

Kazakhstan National Day Special

Multifaceted progress in domestic and global spheres

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On Dec. 16, 1991, the Republic of Kazakhstan declared itself as an independent state. Over these 27 years, Kazakhstan has become a politically stable and economically prosperous country. My country has taken a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for 2017-2018 and has seen a remarkable rise in the World Bank's 2019 Ease of Doing Business index, climbing to 28th out of 190 countries.

Relations with Japan are one of Kazakhstan's most important priorities of foreign policy. Over the years, Kazakhstan and Japan have built a strong foundation for a strategic partnership. From economic development and energy cooperation to combating transnational threats, our joint work has advanced our shared goals and contributed to global security.

I would like to note that the visit of the Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe to Astana in October 2015 and the visit of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to Tokyo in November 2016 gave a powerful impetus to expanding bilateral relations.

Both countries continue to work well together across different economic fields. There is committed involvement by Japanese companies in the economy of Kazakhstan. I would like to highlight the organization of the business forum in Tokyo on Dec. 11 as an excellent opportunity for companies from both countries to have discussed partnerships and collaboration.

First president of Kazakhstan

The entire historical experience of the formation of Kazakhstan over the years of independence indicates the depth and significance of the set ambitious goals. The solution of these tasks became possible because the president was and is at the helm of the young state. The strategic course of the country for peaceful cooperation with neighboring states was both the result and instrument for establishing sovereignty and independence of the state.

National leaders don't build a country or economic and social progress; these are delivered through the combined efforts of millions of people. That is why the president has stressed that Kazakhstan's achievements are the collective product of the country as a whole, as will be the case with the hoped-for successes of the future.

A leader who has his country's interests at heart can accelerate progress by helping provide a framework, and a stable, reassuring environment that encourages people to work together toward common goals.

The decisive steps he has taken, such as shutting down one of the world's largest nuclear test sites, renouncing nuclear weapons and promoting dialogue and respect for international law, have defined Kazakhstan in the world. This approach and the friendships forged at the highest level have helped our country, for

example, be elected to the United Nations Security Council — a major step for both Kazakhstan and the entire region.

The president continues to set the direction and challenges Kazakhstan to build on the progress it has made. He remains determined that young Kazakhs will enjoy even greater opportunities and prosperity. And, in voluntarily giving up powers to Parliament last year, he has shown his desire for further political reform.

Celebrating a rich history

Kazakhstan is striving for nation building and a consolidation of its own identity. Kazakhstan has started an ambitious modernization process, succeeding in creating an economically and politically stable country in the heart of the Eurasian steppe. The president's article "Seven Facets of the Great Steppe" is dedicated to the history of Kazakhstan, and celebrating the rich history of the country and its people, as well as the part played by the region in global civilization.

These efforts stem from recognition that a greater knowledge and understanding of shared roots and values is critical for the health of a nation. As we have seen across the world, such knowledge helps bind a country and its people together.

This article demonstrates a huge amount to celebrate in Kazakhstan's history — the domestication of the horse and the advanced production of metals, both of which can be traced back to these lands, are hugely important in human development.

These new initiatives are important for citizens of Kazakhstan so they can better understand the history of this region and the part those who lived here played in human development. They can only strengthen further the bonds that unite our country as well, of course, as attracting more visitors to Kazakhstan.

New financial center

Kazakhstan's ambitious project to establish a financial services center in Astana is now real, as the country launched the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) on July 5.

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde conveyed her congratulations and said the AIFC is a "great opportunity and platform for Kazakhstan and the region to develop (a) deeper financial market and attract investment."



Astana became the capital of Kazakhstan in 1997 and boasts futuristic infrastructure blended with the country's culture. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

The new financial center is set to offer financial services, including financial technologies, Islamic finance, green finance, capital markets and asset management.

The center enjoys a special legal regime envisioned by constitutional law and offers incentives to companies, including exemption from corporate income tax and personal income tax for 50 years, a visa-free regime for citizens of 48 countries and a simplified employment regime. AIFC focuses on enhancing growth through its main strategic pillars such as capital markets, asset management, financial technology, Islamic finance and private banking, while paying a great deal of attention to green finance.

Status of the Caspian Sea

After two decades of diplomatic efforts, the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea was signed at the Fifth Caspian Summit in Aktau, Kazakhstan, on Aug. 12 by the presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkmenistan.

The convention established the rights and obligations of the parties with respect to the sea, and settled a long dispute over whether to consider the body of water a sea, which would make it subject to international maritime law and accessible by outside countries, or to consider it a lake, which would require dividing it equally among its five coastal nations. The dispute was settled by granting the body of water a special legal status.

The countries agreed on freedom of transit to other seas and oceans, and foresee the possibility for laying pipelines under the waters if environmental requirements are observed.

U.N. Security Council

In January, Kazakhstan steered the work of one of the main U.N. bodies, guided by the president's policy address to the U.N. Security Council called Kazakhstan's Concept Vision on Sustaining Global Partnership for a Secure, Just and Prosperous World, as well as its pragmatic national interests.

The flagship event of Kazakhstan's presidency of the U.N. Security Council was a high-level thematic briefing "Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Confidence-Building Measures" held on Jan. 18, and chaired by the president. The meeting demonstrated that confidence-

building measures, and the strengthening of preventive diplomacy tools, can serve as a starting point for making progress on many critical issues.

The statement by the president of the U.N. Security Council (S/PRST/2018/1) adopted at the end of the meeting is devoted to a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy. Additionally, this document included for the first time the problems of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

On Jan. 18, Kazakhstan held a special high-level event at the U.N. headquarters to launch the draft Code of Conduct for the Achievement of a Terrorism-Free World, with the goal to achieve a terrorism-free world by 2045 and create a broad international coalition of partner countries.

Kazakhstan, being the first Central Asian state elected to the U.N. Security Council for 2017-2018, continued actively promoting the interests of all states of our region.

Global stability

The Astana Club, a platform to debate public issues based on Chatham House rules, held its fourth annual meeting on Nov. 12 to 13. The meeting focused on challenges facing the Eurasian region and the building of Eurasian strategic architecture gathered 50 leading experts, politicians and diplomats from 33 countries.

The president noted the escalating geopolitical rivalry between China, Russia and the United States also impacts the Greater Eurasia context. Economic contradictions are on the rise with an increasing threat posed on global economies. Poverty and the unemployment rate, he noted, will continue to rise.

He once again pleaded to the countries to step up efforts toward achieving a nuclear weapons-free world.

As he went on to propose various solutions to bolster global security, the presi-



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Nursultan Nazarbayev shake hands at their meeting in Astana on Oct. 27, 2015. EMBASSY OF KAZAKHSTAN

dent proposed organizing a conference in 2020 for discussing this possibility that will also mark the document's 40th anniversary. Additionally, he underlined the need to build a trust-based dialogue between nuclear powers and step up negotiations to decrease nuclear arsenals and create nuclear weapon-free zones.

To address growing trade tensions, the president urged the countries to negotiate under the auspices of the World Trade Organization. He also believes Asia needs its own collective security organization.

"It is a matter of time. The Kazakh initiative of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) may serve as the foundation for future security and cooperation organization in Asia." To this purpose, as the first step, he

suggested organizing a joint consultative meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, CICA and the Association of South East Asian Nations regional forum on security.

The president highlighted the importance of organizing a Eurasian security conference, similar to the Munich Security Conference that has taken place in Munich since 1963. The sixth proposal elaborated by the president stresses the need for the international community to develop a global strategy of cooperation in the development of information space.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

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on the Occasion of
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