



# Kazakhstan News Bulletin

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### Say It in Kazakh:

Climate --- Aua raiy  
Summer --- zhaz, fall --  
-- kuz, winter --- kys,  
spring --- koktem

What is the climate in  
Kazakhstan? ---  
Kazakstannyn aua raiy  
qandai?

What is the best time  
for a trip to Astana? --  
- Astanaga zhyldyn kai  
nezgelende bargan  
zhakzy?

The climate in  
Kazakhstan varies  
greatly from place to  
place. ---  
Kazakstannyn aua raiy  
er turly.

## **Economy to Grow 29% in Three Years, Government Predicts**

Kazakhstan's economy is expected to expand 8.8 percent annually in 2007, 2008 and 2009, leading to a cumulative growth of 29 percent. This will also mean Kazakhstan's gross domestic product will double by 2008 compared to 2000.

Marat Kusainov, Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Economy and Budget Planning, presented this forecast at a nationwide conference on social and economic plans for 2007-2009. He said the expansion will mean Kazakhstan's GDP per capita will grow to US\$6,270 in real terms in 2009, an increase of 160 percent over this year's figure.

The economic growth during the next years will be bolstered by an annual trade surplus of more than US\$5.3 billion on average. Capital investment is expected to grow 114-115 percent. Inflation is expected to range from five to seven percent. The productivity should grow 8.8 percent and should surpass the growth in real wages by 2009.

Kazakhstan's economy, considered one of the fastest growing in the world, has expanded by 9-10 percent on average since 2000. Its staples include oil production, metallurgy, grain production, and banking and services sectors.

## **Plans Afoot for 2011 Asian Winter Games in Almaty**

Kazakhstan's Government, the Akimat (Mayor's office) of Almaty and the National Olympic Committee will set to work on a specific plan to prepare Almaty for its biggest ever sporting event, the 2011 Asian Winter Games.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev has given these instructions while visiting Almaty on March 10. This came on the heels of a recent signing of an international agreement sealing Almaty's hosting of the 2011 games.

"Holding the Asian Games in Almaty should become a major step in preparation for the biggest sporting event internationally, the 2014 Winter Olympic Games," the President said, referring to both training of athletes and the Almaty's bid to host the 2014 games. Kazakhstan's athletes failed to win any medal at the most recent Winter Olympic Games in Turin, Italy, and the President urged the revival of training traditions which in the past yielded Kazakhstan Olympic medals in cross country skiing and speed skating.

To prepare Almaty for the 2011 Games which will feature 14 sports, the city will embark on a major construction drive. This will include building a new 20,000-seat ice rink, a new ice stadium with a 400-meter skating track, cross country skiing and biathlon stadiums, a new mountain skiing base, K-90 and K-120 standard ski jumps with 20,000 sets as well as a bobsled track.

## **Internet Fees Will Be Slashed in Half**

Askar Zhumagaliev, Chairman of Kazakhstan's Agency on Informatization and Communications, announced the Internet tariffs will be slashed in half in 2006, which should make the use of the web more accessible.

The reduction will be carried out in two steps of 25 percent reduction in both halves of the year. Currently, less than three percent of Kazakhstan's 15 million population use the Internet. The Internet services are offered by a diverse group of providers, while the Agency serves as the industry regulator.

## **Trade Infrastructure with China Will See Major Expansion**

Kazakhstan plans to expand shipping capacities to China to 50 million metric tons of cargo a year in the near future, as it seeks to capitalize on its transit potential and buttress further its booming trade with its giant eastern neighbor.

Zhenis Kasymbek, Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications announced this week that two major projects will be implemented to reach the goal of 50 million tons of cargo a year. One will be to modernize the Dostyk-Alashankou border crossing to expand its bulking capacity to 25 million tons annually. The second project envisions the construction of a new railway Sary-Ozek – Khorgos along the existing automobile road.

Kazakhstan's trade with China is estimated at more than US\$5 billion annually. Kazakhstan ships metals, oil, gas and grain, while exports from China are mostly consumer goods. Last December, a new pipeline was launched to ship oil from western Kazakhstan to western China.

## **Foreign Minister Says Kazakhstan Committed to Cooperation with OSCE, Seeks Bigger Role in Group**

Kassymzhomart Tokaev, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister said Kazakhstan is committed to constructive cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Kazakhstan seeks a greater role in the organization as it bids for the rotating chairmanship of the OSCE in 2009.

Speaking to ODIHR's Director Christian Strohal in Astana on March 16, Tokaev welcomed the cooperation with this institution in implementing its recommendations following the December 2005 presidential election. The recommendations related to further improvements in the electoral legislation.

Tokaev also told Strohal Astana is interested in expanding the participation of Kazakh election monitors in ODIHR's observation missions which traditionally were staffed mostly by Western observers. The Foreign Minister also proposed analyzing election legislation in all 55 member states of the OSCE in order to develop clear criteria for assessing the elections and their meeting international standards.

## **Things to Watch:**

- President Nazarbayev will pay an official visit to neighboring Uzbekistan on March 19-20 which is expected to result in signing of at least six agreements dealing with trade and economic cooperation, cultural and humanitarian ties, as well as border regime.
- The traditional spring holiday, Nauryz, will be celebrated in Kazakhstan, as well as other countries of Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Turkey on March 22.

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