies, has been the government's main vehicle for dealing with the economic crisis. "Our main tasks are stabilizing the economy and diversifying it," says Kelimbetov, "contributing to the growth of the companies and improving their corporate governance."

He adds that over the past 18 months, Samruk-Kazyna has been particularly focused on stabilizing the financial and real estate sectors, and on helping small and medium - sized businesses, all of which were badly hit by the economic downturn. Around \$10 billion was injected into the economy.

The banking sector in particular has required significant attention. "Thanks to Samruk-Kazyna," says Kelimbetov, "the four largest banks in the country have avoided financial problems, and some of them even avoided collapse during this period."



"Kazakhstan has learned the right lessons from the economic crisis. That is why we have already returned to the level of economic growth we had before", Kayrat Kelimbetov says.

Photo by National Press Club

At the end of 2008, bank debts in Kazakhstan amounted to \$45 billion. Kelimbetov says Samruk-Kazyna has “successfully completed the restructuring of the banks and has cleaned up their portfolios of bad assets, and has significantly reduced external debt pressures.” He adds that Samruk-Kazyna will continue to support the banks, and he predicts that the state’s shares in them could be sold within three to five years.

Although the state has been forced to intervene extensively in the economy, he says, “we strongly believe that not only the banking and construction sectors but all drivers of the economy should be in the private sector.”

Kelimbetov says Samruk-Kazyna is now shifting focus to “post-crisis development,” with the emphasis on large-scale infrastructure and investment projects.

“It is time to expand the volume of foreign investment, increase the number of investment projects, ensure non-oil and gas export growth, and develop small and medium businesses,” he says. “In 2010-14, special attention will be paid to the development of infrastructure and electricity, as well as investment projects in the chemical, petrochemical and metallurgical industries.” He notes that the Samruk-Kazyna fund enables the country to realize large projects in the range of \$2 billion to \$6 billion.

Corporate governance is another top priority for Kelimbetov, who says Samruk-Kazyna companies must concentrate on making “efficient decisions for maximizing profits and improving their cost base.”

Kelimbetov points out that a number of lessons have been learned by the country as a result of the crisis. “The crisis showed us that the private sector was not as powerful as it pretended to be,” he says. “Everybody was liberal, independent and great before the crisis, but the crisis showed us that we do not have great national champions. We helped the private sector a lot. We supported all construction sectors, which were private. Thanks to Samruk-Kazyna, the people did not stop trusting the financial sector. We all know how important is this word trust.”

He adds that, despite massive state intervention in the economy, he does not see a conflict between the state holding company and the private sector. He notes the key role played by Samruk-Kazyna’s various development agencies in providing funds for new or expanding private businesses as well as in specific programs to support small and medium-sized enterprises.

Kelimbetov stresses that one of Samruk-Kazyna’s priorities is to sell assets — where there is no need for government participation—to efficient private owners. “Privatization is needed to create more efficient management,” he says. “It may also include placement of shares on the stock exchange as well as attracting portfolio and strategic investors.”

Kazakhstan’s post-crisis emphasis will also be on motivating large investors and national companies to launch jointly strategic, mutually linked industrial projects. “Under the State Program of Forced Industrial-Innovative Development,” says Kelimbetov, “some 237 investment projects need to be realized, totaling about \$40 billion. Samruk-Kazyna will focus on investment projects in basic industries such as oil and gas, mining, uranium and the chemical industry. In accordance with basic industries, we need to develop all required infrastructure — transport, telecommunications and electricity supply.”

Kelimbetov stresses that Samruk-Kazyna is actively working on attracting direct investments from foreign companies and entities. Last year, neighboring China provided \$13 billion in credits from the Export- Import Bank of China and the State Development Bank of China, of which \$5 billion went to support the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan and \$3 billion will be used to finance projects in the mining and metallurgical industry. The remainder will be used to finance investments in strategically important sectors such as oil and gas, petrochemicals, transport, power, metallurgical, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

Civic Participation and Unity Grow as Campaign Sweeps Across Kazakhstan

A civic campaign which started locally with youngsters helping war veterans with grocery shopping and restoring playgrounds has now grown beyond imagination into a nationwide action uniting people of all walks of life in a common purpose, to develop a greater sense of belonging and participation in the live of their communities.

The “We Are One Team” campaign, spearheaded by the Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan, an umbrella organization for 500 non-governmental organizations across the country, now includes free health checks by medical teams in rural communities, friendly volleyball and football matches in inner cities, restoration of children’s playgrounds in cities and villages, cleaning up backyards in residential areas and many other activities, supported now by both local authorities and private companies.



The notion of one team really makes a lot of sense as this civic campaign gathers thousands across the country having a sincere desire to do charity work and help the society.

Campaign poster by the Civil Alliance

While these actions seem to be routine and banal, they unmask a growing sense of involvement among the Kazakh people who have realized that after almost two decades of building individualistic capitalism communities do matter and it is up to them, not authorities, to nurture the sense of belonging and oneness with their neighbours. Volunteerism is growing in Kazakhstan, and this campaign is leading the way.

In fact, this is the very goal of the campaign embraced wholly by the Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan, as its executive director Alina Khamatdinova explains: “Our goal is to develop the culture of charity in Kazakhstan, for this is an inalienable part of social accord and national unity. We are going to hold the NGOs National Conference in July this year with a view of elaborating the concept of civil society. The Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan is willing to mastermind new ideas, more advanced and modern directions and views enabling our country to develop faster. We believe it is high time to realize these tasks today.”

Just this week, more than a hundred young activists in Taraz launched an action “Let Us Preserve Our Backyard” which brought together inhabitants of apartment blocs in cleaning and restoring the beauty of their environs. In Pavlodar,

a volleyball amateur competition was staged as participants from the Student Alliance of Kazakhstan, the Union of Rural Youth and others promoted the healthy way of life.

The campaign, unfolding in a multi-ethnic Kazakhstan against the backdrop of deadly violence among ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, has drawn attention from experts from abroad.

Aleksey Vlasov, director of the Moscow State University’s analytical centre, in an opinion in Russia’s *Tribuna* newspaper wrote: “The Kazakh experience is also relevant for other post-Soviet countries where the non-governmental sector boasts huge inner potential and which can only be implemented if authorities and the civil centre will act as one team.”

Vlasov noted that “bringing together the efforts of officials, businessmen, and volunteers can give a major boost to resolving so called micro-problems which is what constitutes the weakest links in the social fabric of a society.”

Also in the News:

- The “Medialife” Public Foundation with the support of the Soros Foundation – Kazakhstan and the OSCE Centre in Astana in cooperation with the Human Rights Committee under the President of Kazakhstan, and the Kazakh Ministry of Communications and Information is holding a meeting of experts on the subject of “Adoption of Law on Access to Information in Kazakhstan: Reality and Perspectives” on June 22-23, 2010. The meeting will gather representatives of civil society, state bodies and Diplomatic Corps of Kazakhstan with a view of elaborating a single position on the draft laws “On access to information” and “On information and its protection”. Following the meeting, practical recommendations will be worked out.
- Standard & Poor’s Ratings Services said on Wednesday it had raised the long-term local currency rating on the Development Bank of Kazakhstan (DBK) to “BBB” from “BBB-”. At the same time, the agency affirmed the “BBB-” long-term foreign currency and “A-3” short-term issuer credit ratings on DBK. The rating action reflects its view of DBK’s increased importance for and link to the Kazakh government, and “almost certain” probability of extraordinary government support. DBK is the primary vehicle for providing long-term credit to non-extractive sectors of the Kazakh economy, and the expansion of these sectors is one of the government’s main strategic development targets.

- HSBC Holdings said on Thursday it agreed to buy retail banking assets of Royal Bank of Scotland's Kazakhstan business for \$52 million in cash. In a statement, HSBC said it will acquire RBS Kazakhstan's personal customer loan and credit card portfolios, together with four branches, 80 ATMs and two support offices. "This acquisition reflects HSBC's positive view of Kazakhstan's long term prospects, not least because of its trade flows with China. We have been in Kazakhstan for 12 years and today's deal significantly increases our platform for growth by doubling our network and growing our customer base fivefold", chief executive of HSBC in Kazakhstan Simen Munter said.
- Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev met the Ambassador of Latvia Alberts Sarkanis on June 15 in Astana. Tokayev said he was confident the appointment of Sarkanis as the head of the Latvian diplomatic mission will provide a new impetus to the development of cooperation between the two countries. The parties discussed interaction within the frameworks of international and inter-parliamentary organizations, including the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly.
- Within preparation to the first Eurasian Congress on Roman Law, an International Human Rights Conference was held in the Italian Valmontone city on June 15. Kazakhstan's Human Rights Ombudsman Askar Shakirov participated in the conference, having familiarized the participants with the priority tasks of Kazakhstan aimed at improving the legal policy and law-enforcement practices in the field of human rights protection.
- The collegium of the General Prosecutor's Office held a regular meeting in Astana on June 15. The meeting dealt with the issues of observance of constitutional rights and freedoms by criminal investigation agencies during the criminal proceedings and prosecutor's supervision in the related field. During the discussions, the participants noted relevance of the reviewed problems and said it is important to further increase the effectiveness of measures taken in order to prevent wrongful acts by the officials conducting criminal proceedings.
- The militaries of Kazakhstan, Russia and Tajikistan have finished their three-day inspection of the 8th border regiment of the National Liberation Army of China (NLAC) on Thursday, June 17. According to the so-called "Moscow Agreement", the inspection aims at verifying annual information on the number of arms and weapons, military machines and personnel, located within the 100-kilometre zone on both sides of the Kazakh-Chinese border line. Chinese military officials will hold similar inspection on the territory of Kazakhstan on June 21-23.
- A new international education centre will open in Almaty within the framework of Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). It will operate on the basis of the Kazakh Institute of Geophysics Research of the National Nuclear Centre and prepare experts for monitoring seismic events and nuclear tests. The project aims at ensuring seismic security in Kazakhstan. The Norwegian Seismic Array (NORSAR) is to provide financial, technical and methodological assistance in establishing the centre.

Things to Watch:

- Counteraction to corruption will be in the spotlight during the Conference in Burabay resort area of Kazakhstan on June 24-25. Representatives of nearly forty countries from across the world, including officials, business associations non-governmental, academic and other international organizations will discuss the methods and instruments of fighting the corruption. The Forum is organized by the OSCE Centre in Astana in cooperation with UNDP and the Transparency Kazakhstan social foundation.
- More than 350 military officers from Kazakhstan will pass the examination on driving military vehicles, firing proficiency and physical training on the Matybulak ground of Gvardeyskiy post in Zhambyl region of Kazakhstan next week. During the four-day examination the heads of the Kazakh army will also partake in the command and staff military training game and pass psychological tests.
- Andrea Bocelli will give his first concert in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, on July 5 at the opening of the Khan Shatyr centre, kicking off festivities for Astana's 12th anniversary. The performance in Astana by the world's renowned tenor will mark the artist's first visit to Central Asia. Andrea Bocelli said, "As an artist, I am mainly looking forward to the warmth of the audience, I hope I'll leave a nice memory of myself and my music, which I'll bring from my

country to Kazakhstan.” Andrea Bocelli will perform in Astana before taking center stage at the FIFA World Cup Grand Finale in South Africa. With one of the world’s most recognizable voices in music, Andrea Bocelli continues to defy categorization, age barriers and labels of all kinds. A global household name, he has sold over 70 million albums to date. Opera represents only one side of his musical persona, as Andrea Bocelli fares equally well as a pop singer, having recorded duets and performed on stage with Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras, Celine Dion, Sarah Brightman, and Eros Ramazzotti. Amongst the multitude of acknowledgments received in his career, Andrea Bocelli was honored with seven World Music Awards including “World’s Best Classical Artist” in 2010.

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