



Kazakhstan News Bulletin

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Say it in Kazakh:

Foods you would find in Kazakhstan:

Beshbarmak --- the most traditional Kazakh dish, a boiled meat and pastry combination

Manty --- steamed meat dumplings

Plov --- a rice pilaf dish

Samsa --- a baked meat pastry

Chak-chak --- a sweet pastry dessert with honey and dried fruits

Kazakh Embassy Reception Marks Growing Partnership with US

Representatives of the U.S. Government and private industry and Kazakh officials feted the continually growing partnership between the two countries at an Embassy reception just a few blocks from the White House in Washington, DC, on June 7.

Highlights of the reception included speeches from Ambassador Kanat Saudabayev and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher.

The Ambassador told audience of more than 100 guests the relationship between the two nations "is strong and offers a bright and promising future." He noted growing ties between Astana and Washington in three key areas, including cooperation in security, fighting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the war on terrorism; economy and energy; as well as promoting democracy and civil society. The best evidence of this growing relationship is the constant two way flow of visitors, including recent visits by U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney to Astana and secretaries of agriculture, state and energy, and trips to the US by the Speaker of the Kazakh Senate, a deputy defense minister and the planned visit of Foreign Minister Tokaev to Washington.

The Ambassador reminded his audience of Kazakhstan's troops in Iraq working side by side with other coalition forces to build a normal life for that nation's people. He noted the presence of more than 300 American companies in Kazakhstan, and the expected future U.S. investment of 100 billion dollars within the next decade. Drawing attention to Kazakhstan's reserves of oil and gas, including 75 percent of those in the Caspian, the Ambassador said "the prospects for U.S. participation in the Kazakh economy grow ever brighter."

At right: Ambassador Kanat Saudabayev looks on as Assistant Secretary Boucher delivers his positive message about U.S.-Kazakh relations at the reception.



The Ambassador noted positive strides in Kazakhstan's democratic reforms, saying "economic successes in Kazakhstan allow the country to take bold steps in pursuing greater democracy."

The Ambassador boasted that in 15 years of independence Kazakhstan has moved "from a backward Soviet republic to a regional leader and a country spreading its positive message beyond its borders, and the most stable and reliable partner and friend of the U.S. in our part of the world."

As examples of Kazakhstan's outreach, the Ambassador noted Kazakhstan's strong desire to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to become chairman-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2009. He noted WTO negotiations with the U.S. and other countries are going well and added, "We are also hoping our main friend and partner, the United States, will support us in our bid for OSCE chairmanship as a vote of confidence in Kazakhstan's continued drive to democracy."

Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher noted that "Relations with Kazakhstan are very important to us. It is a dynamic relationship, and we would like to see it grow."

Boucher told the audience, "As far as economic cooperation is concerned, I think everybody knows how actively our energy cooperation is developing. But, there are many other areas of potential involvement, such as promoting regional cooperation, trade along the North-South corridor, and exporting energy resources and electricity along the same route via Afghanistan."

He said the U.S. is looking very optimistically at the growing dialog and cooperation with Kazakhstan on democracy. Boucher concluded, "We do everything possible to support Kazakhstan's independence, Kazakhstan's sovereignty. We do this as equal partners, so that Kazakhstan has options in cooperation with Russia, China, the U.S., India and other countries. The availability of such options will promote future development of Kazakhstan."

The guests applauded both sets of remarks and proceeded to enjoy the treats from the Kazakh kitchen.



The Embassy staff team from the Kazakh kitchen poses with their masterpieces served at the reception.

Kazakhstan Expects to Sign BTC Access Agreement Soon

President Nursultan Nazarbayev, speaking at the 3rd Kazakhstan Investment Summit in Almaty on June 8, announced Kazakhstan's intention to sign the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline access agreement with Azerbaijan during a summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures (CICA) in Kazakhstan on June 17.

Prime Minister Daniyal Akhmetov earlier said the draft agreement prepared by a special working group fully protects Kazakhstan's interests. Speaking at a government meeting on June 5, the PM said "the Azerbaijani side has already become acquainted with the draft and has no conceptual objections."

In the meantime, U.S. President George W. Bush sent a letter to President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan in which he expressed Washington's "hope to see Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan agree on terms to ship oil produced in Kazakhstan via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline." The letter was read at an oil and gas conference in Baku by the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza.

The four billion dollar pipeline, which runs from the Azeri capital of Baku via the Georgian capital of Tbilisi to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, was built by a consortium of Western oil companies led by BP.

The long awaited first shipment of Caspian oil was loaded from BTC onto a tanker at Ceyhan on June 4. Kazakh experts said the pipeline can be viable only with the addition of oil from Kazakhstan which is believed to hold the largest reserves in the Caspian basin. According to the Kazakh President, more than 50 billion dollars were invested in Kazakhstan in foreign direct investment so far, mostly in oil and gas, with the United States as the largest foreign investor.

The access to the BTC pipeline would provide Kazakhstan with a much needed additional export route for its booming oil exports. The exports are expected to grow from one million barrels a day now to three million barrels of oil a day by 2015.

The draft agreement of Kazakhstan's access to the pipeline sets terms for shipping up to 25 million tons of Kazakh oil annually (approximately 500,000 barrels of oil a day), and provides for creating a transportation system for shipping Kazakh oil from Aktau to Baku. Initially 7.5 million tons of Kazakh oil are expected to be transported through BTC.

Parliament Approves Measure Increasing Ombudsman's Authority

Kazakhstan's Senate approved legislation on June 8, earlier passed in the Majilis (the lower house), broadening the mandate of the country's Human Right Ombudsman.

The measure now moves to the President's desk for signature. It expands the Ombudsman's authority in seeking redress of human rights violations. In particular, the bill gives the Ombudsman, Bolat Baikadamov, the right to participate in court reviews of cases with a view to protecting rights of defendants, as well as authority to request the courts and prosecutors to review already existing court decisions, convictions and determinations.

Currently, the Ombudsman operates under the mandate of a 2002 presidential decree.

Elections for District and Town Akims Set for Fall 2006

Elections for akims (mayors) of districts and towns of regional importance will take place in October 2006 in 30 percent of Kazakhstan's administrative jurisdictions according to a presidential decree issued on June 8.

The Central Election Commission and oblast akims (regional governors) received instructions to jointly select constituencies where these elections will take place.

According to existing rules, these upcoming elections will be indirect. Candidates for akims will be nominated by regional governors on an alternative basis, assuring there are at least two candidates for each office. The selection will then be made by members of the maslikhats (local assemblies). The newly elected akims will serve a four year term.

Things to Watch:

- An upcoming edition of *Kazakhstan's Echo* will provide in depth coverage of an international symposium, "Nuclear Weapons Testing in Nevada and Semipalatinsk: SHARED LEGACY, SHARED LESSONS," which took place at the Atomic Testing Museum in Nevada earlier in June.
- Almaty will host *Intercultural, Inter-Religious and Inter-Ethnic Understanding*, a high level conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on June 11 through 13. More than 300 delegates from 55 OSCE member states, international organizations, foreign and domestic NGOs are expected to take part.

- President Nursultan Nazarbayev will participate in the upcoming summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Shanghai on June 15. Members of the organization include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. While in Shanghai, President Nazarbayev is expected to meet with leaders of member countries and also President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, whose country has an observer status in the organization.
- Kazakhstan will convene the second summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on June 17. A total of 17 Asian countries, including Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, and Israel, participate in the fledgling organization which is seeking to become the “OSCE” of Asia.
- The launch of the first Kazakh satellite, *KazSat*, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in southern Kazakhstan on a Russian built launch vehicle has been moved to June 28.

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