

Business & Politics in the Muslim World
News Monitoring
September 4 to 10, 2010
Weekly Report
Central Asia
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Azerbaijan

Political Front

- CIS long-term observers to monitor parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan

A meeting with experts of regional headquarters to observe the conduct and organization of upcoming parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan has been held at the Baku branch of the International Institute of Monitoring Democracy Development, Parliamentarianism and Suffrage Protection for the Citizens of the IPA CIS Member Nations (IIMDD).

Geo strategic Front

- Nagorno-Karabakh Says Two Azeri Soldiers Killed In Clash

The breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh says two Azerbaijani soldiers were killed and another wounded in fighting on the front line of the Armenian-backed region.

- Azerbaijani FM meets U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state

Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov has met US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Tina Kaidanow.

- Ignoring Azerbaijan could cost the U.S.

Tensions between Azerbaijan and neighboring Armenia on the fate of the Nagorno-Karabakh region are reaching dangerous levels. In the past year, the Azeri enclave in the South Caucasus, which Armenia has occupied since 1992, has been the focus of increased violence.

Economic/Energy Front

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- WorldMedvedev to discuss customs union, nuclear issues in Kazakhstan

During the visit, Medvedev will hold talks with his Kazakh counterpart, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to discuss their customs union with Belarus, other trade and economic issues, and nuclear cooperation as well as attend an interregional cooperation forum.

- Joint anti-terrorist exercise to begin in Kazakhstan

ASTANA, September 9 (Itar-Tass) -- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states will hold a joint anti-terrorist exercise code-named Peace Mission 2010 in Kazakhstan on Thursday, September 9.

Economic/Energy Front

- Kazakhstan starts construction of aromatic hydrocarbons production unit at Atyrau refinery

Atyrau. September 6. Interfax-Kazakhstan – Kazakhstan’s oil industry chiefs, public officials and NGO representatives have held a ground breaking ceremony of an aromatic hydrocarbons production unit at the Atyrau refinery on Saturday.

Social Front

- Disabled Kazakhs Press For Access In Almaty

Several nongovernmental organizations representing physically disabled people in Almaty have launched a campaign to bring attention to their problems in Kazakhstan's largest city, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

- Jailed Kazakh Activist's Wife Seeks Help After Threats

AQTOBE, Kazakhstan -- The wife of a jailed Kazakh opposition activist has called on international organizations to intervene after she received threatening phone calls, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

Kyrgyzstan

Political Front

- Ethnic Uzbek Rights Activist's Trial In Kyrgyzstan To Resume

BISHKEK -- The trial of a Kyrgyz human rights activist accused of involvement in a police officer's killing and other crimes will resume next week, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. Azimjan Askarov, an ethnic Uzbek, is also charged with organizing mass disorder and inciting interethnic hatred in the southern Jalal-Abad Oblast during deadly clashes between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in June.

- Does Kyrgyzstan have a plan how to cease revolutions?

The government of Kyrgyzstan submitted for public discussion a new draft law on “Peaceful meetings”. Despite the very peaceful name, this document refers to a very hectic but extremely important part of the local political process.

- Kyrgyzstan election could be cancelled - president

(AFP) - Upcoming parliamentary elections in troubled Kyrgyzstan could be cancelled if politicians use the process to escalate tensions in the ex-Soviet state, President Roza Otunbayeva said Tuesday.

- Kyrgyz Deputy Prime Minister Hospitalized

BISHKEK -- Kyrgyz Deputy Prime Minister Azimbek Beknazarov has been hospitalized, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

- Kyrgyz President's Chief Spokesman Resigns Ahead Of Elections

BISHKEK -- The chief spokesman for Kyrgyzstan's presidential administration has resigned, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

Farid Niyazov, chief of the presidential information and coordination center, told RFE/RL that his decision is connected with parliamentary elections scheduled for October 10.

- Kyrgyzstan requests Russia to assist in conducting parliamentary elections on October 10

Kyrgyzstan requests Russia to assist in conducting parliamentary elections on October 10 in 15 cities and regions of RF. It was voiced at the meeting of Kyrgyzstan's temporary charge d'affaires in RF Ulukbek Chinaliev with the head of Central Election Commission of Russia Vladimir Churov.

Geo strategic Front

- Uzbeks Release Kyrgyz Border Guard To Complete Exchange

BISHKEK -- Uzbek authorities today released a Kyrgyz border guard one day after an exchange of border officials between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

- We must solve the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border issue quickly and fundamentally - Muraliev

"We must solve the issue of opening the state border of Kyrgyzstan with Kazakhstan quickly and fundamentally," Amangeldi Muraliev, the first Vice-Prime-Minister of the Kyrgyz technical government stated to 24.kg news agency. So he commented on the delay of construction of a nine-storied house for the families of the victims of April 7-8, 2010.

Economic/Energy Front

- China to invest \$200 million for the construction of hydroelectric stations in Kyrgyzstan

"China is ready to invest \$200 million for the construction of three hydroelectric stations in Kyrgyzstan," Energy Minister Osmonbek Artykbekov stated at the press-conference today.

Social Front

- 383 thousands of Kyrgyz migrants work in Russia

383 thousands of Kyrgyz migrants are working in Russia. Director of Federal Migration Service Konstantin Romodanovsky reported to the head of Russian government Vladimir Putin as official sources of RF report.

Tajikistan

Political Front

- Escaped Tajik Prisoner Recaptured

DUSHANBE -- Tajik authorities say they have recaptured another inmate who escaped along with 24 others from a Dushanbe prison last month, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports. Tajik Interior Ministry press secretary Muhammadjon Nazriev said today that National Security Forces captured Abdurasul Mirzoev near the town of Faizobod in the Vahdat district, 50 kilometers east of Dushanbe.

- Suicide Car Bomber Hits Tajik Police Station

KHUIJAND, Tajikistan -- Officials in Tajikistan say two suicide bombers in an explosives-packed car slammed into a police station in the northern city of Khujand, killing two police officers and wounding some 25 others.

Geo strategic Front

- Tajik Military Air Base Completed With Indian Help

DUSHANBE -- A multimillion dollar renovation of a Soviet-era military air base near the Tajik capital is complete but it remains unclear which country will use the facility, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

- Tajikistan participates in SCO anti-terror drill in Kazakhstan

DUSHANBE, September 8, Asia-Plus 2010, Asia-Plus -- A military transport plane of Tajik Air Force with a special company-strong subunit of Tajikistan's Ministry of Defense (MoD) on board is flying to Almaty, Kazakhstan today.

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

- President congratulates people of Tajikistan on Independence Day

DUSHANBE, September 8, Asia-Plus -- In a televised speech today evening, President Emomali Rahmon will congratulate the Tajik people on the 19th anniversary of Tajikistan's independence, according to presidential press service.

Turkmenistan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Indian Prime Minister to attend meeting of TAPI states-participants in Ashgabat
On September 9, during a telephone conversation, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov invited Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to attend a meeting of states participating in the TAPI project, which is scheduled for December in Ashgabat.

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

- EU and Turkmenistan implement three-year programme on human rights
The Regional Coordinator for monitoring the programmes of the European Union for Central Asian countries, Brian Morgan, is discussing key aspects of the project "Strengthening the capacity of Turkmenistan to promote and protect human rights" implemented by the European Commission, United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights .

- Turkmenistan Launches Campaign To Justify \$1.9 Billion 'Olympic City'
LEBAP, Turkmenistan -- The Turkmen government has launched a mass campaign in support of its recent plan to spend \$1.9 billion on building a new "Olympic City" sports complex in Ashgabat, RFE/RL's Turkmen Service reports.

- Turkmenistan rated among 15 world most generous countries
Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) published a world ranking of the most generous countries drawn up in accordance with the scale of charity provided to citizens. The report is based on the survey of 500-2000 people in 153 countries of the world by Gallup agency.

Uzbekistan

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- **Uzbeks Release Kyrgyz Border Guard To Complete Exchange**
BISHKEK -- Uzbek authorities today released a Kyrgyz border guard one day after an exchange of border officials between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

- **Prominent Uzbek Rights Activist's Son Injured In Knife Attack**
TASHKENT -- A prominent Uzbek rights activist says her son has been injured in a knife attack in the capital, Tashkent, RFE/RL's Uzbek Service reports.

Detailed Report

Azerbaijan

Political Front

- **CIS long-term observers to monitor parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan**
A meeting with experts of regional headquarters to observe the conduct and organization of upcoming parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan has been held at the Baku branch of the International Institute of Monitoring Democracy Development, Parliamentarianism and Suffrage Protection for the Citizens of the IPA CIS Member Nations (IIMDD). Discussions at the meeting focused on the action plan for long-term observers. Five headquarters of the IIMDD Baku branch including four experts each will start working on September 10 on a long-term basis to watch parliamentary elections in regions of Azerbaijan.

Geo strategic Front

- **Nagorno-Karabakh Says Two Azeri Soldiers Killed In Clash**
The breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh says two Azerbaijani soldiers were killed and another wounded in fighting on the front line of the Armenian-backed region. It says on its army website that soldiers repelled an assault by an Azerbaijani "sabotage" unit at the northeastern section of the front line and that the Azerbaijanis were driven back, leaving two bodies.

It adds that no Armenians were killed.

Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharian told reporters on September 4 that the incident calls for international attention. "In the current situation, both the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia are ready to respond to any action from the other side, whether it be an armed provocation or diplomatic steps on the international level," he said. "I think the situation has gone so far that the time has come for the international community and mediators to make certain statements, because one of the sides [in the negotiation process] is trying to disrupt it. The Armenian side is ready for negotiations, for a compromise decision." Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry has confirmed its forces suffered casualties but says they occurred while repelling an Armenian "sabotage" attack.

Azerbaijan and Armenia fought a six-year war over Nagorno-Karabakh, which is located within Azerbaijani territory. A cease-fire in 1994 brought an end to the fighting, but the enclave remains a point of contention between the two sides. Flare-ups of violence have become increasingly frequent, and the sides frequently offer widely differing casualty figures and accounts of skirmishes. On August 31, Azerbaijan said two of its soldiers and

three Armenians had died. The Armenian-backed forces in Nagorno-Karabakh denied suffering any losses in that clash.

- Azerbaijani FM meets U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state

Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov has met US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Tina Kaidanow. The talks focused on the Azerbaijan-US relationship, situation in the South Caucasus region, current state of the ongoing peace talks to settle the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh conflict. They also discussed regional, global and other issues of mutual interest.

- Ignoring Azerbaijan could cost the U.S.

Tensions between Azerbaijan and neighboring Armenia on the fate of the Nagorno-Karabakh region are reaching dangerous levels. In the past year, the Azeri enclave in the South Caucasus, which Armenia has occupied since 1992, has been the focus of increased violence. Just last month, six people were killed in an exchange of fire across the temporary line that separates the two sides.

Prospects of another war in the Caspian Sea region are real. But as the rhetoric heats up, little is heard from Washington. Azerbaijan, America's closest ally in the region, deserves more direct and concrete support from the Obama administration.

Pinned between Iran and Russia on the ancient Silk Road bridging Europe and Asia, this former Soviet republic is an indispensable strategic partner. It is known mostly for its very significant oil and natural gas reserves, but it also is becoming a decisively vital source of support for Washington's push to end the Afghanistan quagmire. The United States has routinely used Azeri airports in support of NATO and U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, and thousands of flights carrying supplies to and from the Afghan theater have crossed Azeri airspace over the past nine years since Sept. 11, 2001.

What is far less known is that the capital, Baku, also has become a credible sounding board on sensitive political developments. This translates into helping the Obama administration's foreign policy team get a sensible and qualified reading on Russia's aggressive political posture in the Caucasus and on an exceedingly defiant Iran.

But neither Mr. Obama nor his senior aides have come up with a serious plan to jump-start negotiations with Armenia on Nagorno-Karabakh. It took more than a year for the administration to pick an ambassador to Azerbaijan, and Mr. Obama has yet to meet with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev. Worse, unlike in the Middle East, no special envoy has been appointed to help - and ultimately replace - the idling Minsk Group.

A cautious and passive America in the Caucasus will only embolden an increasingly aggressive Russia. Mr. Obama must help defuse a potentially disastrous international conflict - before it is too late.

Economic/Energy Front

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- WorldMedvedev to discuss customs union, nuclear issues in Kazakhstan

During the visit, Medvedev will hold talks with his Kazakh counterpart, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to discuss their customs union with Belarus, other trade and economic issues, and nuclear cooperation as well as attend an interregional cooperation forum.

Twelve Russian regions border on seven Kazakh regions, making interregional ties vital as they account for 70% of bilateral trade. The interregional forum will focus on sustainable development and high technology, presidential aide Sergei Prikhodko said.

The Customs Union between Russian, Belarus and Kazakhstan became fully operational in early July, when the three countries ratified the Customs Code. The countries plan to scrap their customs borders on July 1, 2011.

Prikhodko said the talks between the two leaders will also touch upon space industry, military cooperation as well as interaction in regional organizations such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The presidential aide said Russia hopes to sign an agreement with Kazakhstan on the construction of a nuclear power plant in the Central Asian country by the yearend.

"As regards the nuclear power industry, we count on interaction with Kazakhstan in jointly designing a nuclear power plant with the VBER-300 medium-power reactor unit. We want to sign the relevant agreement by the yearend," he said.

"The current working visit by Medvedev to Kazakhstan will be the eighth meeting of the two countries' presidents this year, which testifies to the great significance Russia and Kazakhstan pay to further deepening and developing mutually advantageous cooperation," Prikhodko said.

- Joint anti-terrorist exercise to begin in Kazakhstan

ASTANA, September 9 (Itar-Tass) -- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states will hold a joint anti-terrorist exercise code-named Peace Mission 2010 in Kazakhstan on Thursday, September 9.

"This year's exercise involves more than 3,000 military personnel from Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan," the Kazakh Defence Ministry said.

Kazakhstan will contribute 1,000 troops, 120 tanks, 30 armoured personnel carriers, armoured fighting vehicles, planes, and helicopters. China will send 1,000 Army and Air Force personnel, and a logistical group.

A thousand servicemen will represent Russia. They will use 130 pieces of military hardware, 1000 vehicles, planes, and helicopters. This is the seventh SCO anti-terrorist exercise. Its purpose is to practice interoperability in "responding to terrorist emergencies in the region." The exercise will be held in three stages. The first one will involve consultations in Almaty. The second stage will focus on the preparation of a joint anti-terrorist operation, and the third one will actually be the operation itself. The last two stages will be held at the Matybulak training range in the Zhambyl region. "The active stage of the exercise will take place on September 24. The defence ministers of the SCO member states will arrive at the Matybulak training range to watch the 'joint anti-terrorist operation'," the Defence Ministry said. In June of this year, Kazakhstan took over the SCO presidency. Experts say it is symbolic that such a major exercise involving all of the SCO states is taking place in Kazakhstan. The last SCO Peace Mission anti-terrorist exercise was held at the Chebarkul training range in Russia's Chelyabinsk region in 2007.

Economic/Energy Front

- Kazakhstan starts construction of aromatic hydrocarbons production unit at Atyrau refinery

Atyrau. September 6. Interfax-Kazakhstan – Kazakhstan’s oil industry chiefs, public officials and NGO representatives have held a ground breaking ceremony of an aromatic hydrocarbons production unit at the Atyrau refinery on Saturday.

According to LLP Atyrau Refinery, all preparatory works for the project have been completed.

“The plant will produce aromatic hydrocarbons and clean gasoline (...). The unit’s production scheme is very flexible so the plant can produce up to 133 thousand tons of benzene and up to 496 thousand tons of paraxylene per year.

As reported, LLP Atyrau Refinery and Sinopec Engineering (China) signed October 29, 2009 an agreement for the construction of an aromatic hydrocarbon plant. This is a turnkey project, the value of which is \$1.040 billion. The Development Bank of Kazakhstan (DBK) has issued a 1.63 billion tenge loan to the Atyrau refinery (in the west) for the construction of an aromatic hydrocarbons production unit. Atyrau Refinery is a subsidiary of JSC Trading House KazMunayGas, which is a subsidiary of National Company KazMunayGas.

Social Front

- Disabled Kazakhs Press For Access In Almaty

Several nongovernmental organizations representing physically disabled people in Almaty have launched a campaign to bring attention to their problems in Kazakhstan's largest city, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

The action, which organizers stressed was nonpolitical, will last for several days, during which participants will visit various public places and buildings in Almaty to chronicle obstacles for disabled people and seek ways to better deal with them.

Seyitzhan Kenzheuly, a member of the organization Zhiger (Persistence) who is legally blind, told RFE/RL that by locating all possible barriers to access in public places, the disabled were asserting their right to be treated as full-fledged members of society.

Campaign coordinator Almas Myrzabekov said that, for example, there was no way for blind citizens to find the doors of shops or to get information about what items are on sale. University students have volunteered to help the participants, some of whom are in wheelchairs or on crutches.

Some 100 disabled people intended to take part in the campaign, but the Almaty city administration gave permission for only 70.

The staff of the district prosecutor's office observed the participants as they started their action on September 3 from Almaty's Old Square. According to official statistics, some 3 percent of Kazakhstan's population of 16 million are physically disabled.

- Jailed Kazakh Activist's Wife Seeks Help After Threats

AQTOBE, Kazakhstan -- The wife of a jailed Kazakh opposition activist has called on international organizations to intervene after she received threatening phone calls, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

Natalya Eshchanova, the wife of Aidos Sadykov, told RFE/RL that she has written letters to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and international human rights organizations informing them about the regular threats she has been receiving.

Sadykov is a well-known opposition activist in the northwestern Kazakh city of Aqtobe. He was found guilty of hooliganism and resistance to police and sentenced to two years in jail on July 16.

Last month an Aqtobe Oblast court upheld the verdict against Sadykov. Sadykov and his lawyers say the case is politically motivated and is the local authorities' "retaliation" for his opposition activities.

Eshchanova, who is pregnant, said she is sure the threats are coming from Aqtobe Oblast authorities, who want her to stop raising the issue about her husband.

Kyrgyzstan

Political Front

- Ethnic Uzbek Rights Activist's Trial In Kyrgyzstan To Resume

BISHKEK -- The trial of a Kyrgyz human rights activist accused of involvement in a police officer's killing and other crimes will resume next week, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. Azimjan Askarov, an ethnic Uzbek, is also charged with organizing mass disorder and inciting interethnic hatred in the southern Jalal-Abad Oblast during deadly clashes between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in June.

Askarov's lawyer, Nurbek Toktakunov, told RFE/RL that his client pleaded not guilty in a court in the village of Nooken, in Jalal-Abad Oblast, on September 2. He said the trial would resume on September 6.

Human Rights Watch issued a statement last month urging Kyrgyz officials to give Askarov a fair and open trial.

Domestic and international human rights organizations claimed that Askarov was beaten by prison guards while in custody last month. He was subsequently transferred from the Bazar-Korgon district pretrial detention center to the regional detention center in the oblast's capital, Jalal-Abad.

Askarov later stated he had been beaten by his cellmates, not by police.

Bazar-Korgon police and Kyrgyz Ombudsman Tursunbek Akun insist that prison guards had nothing to do with Askarov's beating.

Several other leaders of local Uzbek communities in Kyrgyzstan's southern regions of Osh and Jalal-Abad are wanted by Kyrgyz officials for their alleged involvement in the organization of and/or participation in the violent clashes between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz that have officially claimed nearly 400 lives.

- Does Kyrgyzstan have a plan how to cease revolutions?

The government of Kyrgyzstan submitted for public discussion a new draft law on "Peaceful meetings". Despite the very peaceful name, this document refers to a very hectic but extremely important part of the local political process. It stipulates the rules for the protests, which fill local officials with consternation. However, they have a big cause for it.

Rally phobia

A word "rally" in Kyrgyzstan sounds frightening and, perhaps, ominously not only for the bureaucrats. Owing to both revolutions and unrests that hit the country in some intervals, the society got used to think about mass protests as of riots and violence actions. Wake up, you are not in Kiev, where the opposition carefully organize protests activities by entertaining its backers with songs and dances. Kyrgyzstan has another bad habit. An inherent part of our local rallies - drunken marginal category of people ready to

break the walls of the Government House at any moment, and then proceed to the shop windows and fences of houses.

Some people believe it is a lack of political culture in the young republic, the other blame - serving interests, the third - stratification of classes between poor people that prevails in the country and nouveau riches, which would not make even a cat laugh. The experts believe that the main problem is the game rules prohibiting mavericks to contact with the VIP-persons.

The protest actions were not welcomed either at Askar Akayev regime or during Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Kurmanbek Bakiyev introduced almost draconian restrictions proposed by the then-leader of the Communist Party Iskhak Masaliev. Protesters and demonstrators were restricted to approach the government institutions and the organizers of the rallies were taken into hoosegow. You might as well hold meetings far in the mountains. Officials already indifferent to people's voice have ceased to pay any attention to the protests.

Perhaps, Kurmanbek Bakiyev had a full belly with "street democracy" for the first three years of his government. In 2005-2007, in Kyrgyzstan have been registered several thousand different protests actions with number of participants ranged from ten people to ten thousand. But the way the authorities tried to barricade itself from the mass protest, finally played with it a cruel joke. No wonder, the authorities have been cautioned of severe consequences for these draconian laws. The opposition, desperate to agree with opponents peacefully, took the arms and ensanguined the Ala-Too Square of dozens of young people and faced down the police.

A new government decided to look backward over earlier mistakes. Unfortunately they took not all of them. Yet there is some progress. The Bill "On peaceful meetings" - is quite obvious proof to this fact. The project proposes new rules quite unexpected for the Asian country recently shaken by violence.

Surprise!

The bill proposes to deprive the government of the right to ban peaceful actions. The main criterion for them is to be really peaceful. That means no violence, no appeals for change of the government shall be used. In other words, the protesters should not be armed and climb on the barricades. "April Revolution", according to the provisions of the bill, does not fall under the definition of the rally.

"It's time to become a civilized country and not remain "wild" as foreigners think," explains one of the developers of the bill Almaz Esengeldiev. According to him, with no new rules introduced, the police will continue to be publicly beaten and disorganized, the authorities -demolished. Therefore, the state is vitally interested not only in the change of the situation but in its attitude to the participants of protest actions as well.

The project suggests prohibition for the state agencies to organize counter- manifests to a protest rally. The main premise - the state must be neutral and attentive to the aspirations of citizens. Officials, according to a rule of law, will oblige to meet protesters, to consider their claims on the merits and report on decisions taken. Only the Parliament will have a right to restrict the right of citizens to peaceful meetings. Other government institutions - state or municipal - could have been deprived of this right.

The state, according to developers of the bill, should ensure the safety of the protesters. If there will be some people calling for violence or illegal actions among the protesters, experts say, police should isolate them without interrupting the protest action. If the state

has caused damage to the protesters, it would compensate it because the government must protect not only security but also the property of citizens.

“If the crackdown is carried out unlawfully and illegally, the organizers may go to court and demand compensation of damage, Almaz Esengeldiev continues. Local authorities and police will bear joint responsibility for it. The prohibition of rallies shall not be permitted except if they are illegal.”

“The right of Kyrgyzstan’s citizens to peaceful meetings is fundamental,” the Minister of Justice Aida Salyanova said. The Ministry was also involved in development of the bill. She believes that the proposed document contains progressive provisions. Representatives of the Venice Commission and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe support her.

Instead of P.S.

The bill has not yet caused any particular criticism, with the exception of some comments by human rights defenders and representatives of the police. The Interior Ministry is convinced that not only law enforcers should be responsible for the safety of meetings’ participants, but also the organizers of peaceful meetings and their members. Demonstrators should assist internal affairs authorities in identifying and suppression of offenses.

Law enforcement authorities do not support the idea of some experts suggested to prohibit the use of photo and video during the rally. “What should we do with evidences on provocateurs and violators?” asks the police. Human rights defenders, in turn, believe that the right to peaceful meeting must be provided for all - even for prisoners. “Prisoners, as the head of the Kylym Shamy Center Aziza Abdirasulova said, can be deprived from their freedom but not from certain rights. So, may in a short run pickets and rallies behind bars will become the norm for our society.

The developers of the project, by the way, suggested ensuring equal rights for peaceful meetings for everyone - regardless political, racial, ethnic, religious or other affiliation of people as well as their sex, age, conviction and nationality. If the law will be approved everyone including foreigners will have a right to hold meetings.

Surprisingly, that the draft has been submitted for public discussion in the run-up to the most important political campaign of 2010 – the parliament elections. The leaders of some political parties have already expressed their intention to go “to the end” and analysts do not rule out that some organizations will rally. The country's leadership in response to the threats promised to introduce the state of emergency. Democracy is, of course, not a bad idea, but when it becomes “street” even liberals do not want to live.

However, the project, no matter how progressive it is, remains a draft until approved by the Parliament. But who will enter its structure and what rules its members will use – nobody knows. After all, our local officials still have not learned to oppose in a civilized manner, instead political coup has become a norm for the past five years. No wonder the people use a sad joke: “Collect 5,000 supporters and become the president.” Kyrgyzstan has already experience in this regard.

- Kyrgyzstan election could be cancelled - president

(AFP) - Upcoming parliamentary elections in troubled Kyrgyzstan could be cancelled if politicians use the process to escalate tensions in the ex-Soviet state, President Roza Otunbayeva said Tuesday.

Kyrgyzstan election could be cancelled: President

Upcoming parliamentary elections in troubled Kyrgyzstan could be cancelled if politicians use the process to escalate tensions in the ex-Soviet state, President Roza Otunbayeva said Tuesday.

Fighting between ethnic majority Kyrgyz and minority Uzbeks in June that left hundreds dead and tens of thousands homeless has been followed by rising ethnic tensions that many say is being stoked by opportunistic politicians.

"(I am) concerned about the intentions and behaviour of individual parties," she said at a political forum in the capital, Bishkek.

"If it is a question of the integrity and unity of the country, we will introduce a state of emergency and the elections can be stopped," she added.

Kyrgyzstan, which borders China, has been wracked by political chaos and ethnic violence since the toppling of Kurmanbek Bakiyev as president in bloody street protests in April. Otunbayeva, a former ambassador to both the United States and Britain, has struggled to impose order since assuming power, particularly in the country's deeply-divided southern regions where the fighting occurred.

Last month protestors loyal to Osh Mayor Melis Myrzakhmatov, an outspoken critic of the central government in Bishkek, attacked and beat a government minister sent to calm the crowd, further underscoring tensions.

Myrzakhmatov, who told Russia's Kommersant daily that he did not recognise the remit of the central government and calls himself a "nationalist", has emerged as the most powerful regional political leader ahead of the elections.

The government, which won a July referendum to transform the country into the region's first parliamentary democracy, is set for a nationwide vote on October 10.

If the elections are held successfully, they would be historic for ex-Soviet Central Asia -- a region that has been ruled by Soviet-era strongmen since the collapse of Communism almost two decades ago.

- **Kyrgyz Deputy Prime Minister Hospitalized**

BISHKEK -- Kyrgyz Deputy Prime Minister Azimbek Beknazarov has been hospitalized, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

Kyrgyz media outlets reported today that Beknazarov was hospitalized with symptoms suggesting suspected poisoning. But his aide told RFE/RL that Beknazarov's diagnosis is unclear. The aide said a diagnosis of Beknazarov's illness would be made public as soon as doctors issue one.

It is also unclear when Beknazarov was hospitalized.

Beknazarov, 54, was officially appointed deputy prime minister last month after deciding not to take part in parliamentary elections scheduled for October 10.

He has stated his opposition to the government decision to deploy a police force from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in southern Kyrgyzstan and has supported controversial Osh Mayor Melis Myrzakmatov.

- **Kyrgyz President's Chief Spokesman Resigns Ahead Of Elections**

BISHKEK -- The chief spokesman for Kyrgyzstan's presidential administration has resigned, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

Farid Niyazov, chief of the presidential information and coordination center, told RFE/RL that his decision is connected with parliamentary elections scheduled for October 10.

Niyazov said he wants to work for his Social Democratic Party -- the former party of President Roza Otunbaeva -- during this important period.

Niyazov became head of the center on April 8, the day after deadly clashes between antigovernment demonstrators and security forces that led to the ouster of President Kurmanbek Bakiev.

- Kyrgyzstan requests Russia to assist in conducting parliamentary elections on October 10

Kyrgyzstan requests Russia to assist in conducting parliamentary elections on October 10 in 15 cities and regions of RF. It was voiced at the meeting of Kyrgyzstan's temporary charge d'affaires in RF Ulukbek Chinaliev with the head of Central Election Commission of Russia Vladimir Churov.

Ulukbek Chinaliev noted that 18 polling stations in 15 cities including Moscow will be opened for citizens of Kyrgyzstan staying in Russia.

"Polling stations will be opened in Khabarovsk, Chita, Omsk, Novosibirsk, Tyumen, Surgut, St. Petersburg, Krasnoyarsk and in other cities. Kyrgyzstanis living and working in Russia have to have possibility to vote," he stressed.

Vladimir Churov assured that Russia will assist in organizing elections. He added that October 10 is a single voting day in Russia and they are planning to take vote on 7 thousands of polling stations.

Geo strategic Front

- Uzbeks Release Kyrgyz Border Guard To Complete Exchange

BISHKEK -- Uzbek authorities today released a Kyrgyz border guard one day after an exchange of border officials between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

Kyrgyz Border Guard Service Deputy Commander Cholponbek Turusbekov told RFE/RL that on September 5 Kyrgyzstan released three Uzbek customs officers and one Uzbek national security officer and handed them over to the Uzbek side. The Uzbek authorities, in turn, released three Kyrgyz border guards.

Turusbekov said Colonel Ismatilla Anarbaev's release today was delayed by additional negotiations between the two sides over unspecified border issues.

Turusbekov said Uzbek border guards detained the two senior Kyrgyz border officers, Anarbaev and Colonel Ziyad Begmatov, on August 31 near the southern Kyrgyz village of Pulgon in the Kadamjay district, which borders Uzbekistan.

He said they were detained when they went to a checkpoint to resolve problems that had arisen after Uzbekistan closed all of its border crossings with Kyrgyzstan for three days in connection with Uzbekistan's Independence Day celebrations on September 1.

The Uzbek authorities detained two more Kyrgyz border guards that day near the Ala-Buga border crossing in Kyrgyzstan's Jalal-Abad Oblast.

It is not clear when or for what reason the Kyrgyz border guards detained their four Uzbek counterparts.

- We must solve the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border issue quickly and fundamentally - Muraliev

"We must solve the issue of opening the state border of Kyrgyzstan with Kazakhstan quickly and fundamentally," Amangeldi Muraliev, the first Vice-Prime-Minister of the Kyrgyz technical government stated to 24.kg news agency. So he commented on the

delay of construction of a nine-storied house for the families of the victims of April 7-8, 2010.

According to him, the house of 144 apartments must be commissioned by December 1, 2010. The total amount of the project is 160 million soms. “The construction is financed totally at the expense of state budget. The only problem the state faces at construction of the apartment house is untimely delivery of cement,” Amangeldi Muraliev underlined.

He added that he shared the resentment of people, for whom the apartments in the house were destined, and assured the difficulties would be resolved in the nearest future. “The Kant cement factory is working out two open pits in Kyrgyzstan. But the most important thing – our headache – is the closed border with Kazakhstan. If the crossing point in Kordai district was open, we would import cement from there,” Amangeldi Muraliev concluded.

Kanybek Narbaev, the head of the State Agency for Architecture and Construction of Kyrgyzstan, stressed they would try to submit the house by the target date, but the construction would be completed earlier, if financing was timely. “In the middle of April and in May, for reasons unknown to us, the Finance Ministry suspended funding. But now money is coming on a regular basis, so I think we will meet the deadline,” Kanybek Narbaev said.

Economic/Energy Front

- China to invest \$200 million for the construction of hydroelectric stations in Kyrgyzstan

“China is ready to invest \$200 million for the construction of three hydroelectric stations in Kyrgyzstan,” Energy Minister Osmonbek Artykbekov stated at the press-conference today.

Chinese companies are conducting negotiations and the memorandum of agreement about construction of three hydroelectric stations with total capacity of 165 megawatt on Boom and Kemin rivers will be signed in the near future, he said. “It is very important for us, especially in winter,” Minister noted.

He added that Chinese side expressed readiness to participate in all projects concerning construction of hydro-electric power stations. According to Mr. Artykbekov, the country can build hydroelectric stations without foreign aid and can be financed not from budget funds. “In the world everything is built at the expense of investments; we have a programme for creation of financial instrument for receiving money,” said Osmonbek Artykbaev. “We will create development bank and attract money of immanent basis funds.”

He noted that Kyrgyzstan possesses sufficient political will, desire and professionalism to do that.

Social Front

- 383 thousands of Kyrgyz migrants work in Russia

383 thousands of Kyrgyz migrants are working in Russia. Director of Federal Migration Service Konstantin Romodanovsky reported to the head of Russian government Vladimir Putin as official sources of RF report.

“5 million of foreign citizens are working here,” Konstantin Romodanovsky noted. “One million of them are legal workers while the rest 4 millions are illegal migrants, i.e. they are staying legally here but violate rules of labor activity.”

“Almost 50 percent of foreign citizens staying in Russia are citizens of Ukraine (near to 1.5 million of people), Uzbekistan (1.2 million), Tajikistan (near to 800 thousands) and Kyrgyzstan (383 thousands),” head of FMS emphasized.

Tajikistan

Political Front

- Escaped Tajik Prisoner Recaptured

DUSHANBE -- Tajik authorities say they have recaptured another inmate who escaped along with 24 others from a Dushanbe prison last month, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports. Tajik Interior Ministry press secretary Muhammadjon Nazriev said today that National Security Forces captured Abdurasul Mirzoev near the town of Faizobod in the Vahdat district, 50 kilometers east of Dushanbe.

The 52-year-old was sentenced to 30 years in prison after being apprehended and extradited from the United Arab Emirates earlier this year. He was convicted of illegal possession of weapons, robbery, and plotting to overthrow the government.

On September 2, former Guantanamo inmate Ibrahim Nasridinnov, one of the three people thought to have orchestrated the August 23 escape from the Tajik State Committee of National Security detention center, was also captured by security forces in Vahdat.

Mirzoev is the brother of General Ghaffor Mirzoev, the former presidential guard commander and Tajik Drug Control Agency head, who is serving a life sentence on charges of planning to overthrow the government and other serious crimes. He was sentenced in 2006.

The 23 other escapees, among them five Russian citizens, four Afghans and two Uzbeks, are still at large.

- Suicide Car Bomber Hits Tajik Police Station

KHUYAND, Tajikistan -- Officials in Tajikistan say two suicide bombers in an explosives-packed car slammed into a police station in the northern city of Khujand, killing two police officers and wounding some 25 others.

It would appear to be the first suicide bombing in the Central Asian country.

Reports said the toll could rise as investigators continued to search the rubble of the building for the bodies of missing officers.

Interior Ministry officials blamed the attack on elements with ties to the banned Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), whose leadership purportedly has links to Al-Qaeda.

Interior Ministry spokesman Muhammadjon Nazriev told RFE/RL's Tajik Service that the vehicle was driven at high speed "into the gated compound of the Sughd regional police organized-crime division -- as the gate was closing after two police cars entered the complex -- and the car exploded."

He said a senior police lieutenant died in hospital as a result of injuries from the blast, and another police officer who tried to stop the car was likely to be the other victim.

Nazriev said the powerful explosion partially destroyed the police compound and that it also damaged several surrounding buildings, including a nearby hospital.

RFE/RL correspondents in Khujand said the area was cordoned off and that law enforcement agencies were not allowing reporters near the compound.

They said police officers briefly detained local reporters who were taking photos, and confiscated their photo and video equipment.

Islamic Movement Blamed

The IMU found sanctuary in Tajikistan during the country's 1992-97 civil war as its leaders had close ties with the country's former Islamic opposition fighters.

In recent years, Tajik officials have blamed the IMU for a number of attacks in the country. They say the banned group was involved in the killings of several police officers in the northern town of Isfara in 2008 and 2009.

Authorities have also held the IMU responsible for the 2006 attack on Kairokum detention center, when attackers killed the head of the prison and set free two suspected members of the Islamic group being held there.

Today's incident comes two weeks after some 25 prisoners, including some with ties to the IMU, staged a dramatic jailbreak in Dushanbe.

A special commission led by Security Council chief Amirqul Azimov has been set up to investigate the Khujand attack, and Azimov himself has been sent to Khujand to oversee the probe.

Khujand is the second-largest city in Tajikistan and the administrative center of Sughd province. The city is located some 350 kilometers north of the capital, Dushanbe.

written by Farangis Najibullah in Prague, based on reporting by RFE/RL's Tajik Service correspondents Kamar Ahror and Ma'sum Muhammad Rajab from Khujand and additional wire reporting

Geo strategic Front

- Tajik Military Air Base Completed With Indian Help

DUSHANBE -- A multimillion dollar renovation of a Soviet-era military air base near the Tajik capital is complete but it remains unclear which country will use the facility, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

The completion of the renovation work at Ayni air base -- which was largely paid for by India -- was marked at the weekend by a military parade and a visit by President Emomali Rahmon.

Tajik Defense Ministry spokesman Faridun Muhammadaliev told RFE/RL on September 7 that the air base, located 25 kilometers from Dushanbe near the town of Hisor, now has state-of-the-art navigational and defense technology.

He added that the runway was also extended to 3,200 meters so that all types of aircraft can land there. Some experts anticipate that India -- which contributed \$70 million toward the renovation and sent specialists to help with the work -- will be allowed to use the airport. But other analysts doubt that Tajikistan would jeopardize its relationship with Pakistan by allowing Indian planes at the air base.

Russian media reported that Rahmon and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, reached an agreement during talks in Dushanbe on August 30, 2008, that Russia would station five Su-25 fighter jets, Mi-24 and Mi-8 helicopters at Ayni after renovations were completed. Muhammadaliev said those reports are baseless. He said that "for now we have not signed any agreements with any country about the use of Ayni. This airport is for the [Tajik] air force and the anti-aircraft defense of Tajikistan."

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake denied during talks with President Rahmon in late August that Washington was interested in using Ayni.

It has also been proposed to move French military aircraft based at Dushanbe city airport to Ayni.

- Tajikistan participates in SCO anti-terror drill in Kazakhstan

DUSHANBE, September 8, Asia-Plus 2010, Asia-Plus -- A military transport plane of Tajik Air Force with a special company-strong subunit of Tajikistan's Ministry of Defense (MoD) on board is flying to Almaty, Kazakhstan today.

This company that is part of mobile subunits of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is representing Tajikistan in a multinational anti-terror drill that is taking is kicking off in Kazakhstan tomorrow.

The exercise, which takes place under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), will last till September 25, Faridoun Mahmadiyev, a spokesman for MoD, said.

According to him, the SCO command-and-staff drill, dubbed Peace Mission 2010, aims to demonstrate SCO member nations' determination and capacity to combat terrorism and extremism, showcase their mutual trust and cooperation, and the shared wish to protect regional peace and stability, the source said.

Tajik Defense Minister Sherali Khairulloyev is also expected to attend the drill that will involve more than 5,000 troops from China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan.

The drill will be the seventh of its kind. The chiefs of staff of the armed forces of the participating countries will announce the launch of the drill in Almaty in Kazakhstan, and defense ministers from the SCO member countries will observe the military exercises.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization groups China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

- President congratulates people of Tajikistan on Independence Day

DUSHANBE, September 8, Asia-Plus -- In a televised speech today evening, President Emomali Rahmon will congratulate the Tajik people on the 19th anniversary of Tajikistan's independence, according to presidential press service.

Meanwhile, celebrations organized by the capital mayor's office to mark Tajikistan's Independence Day will take places in Dushanbe on September 9.

Concert programs and street festivities will be held in all parks of Dushanbe and the main festive concert will take place at Dousti Squire Thursday evening, Shavkat Saidov, a spokesman for the Dushanbe mayor's office said. Dushanbe Mayor Mahmadsaid Ubaidulloyev will congratulate Dushanbe residents on the national day.

Turkmenistan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Indian Prime Minister to attend meeting of TAPI states-participants in Ashgabat

On September 9, during a telephone conversation, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov invited Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to attend a meeting of states participating in the TAPI project, which is scheduled for December in Ashgabat.

As the Turkmenistan.ru correspondent reports quoting the press service of the head of state, Manmohan Singh expressed his gratitude for the invitation and confirmed his

participation in the meeting, expressing confidence that it will be "the final and agreed solution to implement the project on construction of the transnational gas pipeline TAPI." "The Indian side attaches great importance to the construction of TAPI," said the Prime Minister, stressing his country's willingness to increase joint efforts to advance the project. According to him, India is confident of the project's success and the enormous contribution of the future energy bridge to the promotion of positive partnership in the region as a whole.

The President of Turkmenistan also expressed his appreciation to the head of the Government of India for his decision to send Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Murli Deora to attend the forthcoming meeting of the steering committee on TAPI project in Ashgabat.

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

- EU and Turkmenistan implement three-year programme on human rights

The Regional Coordinator for monitoring the programmes of the European Union for Central Asian countries, Brian Morgan, is discussing key aspects of the project "Strengthening the capacity of Turkmenistan to promote and protect human rights" implemented by the European Commission, United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights . He is on working visit to Turkmenistan that started on September 7.

"This project is designed for three years. It provides for a number of activities aimed at developing a constructive dialogue with international organizations to further improve the socio-legal system of human rights, as well as organization of thematic international forums, workshops, study visits," the State News Agency of Turkmenistan (TDH) said.

The prospects of Turkmenistan-EU cooperation within the framework of this project were discussed in the Mejlis of Turkmenistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Economy and Development, the Ministry of Justice and the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan.

As the Turkmenistan.ru correspondent reports quoting the press service of the Turkmen Foreign Ministry, it is expected that Morgan will have a number of meetings in other ministries and departments, including the Ministries of Health and Medical Industry, the Ministry of Education, and the National Centre of Trade Unions of Turkmenistan.

- Turkmenistan Launches Campaign To Justify \$1.9 Billion 'Olympic City'

LEBAP, Turkmenistan -- The Turkmen government has launched a mass campaign in support of its recent plan to spend \$1.9 billion on building a new "Olympic City" sports complex in Ashgabat, RFE/RL's Turkmen Service reports.

An RFE/RL correspondent in Turkmenistan's eastern Lebap Province reports that a day after the plan was announced by state media on September 4, ministries, state committees, schools, universities, state and private enterprises, and civic organizations started to host meetings "to show support for the government's huge investment plan for sports facilities."

A bank official who talked to RFE/RL's correspondent on condition of anonymity said the rushed meetings prove the government's sensitivity to potential negative reaction in foreign media.

According to Turkmen media, the Turkish construction company Polimeks will build the complex. Polimeks has recently completed construction of a new medical university in Turkmenistan, including a general hospital that cost \$59 million.

The new project is to include 30 sports facilities and a football stadium with a capacity of 60,000 people.

State news agency TDH has described the government's plan as further proof of the state's concern for individual citizens.

But one Lebap resident, who gave his name as Seyitnazar, said, "It is just a waste of money."

Turkmenistan has competed in four Summer Olympic Games but has never won an Olympic medal.

- Turkmenistan rated among 15 world most generous countries

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) published a world ranking of the most generous countries drawn up in accordance with the scale of charity provided to citizens. The report is based on the survey of 500-2000 people in 153 countries of the world by Gallup agency. The questions were related to how often people donate their time and money to charity, as well as to what extent they are prepared to assist needy people.

According to the survey, Turkmenistan took the 14th place in the world ranking of generosity and the 1st in the CIS and Central Asia. Moreover, the country is leading by the scale of assistance, which is measured not in cash but deeds. Sixty one percent of those surveyed regularly help and always willing to help in this way. This is more than in any other country of the world.

In the overall ranking, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland and Switzerland occupy the first five places. Their citizens donate money to the maximum number of charitable foundations. However, only 40 percent of respondents in the leading countries were prepared to provide active help and donate their time.

Uzbekistan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Uzbeks Release Kyrgyz Border Guard To Complete Exchange

BISHKEK -- Uzbek authorities today released a Kyrgyz border guard one day after an exchange of border officials between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

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It is not clear when or for what reason the Kyrgyz border guards detained their four Uzbek counterparts.

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

- **Prominent Uzbek Rights Activist's Son Injured In Knife Attack**

TASHKENT -- A prominent Uzbek rights activist says her son has been injured in a knife attack in the capital, Tashkent, RFE/RL's Uzbek Service reports.

Vasila Inoyatova, the chairwoman of the human rights organization Ezgulik (Mercy), told RFE/RL that the incident took place on September 7 afternoon when she and her son, Jamshid Inoyatov, were driving to the Justice Ministry. Inoyatova said another vehicle forced her car to pull over and an older man got out of the other car and began insulting her and her son. When her son replied to him, he pulled a knife and stabbed Jamshid in the hand, she said.

Inoyatova said there was a police car parked 20 meters from the incident, but no one came to help her or her son. She said her son had undergone surgery in a hospital due to the wound.

Inoyatova gave the license plate number of the attacker's car to police. She later received a phone call from police who informed her that the car had been located and the owner detained. The police asked her to come today to see if she can identify the suspect in a police line-up.

Inoyatova added that she does not exclude the possibility that the attack was planned and connected with her human rights activities. Her son also works for Ezgulik as a lawyer and accountant.

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