

# Kazakhstan independence day



Night view: The contemporary skyline of Astana lights up the Ishim River. First designed by Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa, Astana is the new capital city at the heart of the nation. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

## Further deepening of strategic partnership with Japan

Rising Kazakhstan continues to pursue new global initiatives for safer, cleaner energy

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KAZAKHSTAN

On Dec. 16, our country celebrates one of the most important national holidays — the Independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan.



On this day, exactly 21 years ago, our country gained its independence, laying the foundation of new Kazakhstan.

Thanks to the enormous efforts of our first President and Leader of the Nation Nursultan Nazarbayev, who became the author of Kazakhstan's unique model of development during a historically short period of time, Kazakhstan has taken a quantum leap from economic and political chaos of the early 1990s to the modern welfare state with a dynamically growing market economy, democratic institutions, political stability, ethnic and religious harmony, as well as significant international recognition.

It should be fair to say that the merits of our leader are known not only in Kazakhstan, but also far beyond its borders.

Having experienced the horrors of nuclear weapons ourselves, Kazakhstan from the first days of its independence has been one of the leaders of the international movement for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

On Aug. 29, 1991, President Nursultan Nazarbayev by his unilateral decree permanently shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, the second-largest in the world, and a year and a half later an already independent Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear and missile arsenal.

By these steps, Kazakhstan has charted a way toward a nuclear-weapons-free world and, by following successful development, has proven that dialogue and peaceful and

trustful cooperation with other countries serve as much more solid security guarantees than huge arsenals of the deadliest weapons.

In 2009, the U.N. General Assembly unanimously approved the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, declaring Aug. 29, the closing date of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. It should be particularly emphasized that the coauthors of the appropriate resolution were 26 states, including Japan, which is another example of the recognition of Kazakhstan's contribution to the strengthening of international security and non-proliferation.

The new initiative of Kazakhstan was brought forward at the Global Nuclear Security Summits in Washington, D.C., and Seoul, and the establishment of the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank has generated possible developments.

In this regard, on Aug. 27-29, 2012, Astana hosted the international conference "From a Nuclear Test Ban to a Nuclear-Weapons-Free World," organized by the Majilis of the Parliament, the Nazarbayev Center and the Foreign Ministry on the Kazakhstan side, and by the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNNND).

This forum in the Kazakh capital that gathered parliamentarians and scientists from more than 70 countries was another important step toward strengthening closer international cooperation in the field of nonproliferation and nuclear disarmament, and supporting Kazakhstan's international initiatives in this area.

During the forum, the President Nursultan Nazarbayev launched the international campaign "The ATOM Project." Under the project, any human being on Earth, who stands against nuclear weapons can sign an online petition (at [www.theATOM-Project.org](http://www.theATOM-Project.org)) urging governments

of the world to abandon nuclear tests forever.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to urge the readers of The Japan Times and all the people of good will to support the ATOM Project and to make the creation of the non-nuclear world our main goal.

And, it is obvious that Kazakhstan's example becomes especially timely and needed today when the world is facing further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, while the threat of their use by international terrorist organizations is also growing.

Kazakhstan, as a multiethnic and multireligious state, fully supports the global process aimed at promoting of dialogue between civilizations and religions. Under the initiative of our country, UNESCO declared 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures; and 2013-2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

This noble goal is also devoted to the practice of holding congresses of leaders of world and traditional religions on Kazakh soil.

Over the past nine years, four times the capital Astana has gathered together leaders of major world and traditional religions, including representatives of the Japanese Association of Shinto Shrines aka Jinja Honcho. In addition to its direct inter-religious values, the congress is an important and effective international policy instrument to serve peace and stability in the world, as well as to bring together political and religious leaders for convergence of civilizations, nations and countries.

In 2013, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the convening of the first congress, and on this important occasion the members of the newly established permanent body of the congress — the Council of Religious Leaders — intend to make a special statement in which they plan to highlight the importance and relevance of the dialogue,

and the increase in the peace-keeping role of religious and spiritual leaders.

Against this background, it is necessary to stress the importance of the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to convene a Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) that united 24 states occupying more than 90 percent of the territory of Asia and half the world's population.

The main purpose of the CICA is to strengthen cooperation through multilateral approaches to peace, security and stability in Asia.

As a matter of fact, the CICA has basically reached such a level of interaction that provides for a transition to a more efficient form of its participation in the system of modern international relations in Eurasia and globally. We are speaking about the prospect of establishing a new full-fledged international Organization on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the OICA.

During past years the CICA has considerably expanded its geographic scope. Vietnam, Bahrain, Iraq and Cambodia have become new members. Bangladesh and the Philippines became observers. Japan is now an observer of the CICA, but we hope Japan will also become a full member of the forum in the near future.

As part of the 20th anniversary of the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, on Sept. 12, 2012, a Commemorative Session and the fourth Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CICA were held in Astana.

As a responsible member of the world community, Kazakhstan proposes to work together to form a new world order in both virtual (via the Internet) and real dialogue through G-GLOBAL. In this regard, our website has millions of users engaged in a dialogue on a wide range of issues on the formation of a new world order in the 21st

century.

The economic model implemented by President Nursultan Nazarbayev proved its high effectiveness and stability during the recent global crisis. Despite it, Kazakhstan was able to minimize the negative trends and quickly return to the path of sustainable growth.

Over the past decade and a half our economy has been growing by an average of 7 percent annually. Compared with the initial period of independence, gross domestic product (GDP) grew by more than 16 times. In 2011, GDP growth was 7.5 percent. In the first half of 2012, Kazakhstan's economic growth was 5.6 percent, while real income grew by 12.8 percent. Today, GDP per capita is approaching to \$12,000, and according to the World Bank, Kazakhstan entered the category of upper-middle-income countries. Prior to 2016, we plan to provide an annual GDP growth of 7 percent.

Another indication of the global assessment of our economic model is improvement of Kazakhstan's performance in the World Bank's Doing Business Report. In the 2013 edition of the report, Kazakhstan ranked 49th, up 7 positions, occupying a leading position among the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The stable and dynamic development of Kazakhstan promotes more intensive partnership with foreign partners. Since 1991, our economy attracted \$150 billion of foreign investment (more than 80 percent of investment flows to Central Asia). The largest investors and captains of the world's business are widely presented in Kazakhstan. Only in 2011, the volume of investments amounted \$18 billion.

In 2011, Kazakhstan's foreign trade grew by 40 percent to \$126 billion. Exports of Kazakh products to international markets totalled \$88 billion with more than \$21 billion coming from exports



Global project: The official poster (left) of the international campaign against nuclear tests, The ATOM Project, which was launched by the government of Kazakhstan during the international conference "From a Nuclear Test Ban to a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World" in the capital Astana in August. Above: Launched in 2008, realizing President Nursultan Nazarbayev's proposal, the Astana Economic Forum ([www.aef.kz](http://www.aef.kz)) will hold its sixth meeting in May 2013. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

of non-primary goods. This is the first time in our economy. During the first nine months of 2012, Kazakhstan's foreign trade exceeded \$101 billion, up 10.9 percent in comparison with the same period of 2011.

EXPO 2017 will indeed be the first international exposition to be held in Central Asia and the CIS.

Also, I would like to mention the relations between Kazakhstan and Japan, which crossed the 20-year threshold this year.

We highly appreciate the support that Japan has provided to the development of Kazakhstan in the first days of our independence. And it should be noted that Japan is one of the first countries that recognized the independence of Kazakhstan and all these years the nation has remained a reliable and constructive partner.

The last few years have been a breakthrough in bilateral economic and trade relations as a result of the burgeoning cooperation in industry, energy and finance.

In 2011, bilateral trade amounted to \$1.688 billion. According to the National Bank of Kazakhstan, in 2011 Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) to the Kazakh economy grew by 15.1 percent to \$747.3 million. Starting from 1993, the gross inflow of Japanese FDI to Kazakhstan has exceeded \$4 billion.

Bilateral trade and economic partnership received a powerful impetus in 2008 during the visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Japan, when the parties identified new paths and perspectives of economic and investment cooperation.

In May 2012, during the visit of Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yukio Edano to Astana, the two countries adopted a road map to strengthen economic and investment relations

in the implementation of major investment projects in the nuclear and petrochemical industries, the mining sector and technology transfer.

Closer economic ties are also maintained by the activities of joint committees and commissions of government and private sectors for economic cooperation, whose next meeting will be held in Tokyo in spring 2013.

Political dialogue also develops very dynamically based on interparliamentary contacts between parliamentarian friendship groups.

On Nov. 9-10, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov visited Tokyo to participate in the Fourth Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central Asia plus Japan Dialogue. Based on the results of meetings with Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba and Minister Edano, the parties noted the importance of the further deepening of the strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and Japan, both bilaterally and in the framework of regional and international organizations.

At the conclusion, I would like to express our hopes for the further development of strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and Japan for the sake of the prosperity of our nations.

We are confident about the bright future of our bilateral relations.

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev gave a special speech on Dec. 14 in the capital Astana. The transcript is available on the official website of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Tokyo at [www.embkaz.jp.org](http://www.embkaz.jp.org)



Conferences: Leaders of world and traditional religions meet in Astana on May 30. Right: A Commemorative Session and the fourth Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) are held in Astana on Sept. 12. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN





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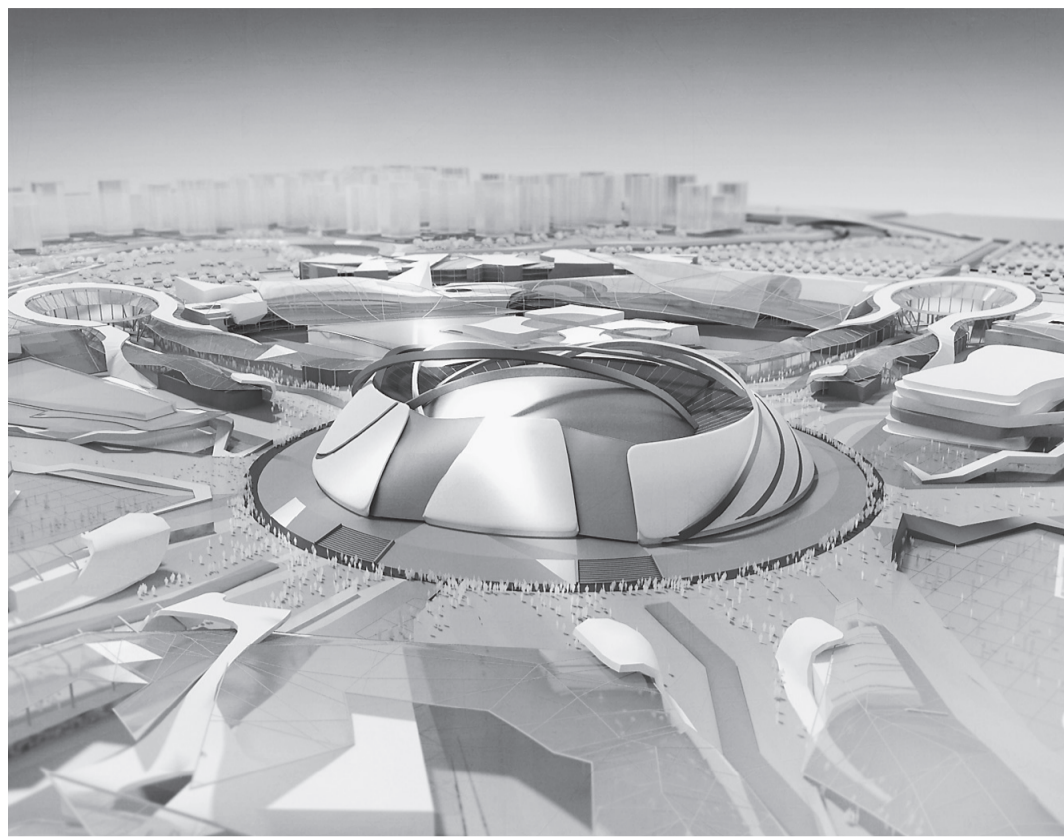
## Expo 2017: the first global exposition in Central Asia

"We are fully aware of the historic responsibility that rests on us. This is the first time that Expo will be held in the center of the huge Eurasian continent. I am sure that the international exhibition 'Future Energy' will give a powerful impulse to transformations in world energy. Kazakhstan will do its maximum to ensure it takes place at the highest level."

President of Kazakhstan  
Nursultan Nazarbayev



**First in Central Asia: Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev speaks at a press conference in Paris on Nov. 23 after Kazakhstan won the right to host Expo 2017. Right: A model shows the Expo venue in Astana for 2017 under the theme "Energy of the Future."** EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN



On Nov. 22, Kazakhstan's capital received the overwhelming majority of votes at the 152nd General Assembly session of the Bureau International des Expositions (International Exhibitions Bureau) in Paris and was chosen to host the International Expo in 2017.

"I want to inform you that we have just achieved another big victory for our country," Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev said at a special press conference in Paris after the announcement of the results. "The secret vote showed that the vast majority of 148 countries participating in the vote support Kazakhstan's bid. We have received 103 votes and defeated the bid by Liege (Belgium)."

"Thus, Kazakhstan received recognition as a country capable of holding an event of this scale. It is a great honor, a great happiness for Kazakhstan, since representatives of more than 100 countries will arrive to our country. They will build pavilions at the exhibition, major responsibility will lay on us, but we will keep all infrastructures to be built afterward in Astana," the president said.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that the Expo always serves as the ground for the best technological, scientific and cultural achievements. Events of

this scale are attended by millions of people from dozens of countries. He also mentioned that Astana Expo 2017 will be the first international exhibition of such a level ever to be held in any Central Asian country or member nation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. He also added that the theme "Future Energy" suggested by Astana is timely and of high importance for the sustainable development of the world.

"Expo 2017 will promote Kazakhstan all over the world. The exhibition defines the agenda for the world economic development. This event is beneficial for the whole of Kazakhstan, to all people of Kazakhstan, and will demonstrate our capabilities. I once again want to congratulate all the people of Kazakhstan with this victory," the president said.

The theme proposed by Astana is aimed at finding ways to achieve qualitative changes in the energy sector, primarily for the development of alternative sources of energy and new ways of transportation. Finding

sustainable energy supplies is a key and growing global problem, and the solution must be found to ensure economic growth and living standards while reducing the burden on the environment. Kazakhstan's choice of the topic is due to the fact that, with significant reserves of natural energy resources, the country has been consistently taking steps to use alternative energy sources, and has committed itself to building a green economy.

Kazakhstan has enormous potential in renewable energy, particularly in wind and solar. Wind power can potentially produce 25 times more energy in a year than is currently produced from the country's hydrocarbons. The government also sees vast opportunities to conserve energy, including at the consumer end by 50 to 60 percent. Urgent steps are already being taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Kazakhstan will be the first CIS country to launch a cap-and-trade system starting in January 2013.

Kazakhstan's capital has al-

ready gained experience in holding major international events, including the Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Asian Winter Games. Astana is a modern city with a dynamic and comfortable environment for business and residence.

According to Astana Mayor Imangali Tasmagambetov, "Astana is the place where the energy of the youth sets the rhythm of the city."

"We also want to underline prospects. The Expo will expand its borders up to territories that occupy the ninth place in the world, which coincides with the mission of Expo to have planetary significance," the mayor said as he sought to emphasize the importance of the Expo for Kazakhstan and for the world.

"A total of 2.5 billion people live in close proximity to our country. It's only a three-hour flight from the capital city of India, a five-hour flight from the capital of China and a three-hour flight from Moscow. We have established excellent con-

nections. We have repeatedly held global events, including the Asian Winter Games, the Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe," Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Kairat Kelimbetov underlined. "Astana has extensive experience in conducting major events, and in fact, I would say that our country plans to hold the world Universiade in 2017, and I think that Astana provides a sufficiently large number of people and really make it possible for further spread of the ideas of green economy not only in the region, but also in other parts of the world."

The victory of Astana's bid capped a two-year campaign by the two competing cities. It all began in December 2010 when plans were announced for Astana to bid for Expo 2017. Later, on June 10, 2011, at the headquarters of the BIE in Paris, MFA Executive Secretary and national Expo 2017 coordinator Rapol Zhoshybayev met with the General Secretary of the BIE Vincent Gonzales Loscertales. Dur-

ing their meeting, Zhoshybayev submitted Kazakhstan's official candidacy signed by the prime minister.

The campaign organized in support of Astana's candidacy was held all over the world. Thus, in early October a nine-month auto expedition of Kazakhstan's Geographic Society started. Its leader, biker Dmitry Petrukhin, planned to visit 35 of the 160 member countries of the BIE in the Americas, including Latin America and the Caribbean.

Also, the Kazakh film "Astana Expo 2017: The Great Expectation of Kazakhstan" received the second prize Silver Dolphin Award at the annual international festival "Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards" in the category "Corporate Video."

The exhibition will be held for three months in the summer of 2017. The city expects up to 5 million visitors to attend the event. Expo 2017 in Astana would also coincide with the city's 20th anniversary as the capital of Kazakhstan.

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on the Occasion of  
the 21st Anniversary of  
Their Independence

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