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Central Asia
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Table of Content

Book Review.....	2
Azerbaijan	
Political Front.....	4
Geo strategic Front.....	5
Economic/Energy Front.....	5
Social Front.....	6
Kazakhstan	
Political Front.....	6
Geo strategic Front.....	6
Economic/Energy Front.....	6
Social Front.....	6
Kyrgyzstan	
Political Front.....	7
Geo strategic Front.....	7
Economic/Energy Front.....	8
Social Front.....	8
Tajikistan	
Political Front.....	8
Geo strategic Front.....	8
Economic/Energy Front.....	9
Social Front.....	9
Turkmenistan	
Political Front.....	9
Geo strategic Front.....	9
Economic/Energy Front.....	10
Social Front.....	10
Uzbekistan	
Political Front.....	10
Geo strategic Front.....	10
Economic/Energy Front.....	11
Social Front.....	11

Book Review

Natural Gas and Geopolitics: From 1970 to 2040.
EDITED BY DAVID G. VICTOR, AMY M. JAFFE,
AND MARK H. HAYES.

Natural gas and geopolitics from 1970 to 2040 comprehensively explain the history of oil and gas from the 1970 to 2040. Energy demand is growing day by day all over the world. Oil reserves of Middle east have been in use for more than half a century. Increased demand of energy resources have given momentum to the exploration of gas reserves which is more environment friendly. Natural gas is becoming energy source of the 21st century. Huge reserves of natural gas are found in Russia Iran Caspian Sea and Central Asian states. International investors are willing to invest in gas market. In order to explore gas and bring them to the world market huge pipeline are being constructed.

This book look at the history of natural gas use and future prospects of its consumption. It also analyze the economic and political obstacles in the development of gas trade and its infrastructure. It focus on some particular region where gas demand is higher than others. It also describe the factors which would help in making the 21st century the century of natural gas ; a shift in energy paradigm of the world.

Outline

Azerbaijan

Political Front

- PACE summer session to discuss Azerbaijan's democratic institutions
- Azerbaijani Parliament holds hearings on Constitutional Law "On normative legal acts"

Geo strategic Front

- U.S. Reaches Out To Azerbaijan
- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to visit Azerbaijan
- British Group To Expand Nagorno-Karabakh Demining
- New Karabakh Parliament Convenes, Elects Leadership
- Azerbaijani President meets Turkish counterpart in Istanbul
- Azerbaijan Defence Minister to attend NATO defence ministers' meeting

Economic/Energy Front

- Azerbaijan is the key for South Caucasus energy stability
- Azerbaijan to ship more gas to Europe via Turkey, ministry official says
- Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH welcomes gas agreement signed by Azerbaijan and Turkey

Social Front

- International training on youth and conflict management held in Azerbaijan
- Azerbaijani official: Azerbaijan has the lowest crime rate in the region

Kazakhstan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Uzbek Border Guards 'Blockade Kazakh Village'
- Gates, in Baku, seeks to shore up Afghan supply chain

Economic/Energy Front

- Kazakhstan, China to form joint venture to build pipeline
- China, Kazakh pipeline expansion on Hu visit agenda

Social Front

Kyrgyzstan

Political Front

- Grenade Explosion In Kyrgyzstan Injures Four
- Death Toll In Kyrgyz Violence Rises To 50
- Kyrgyz Officials Escape Attack In Bishkek
- Some local officials bear pressure upon members of election committees in Kyrgyzstan
- participation of ethnic minorities in political life is crucial for Kyrgyzstan

Geo strategic Front

- U.S., Kyrgyzstan in talks on fuel supplies at key air base - U.S.
- Roza Otunbayeva says successful referendum to provide equitable dialog with neighbour states leaders
- US base bargaining
- Roza Otunbayeva and NATO Special Envoy discuss Public Security Issues
- Vladimir Putin: US troops depends on Bishkek's decision
- Kazakhstan special envoy arrives to Kyrgyzstan
- NATO Secretary General's Special Representative arrives to Kyrgyzstan

Economic/Energy Front

- In Kyrgyzstan GDP increased by 9.7 percentage points

Social Front

- Kyrgyz Religious Board Elects New Mufti

Tajikistan

Political Front

- Tajik Opposition Party Member Jailed For Election Fraud

Geo strategic Front

- Iran's President In Tajikistan For Talks, Water Conference
- Tajik Journalists Picket Uzbek Embassy Over Rail Holdup
- Criticism For Tajik Response To 'Biased' Russian Comments
- E.Rahmon, M.Encha discuss situation in region and Afghanistan
- Emomali Rahmon to hold talks with Islam Karimov in Tashkent

Economic/Energy Front

- World Water Conference Opens in Dushanbe

- Gazprom Subsidiary Raises Gasoline Price In Tajikistan
- Tajik Farmers Seek New Markets In Wake Of Russian Import Ban
- China to allocate 85m yuans to Tajikistan

Social Front

- UNICEF gives opportunity to Tajik children to be heard

Turkmenistan

Political Front

- Elections to local governments to be held December 5

Geo strategic Front

- Turkmen, Chinese leaders hold talks in Tashkent

Economic/Energy Front

- Turkmenistan to attend 31st session of Commission on Caspian Sea bio-resources
- Turkmenistan to develop potable water supply program
- Ashgabat to host Turkmen-American business forum

Social Front

- Turkmenistan, USA extend narcotics control agreement
- Turkmen delegation to attend international UN conference on water

Uzbekistan

Political Front

- Implementation of legal expertise law considered

Geo strategic Front

- SCO summit opens in Tashkent
- Protest near Uzbekistan embassy in Washington
- President of Turkmenistan arrives in Uzbekistan
- Meetings of Presidents
- Emomali Rahmon to hold talks with Islam Karimov in Tashkent
- President of Afghanistan arrives in Tashkent
- President of Russia arrives in Tashkent
- President of Pakistan arrives in Tashkent
- President of Kazakhstan arrives in Tashkent
- Tashkent to host 10th SCO heads of states summit

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

Summery

Azerbaijan

Political Front

- PACE summer session to discuss Azerbaijan's democratic institutions

Activity of the Azerbaijani democratic institutions will be discussed at the summer session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the CE said.

The first day of the session will be attended by bureau and political groups of the CE and the organization's budget for 2011 will be discussed.

- Azerbaijani Parliament holds hearings on Constitutional Law "On normative legal acts"

The Azerbaijani Milli Mejlis (Parliament) with participation of MPs and local and international experts holds hearings on the Constitutional Law "On normative legal acts". According to the Chairman of the committee on legal policy and state building Ali Huseynov, the constitutional law will regulate the preparation of legal acts, their formalization, adoption, publication and entry into force, the comments on them and their systematization.

Geo strategic Front

- U.S. Reaches Out To Azerbaijan

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev (right) meets with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates in Baku on June 6.

U.S. President Barack Obama promised Azerbaijan in a letter released today that Washington will treat its dispute with Armenia as a top priority. Azerbaijan is an important link in Afghan supply lines and energy export routes to the West.

- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to visit Azerbaijan

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who is visiting Baku, met with Azerbaijan's Defense Minister, Colonel-General Safar Abiyev, spokesman for the Defense Ministry, Lieutenant-Colonel Eldar Sabiroglu said. Following the solemn welcoming ceremony at the Defense Ministry, the state anthems of both countries were played.

- British Group To Expand Nagorno-Karabakh Demining

STEPANAKERT, Nagorno-Karabakh -- A British humanitarian organization says it has cleared land mines and unexploded ordnance from the bulk of Nagorno-Karabakh's war-affected territory and will soon begin demining Armenian-controlled areas outside the disputed region, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports.

- New Karabakh Parliament Convenes, Elects Leadership

STEPANAKERT, Nagorno-Karabakh -- Nagorno-Karabakh's new parliament convened for the first time and elected its leadership today, more than two weeks after being elected in a vote criticized by Azerbaijan and the European Union, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports.

- Azerbaijani President meets Turkish counterpart in Istanbul

Today, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul here. They praised friendly and brotherly relations between the two countries. They also stressed the importance of high-level meetings. The Heads of State emphasized the significance of cooperation in various fields, in particular energy.

- Azerbaijan Defence Minister to attend NATO defence ministers' meeting

The Azerbaijani Defence Minister, Colonel General Safar Abiyev has today left for Brussels to attend a meeting of defence ministers of countries - participants of NATO's peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan, the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry said.

Economic/Energy Front

- Azerbaijan is the key for South Caucasus energy stability

Envoys from Central Asian countries discussed Caspian basin energy security Friday during the second day of an Istanbul summit ahead of a crucial meeting between Azerbaijan and Turkey next week.

- Azerbaijan to ship more gas to Europe via Turkey, ministry official says

Azerbaijan has agreed to ship more gas to Europe via Turkey, an Azerbaijani energy ministry official announced Monday.

The official said it was not immediately clear whether Azerbaijan was intending to join Nabucco, a major pipeline project to bring natural gas from Central Asia and the Middle East to Europe to diversify the continent's energy sources and reduce Russia's dominance.

- Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH welcomes gas agreement signed by Azerbaijan and Turkey

Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH welcomes the agreement that was signed in Ankara today between Azerbaijan and Turkey defining terms for the transit of gas to Turkey and Europe, Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH said.

Social Front

- International training on youth and conflict management held in Azerbaijan

An international training on the role of youth in maintaining peace and conflict management will be held on June 5-12 in Oguz region in Azerbaijan.

- Azerbaijani official: Azerbaijan has the lowest crime rate in the region

Azerbaijan is one of the leading countries in the region for the minimal number of crimes per 100,000 people, Deputy Interior Minister Oruj Zalov said at the First International Conference "Policing with the support of society" organized jointly with the OSCE Baku Office.

Kazakhstan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Uzbek Border Guards 'Blockade Kazakh Village'

ARNASAI, Kazakhstan -- Officials of a village near Kazakhstan's southern border with Uzbekistan say they have been cut off by Uzbek border guards for several days, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

- Gates, in Baku, seeks to shore up Afghan supply chain

The United States sought to shore up a link in its supply chain to Afghanistan Sunday, sending Defense Secretary Robert Gates to Azerbaijan, a transit point that has complained about not getting enough attention.

Gates, in Baku, seeks to shore up Afghan supply chain

Economic/Energy Front

- Kazakhstan, China to form joint venture to build pipeline

(SRI) - Kazakhstan and China will create a joint venture in July to build the Beyneu-Bozoy-Akbulak gas pipeline, the Oil and Gas Journal reported citing a Kazakh oil and gas executive.

- China, Kazakh pipeline expansion on Hu visit agenda

Chinese president Hu Jintao will sign an agreement to increase crude pipeline capacity from Central Asia during a trip to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan next week, part of China's efforts to diversify oil sources. Hu will also attend the annual meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a regional security grouping that is led by China and Russia. Regional economic development will also be on the agenda there.

Social Front

Kyrgyzstan

Political Front

- Grenade Explosion In Kyrgyzstan Injures Four

At least four people were injured when a grenade exploded in Kyrgyzstan's northern city of Tokmok today, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. The press service of Kyrgyzstan's Healthcare Ministry told journalists that all four were injured by flying glass.

- Death Toll In Kyrgyz Violence Rises To 50

Kyrgyz health officials say at least 50 people have died in clashes between rioters and security forces overnight in the southern city of Osh. More than 660 others were injured in the city as clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth spilled over into battles with security forces.

- Kyrgyz Officials Escape Attack In Bishkek

BISHKEK -- Two senior Kyrgyz officials were attacked by a crowd of young Kyrgyz in Bishkek today, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

- Some local officials bear pressure upon members of election committees in Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan some local officials bear pressure upon members of election committees forcing them to leave as Central Election Committee reports.

- participation of ethnic minorities in political life is crucial for Kyrgyzstan

The United States of America calls for sensitivity to ethnic issues and the inclusion of all ethnic groups in the development in the republic, the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek informs.

Geo strategic Front

- U.S., Kyrgyzstan in talks on fuel supplies at key air base - U.S.

(AFP)- The Pentagon said Thursday it is in talks with Kyrgyzstan's provisional government about fuel supplies for its operations at Manas air base, a key transit point for US troops headed to Afghanistan.

- Roza Otunbayeva says successful referendum to provide equitable dialog with neighbour states leaders

Successful constitutional referendum in Kyrgyzstan would provide Kyrgyzstan with a platform for equitable dialog with leaders of neighbour states, Roza Otunbayeva, the President of transition period said Wednesday.

- US base bargaining

Bishkek hurt Washington's reputation by sound jobbery scandal around US Transit Center at the Kyrgyz airport "Manas". However, US "knockout" can appear to be deceptive...

- Roza Otunbayeva and NATO Special Envoy discuss Public Security Issues

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert F. Simmons and the President of transition period of Kyrgyzstan Roza Otunbayeva discussed Public Security Issues.

- Vladimir Putin: US troops depends on Bishkek's decision

The US troops stay in Kyrgyzstan depends on Bishkek's decision, stated Russian Prime-Minister Vladimir Putin at a press conference after negotiations in Istanbul, RIA Novosti informs.

- Kazakhstan special envoy arrives to Kyrgyzstan

Kazakhstan has sent a special envoy Bolat Utemuratov to Kyrgyzstan. Bolat Utemuratov was appointed by official Astana after tragic April events that ousted president Bakiyev.

Mr. Utemuratov will meet president of transition period Roza Otunbayeva on 10 June, 2010.

- NATO Secretary General's Special Representative arrives to Kyrgyzstan

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert F. Simmons is to arrive to Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the NA 24.kg.

Economic/Energy Front

- In Kyrgyzstan GDP increased by 9.7 percentage points

In Kyrgyzstan GDP increased by 9.7 percentage points comparing with 2009 as National Statistic Committee KR reports.

Social Front

- Kyrgyz Religious Board Elects New Mufti

Former Kyrgyz mufti Murataaly-Hajji Juman-Uulu stepped down in April.

BISHKEK -- Kyrgyz Muslims have elected Ruslanbek Jumagulov as their new official leader, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

Tajikistan

Political Front

- Tajik Opposition Party Member Jailed For Election Fraud

DUSHANBE -- The Vakhsh district court in Tajikistan's southern Khatlon region today sentenced opposition party member Muhammadruzi Burhonov to one year in prison for election violations during the February 28 parliamentary vote, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Geo strategic Front

- Iran's President In Tajikistan For Talks, Water Conference

Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad has arrived in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, where he is to hold talks with his counterpart Emomali Rahmon and attend a UN-sponsored international conference on water security.

- Tajik Journalists Picket Uzbek Embassy Over Rail Holdup

At an earlier protest, Tajik students also demanded the resumption of rail links.

DUSHANBE -- More than 20 journalists protested today outside the Uzbek Embassy in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, to demand an end to what they call Uzbekistan's ongoing economic blockade of Tajikistan, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

- Criticism For Tajik Response To 'Biased' Russian Comments

Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy referred to Tajikistan as a 'failed state.'

DUSHANBE -- Tajik independent journalists and analysts have criticized the belated official response to Russian officials' negative remarks about the country, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

- E.Rahmon, M.Encha discuss situation in region and Afghanistan

DUSHANBE. June 9. "Asia-Plus" -- Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon met with the visiting Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia Miroslav Encha to discuss current situation in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

- Emomali Rahmon to hold talks with Islam Karimov in Tashkent

DUSHANBE. June 4. "Asia-Plus" -- On June 10 this year Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon will leave for Uzbekistan's capital of Tashkent to take part in a regular summit

of heads of SCO member states, a reliable source in the government of Tajikistan told the AP.

Economic/Energy Front

- World Water Conference Opens in Dushanbe

DUSHANBE -- A UN-sponsored international water conference has opened in Dushanbe, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Participants will assess implementation of the goals set by the UN for its Water For Life Decade (2005-2015), such as reducing the proportion of people worldwide without access to safe drinking water.

- Gazprom Subsidiary Raises Gasoline Price In Tajikistan

DUSHANBE -- Gazprom-Neft-Tajikistan, which controls some 60 percent of the gasoline market in Tajikistan, has announced a retail price hike of over 25 percent, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

- Tajik Farmers Seek New Markets In Wake Of Russian Import Ban

DUSHANBE -- Farmers and businessmen in Tajikistan's northern province of Sughd are desperately seeking new markets following a ban by Russia on the import of dried fruit and nuts from Tajikistan, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

- China to allocate 85m yuans to Tajikistan

DUSHANBE. June 10. "Asia-Plus" -- Yesterday Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon, who is currently on his official visit to Tashkent where he will take part in the summit of heads of SCO member states, met with his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao.

The sides have discussed issues of bilateral and multilateral Tajik-Chinese relations, Tajik President's press service reports.

Social Front

- UNICEF gives opportunity to Tajik children to be heard

DUSHANBE. June 9. "Asia-Plus" -- Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon and the visiting UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang have attended National exhibition of drawings "Water by children's eyes", organized by the Ministry of Education and supported by UNICEF.

Turkmenistan

Political Front

- Elections to local governments to be held December 5

The Mejlis of Turkmenistan passed a resolution setting the date of elections to the regional, district and city people's councils. Chairwoman of the national parliament Akja Nurberdieva signed the relevant document. As the Ashgabat correspondent of Turkmenistan.ru reports, elections to the district and city people's councils with the status of district will be held on Sunday, 5 December 2010.

Geo strategic Front

- Turkmen, Chinese leaders hold talks in Tashkent

President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who arrived in the capital of the Republic of Uzbekistan to attend the summit of the Shanghai Organization of Cooperation (SOC), has met with President Hu Zintao of the People's Republic of China on June 11.

Economic/Energy Front

- Turkmenistan to attend 31st session of Commission on Caspian Sea bio-resources

Chairman of the State Committee for Fisheries of Turkmenistan Amanmyrat Sahadov will attend the 31st session of the Commission on the Caspian Sea Biological Resources to be held in Tehran, the capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on June 13-17, 2010.

- Turkmenistan to develop potable water supply program

During the Cabinet of Ministers meeting, June 10, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov signed a decree that prescribes drafting a comprehensive program of providing all settlements of the country and, first of all, nurseries, preschool and educational institutions, hospitals, public catering establishments with pure potable water.

- Ashgabat to host Turkmen-American business forum

Ashgabat will host political consultations between Turkmenistan and the US delegation and the Turkmen-American business forum in June. This was announced by Vice-Premier of the Turkmen government and Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov at the Cabinet of Ministers meeting yesterday.

Social Front

- Turkmenistan, USA extend narcotics control agreement

Today, the Turkmen Foreign Ministry has held the ceremony of signing the third Amendment to the existing Letter of Agreement of September 2001 on Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Assistance between the Government of the United States and the Government of Turkmenistan.

- Turkmen delegation to attend international UN conference on water

Turkmen president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov signed a document authorizing Vice Premier of the Turkmen government Myratgeldi Akmamedov to attend the High Level International Conference on the Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life," 2005-2015 held under the United Nations aegis.

Uzbekistan

Political Front

- Implementation of legal expertise law considered

President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov signed the law on legal expertise on 1 June. The document regulates relations in the field of legal expertise in the country.

The new law outlines general norms and rules ensuring the independence of the legal experts and their conclusions.

Geo strategic Front

- SCO summit opens in Tashkent

The summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization opened in Tashkent on Friday with a meeting of the heads of states of the SCO member states.

- Protest near Uzbekistan embassy in Washington

WASHINGTON. June 7. "Asia-Plus" – At least 20 Tajik students gathered early in the morning on June 4 near Uzbekistan's embassy in Washington urging Uzbekistan's government to remove transport blockade of Tajikistan.

- President of Turkmenistan arrives in Uzbekistan

President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov arrived in Uzbekistan on 11 June for participation as a guest in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

- Meetings of Presidents

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov on 10 June at Kuksaroy met with President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev, who is in Tashkent to attend the summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

- Emomali Rahmon to hold talks with Islam Karimov in Tashkent

DUSHANBE. June 4. “Asia-Plus” -- On June 10 this year Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon will leave for Uzbekistan’s capital of Tashkent to take part in a regular summit of heads of SCO member states, a reliable source in the government of Tajikistan told the AP. According to the source, Tajik President will be accompanied by President Adviser for International Affairs Erkin Rahmatulloev, Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrohon Zarifi, Tajik Interior Minister Abdurahim Kaharov and other officials.

- President of Afghanistan arrives in Tashkent

President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation as observer in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

- President of Russia arrives in Tashkent

President of Russian Federation Dmitriy Medvedev arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

- President of Pakistan arrives in Tashkent

President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation as observer in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

- President of Kazakhstan arrives in Tashkent

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

- President of Tajikistan arrives in Tashkent

President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

- Tashkent to host 10th SCO heads of states summit

The 10th session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will be held in Tashkent on 11 June.

On the invitation of the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, who is chairing the SCO, the heads of states and delegations of SCO member and observer countries will take part in the summit.

- Uzbekistan-China: Toward enhancing cooperation

At the invitation of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, President of the People’s Republic of China Hu Jintao arrived June 9 in Tashkent on state visit.

Relations shaped between the two nations are historically deep-rooted, dating back to more than a thousand years and thriving most during the era of the Great Silk Road.

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

Detailed Report

Azerbaijan

Political Front

- PACE summer session to discuss Azerbaijan's democratic institutions

Activity of the Azerbaijani democratic institutions will be discussed at the summer session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the CE said. The first day of the session will be attended by bureau and political groups of the CE and the organization's budget for 2011 will be discussed. Also during the session it is planned to elect judges to the European Court from Germany and Malta.

Issues on "Human rights violations in the North Caucasus", "Situation in Kosovo and the Council of Europe's role", "Romanians situation in Europe" will be discussed.

The UN Secretary-General's High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations Jorge Sampaio, Montenegro's Prime Minister Milo Dukanovich and the Macedonian President Georgi Ivanov are expected to address at the session.

- Azerbaijani Parliament holds hearings on Constitutional Law "On normative legal acts"

The Azerbaijani Milli Mejlis (Parliament) with participation of MPs and local and international experts holds hearings on the Constitutional Law "On normative legal acts". According to the Chairman of the committee on legal policy and state building Ali Huseynov, the constitutional law will regulate the preparation of legal acts, their formalization, adoption, publication and entry into force, the comments on them and their systematization.

The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe positively assessed the law, the legal framework of the developed countries and international experience were carefully studied during the preparation of documents, Huseynov said. Azerbaijani parliament's Legislation Department head Latif Huseynov commented on regulations of the law.

Geo strategic Front

- U.S. Reaches Out To Azerbaijan

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev (right) meets with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates in Baku on June 6.

U.S. President Barack Obama promised Azerbaijan in a letter released today that Washington will treat its dispute with Armenia as a top priority. Azerbaijan is an important link in Afghan supply lines and energy export routes to the West.

In April, Azerbaijan accused the United States of siding with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave populated mainly by ethnic Armenians that broke away from Azerbaijan in the early 1990s, prompting a civil war that left some 30,000 dead. A cease-fire agreement was signed in 1994.

In a copy of the letter provided to journalists, Obama wrote that a peaceful resolution of the dispute is vital for the stability of the South Caucasus.

"Support for this outcome will remain a priority for the United States," it said.

Obama acknowledged "serious issues" in U.S. relations with Azerbaijan, but said "I am confident that we can address them." U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates hand-delivered Obama's letter to President Ilham Aliyev on June 6.

In the letter, Obama praises Azerbaijan for sending military personnel to serve in Afghanistan and opening its land and air space to help resupply U.S. and NATO forces

there. Gates told reporters today that he and Azerbaijan's leadership had discussed ways to expand military-to-military relations, including exercises and intelligence sharing.

- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to visit Azerbaijan

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who is visiting Baku, met with Azerbaijan's Defense Minister, Colonel-General Safar Abiyev, spokesman for the Defense Ministry, Lieutenant-Colonel Eldar Sabiroglu said. Following the solemn welcoming ceremony at the Defense Ministry, the state anthems of both countries were played. Safar Abiyev noted the brief history of Azerbaijan-US military cooperation founded by Heydar Aliyev in 1997 and underlined that Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the cooperation with the US. Speaking about the joint contributions to the struggle against the international terrorism and to other security processes, Minister said the situation is complicated and tense in the South Caucasus because of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno Karabakh. He appreciated the role of the US as a co-chair of OSCE Minsk Group.

Safar Abiyev underlined that section 907 has negative influence on the US-Azerbaijan relations. Gates noted that President Barack Obama's letter to President Ilham Aliyev, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's upcoming visit and his present visit to Baku are obvious examples of the strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and the United States. Gates emphasized that when he returns home he will tell President Obama how important the solution to Nagorno Karabakh conflict is for Azerbaijan. The US Defense Secretary mentioned a number of important issues and said he would make best efforts towards abolition of Section 907. Then Safar Abiyev expressed hopes that Azerbaijan and the United States will establish real partnership relations and the Defense Secretary's visit to Azerbaijan will make new contribution to the development of this partnership.

- British Group To Expand Nagorno-Karabakh Demining

STEPANAKERT, Nagorno-Karabakh -- A British humanitarian organization says it has cleared land mines and unexploded ordnance from the bulk of Nagorno-Karabakh's war-affected territory and will soon begin demining Armenian-controlled areas outside the disputed region, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. Representatives of the HALO Trust made the announcement on June 7 as they marked the 10th anniversary of HALO's permanent presence in Karabakh at a ceremony attended by the Karabakh Armenian leadership. Karabakh President Bako Sahakian praised the group's decade-long demining efforts in his unrecognized republic that have been financed by the U.S. government and nongovernmental Western charities. "We regard saved lives as the biggest result and value of the work done by them," he said in a speech at the ceremony held in Khachen, a village in eastern Karabakh.

The HALO Trust says that since 2000 it has destroyed over 50,000 land mines, cluster munitions, and other items of unexploded ordnance over 125 square kilometers of land.

According to its regional director, Andrew Moore, that means more than 80 percent of Karabakh territory mined by Armenian and Azerbaijani forces during the 1991-94 hostilities is now considered safe. Aknaghbyur, a village in southern Karabakh, has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of HALO's demining efforts. "Six hundred hectares of our agricultural land have been cleared," Artur Babayan, the village mayor attending the ceremony, told RFE/RL. The disputed region within Azerbaijan and much of the adjoining territory has been under the control of ethnic Armenians since the 1994 cease-fire. Karabakh has continued to regularly report civilian casualties from land mines and unexploded ordnance. According to government data, 74 local residents have been killed

and 254 others wounded in landmine explosions over the past decade. Moore said that HALO, which operates in nine countries and has nearly 8,000 mine-clearers, now plans to expand its operations into some of the Azerbaijani districts around Karabakh that were fully or partly occupied by Karabakh Armenian forces during the war. He said that work will be financed by a fresh grant from the Julia Burke Foundation, a California-based charity that has supported HALO's activities in Karabakh since 2007. "I hope very much that Azerbaijan will not try to influence other potential donors willing to support demining efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh," said Caroline Cox, a pro-Armenian member of the British House of Lords who has frequently visited Karabakh since the early 1990s. She argued those efforts have a "humanitarian, rather than political" character. Azerbaijan has repeatedly criticized HALO for engaging in land-mine clearance in Karabakh without its permission.

- New Karabakh Parliament Convened, Elects Leadership

STEPANAKERT, Nagorno-Karabakh -- Nagorno-Karabakh's new parliament convened for the first time and elected its leadership today, more than two weeks after being elected in a vote criticized by Azerbaijan and the European Union, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports.

The May 23 polls were swept by the three political parties represented in the unrecognized republic's government. The largest of them, Prime Minister Ara Harutiunian's Azat Hayrenik (Free Fatherland) party, won 14 seats in the 33-member legislature.

The Democratic Artsakh Party of outgoing parliament speaker Ashot Ghulian came in second with 10 seats, followed by the Karabakh branch of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation with six seats. The remaining three deputies are also loyal to Karabakh President Bako Sahakian and his coalition government.

Despite not leading the largest parliamentary faction, Ghulian was overwhelmingly reelected as speaker. In an ensuing speech, he portrayed this situation as proof of "political solidarity" among Nagorno-Karabakh's three coalition partners. The Karabakh parliament also swiftly chose the chairmen of its standing committees representing the three parties.

Azerbaijan has always condemned elections held in the Armenian-controlled disputed region, and the May 23 vote was no exception. The Azerbaijani Central Election Commission denounced it as a "farce."

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton similarly called the Karabakh elections illegitimate and said they "should not prejudice the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict."

But the French, Russian, and U.S. mediators co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group gave a far more cautious assessment of the polls. In a joint May 24 statement, they said they understand the "need for the de facto authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh to try to organize democratically the public life of their population with such a procedure."

- Azerbaijani President meets Turkish counterpart in Istanbul

Today, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul here. They praised friendly and brotherly relations between the two countries. They also stressed the importance of high-level meetings. The Heads of State emphasized the significance of cooperation in various fields, in particular energy.

It was stressed, that the signing of new documents on natural gas would open a new page in the successful Azerbaijan-Turkey cooperation. They also discussed settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and regional and international issues.

The Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has today arrived in Istanbul, the Turkish Cihan Agency reported. Ilham Aliyev was met by Istanbul's major Huseyn Adli Mutlu at the Ataturk Airport.

Within the working visit to Turkey Ilham Aliyev will meet with his Turkish counterpart Abdulla Gul today, Cihan Agency reports. Also, Ilham Aliyev will meet with the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today headed to Turkey for a working visit. At the Heydar Aliyev International Airport, the Head of State was seen off by Prime Minister Artur Rasizadeh, Chief of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev and Baku Mayor Hajibala Abutalybov.

- Azerbaijan Defence Minister to attend NATO defence ministers' meeting

The Azerbaijani Defence Minister, Colonel General Safar Abiyev has today left for Brussels to attend a meeting of defence ministers of countries - participants of NATO's peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan, the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry said.

The foundation for cooperation between Azerbaijan and NATO was laid through signing a program-document within the framework of the Partnership for Peace May 4 1994. Azerbaijan was one of the 27 OSCE member countries to join the program.

In April 1996, an official document envisaging concrete directions in the cooperation was signed within the framework of the Partnership for Peace. Now, Azerbaijan is fulfilling about 50 tasks in conformity with the program.

August 3, 2005, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev signed the Decree on "Approval of the Action Plan on Individual Partnership between the Azerbaijani Republic and NATO". Azerbaijan and NATO are now cooperating within the second stage of the Action Plan on Development of Individual Partnership between Azerbaijan and NATO.

Since 1999, the Azerbaijani troops have been providing support to peacekeeping operations of NATO in Kosovo, and since 2002 - in Afghanistan.

Economic/Energy Front

- Azerbaijan is the key for South Caucasus energy stability

Envoys from Central Asian countries discussed Caspian basin energy security Friday during the second day of an Istanbul summit ahead of a crucial meeting between Azerbaijan and Turkey next week.

As part of the meeting for the Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, or CICA, whose council presidency Kazakhstan is set to pass to Turkey, participants said on Friday, that Azerbaijan was a transit hub for energy stability in the region at the 5th International Turkish Asian Congress organized by the Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies, or TASAM.

"However, CICA member states' problems are also CICA's problem. Azerbaijan's internal problems are also CICA's problems," Cavide Veliev, from Azerbaijan's President's Center for Strategic Studies, told the conference.

"Karabakh is a security issue for the South Caucasus and therefore for CICA," he said, referring to a territorial dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Emphasizing regional security in the South Caucasus, Veliev said mediation for the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave was essential for securing the energy supply in the region and to Europe.

Veliev warned of instability and a “polarized South Caucasus,” citing over 1 million refugees from the Karabakh conflict and an influx of radicals from Asia and the Northern Caucasus trying to settle in Azerbaijan. He also lamented the lack of acceptance of the Madrid principle by Armenia, which he said would be a step toward solving the conflict. Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev will visit Turkey on Monday for the signing ceremony of a highly anticipated agreement on natural gas sales and transit from Azerbaijan’s Shah Deniz field.

Aliyev’s visit was preceded by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s visit to Baku last month, where the two leaders decided to establish a high-level strategic cooperation council to overcome the initial worries by Baku that Ankara would ratify the diplomatic protocols with Armenia and open the borders without heeding Baku’s wishes.

“The mechanism serves dialogue, which will prevent unpleasant surprises between Turkey and Azerbaijan and support rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia,” Veliev said.

The opening of the second phase of the Shah Deniz field, Shah Deniz II, is considered as key in the supply for the Southern Corridor and possibly the Nabucco pipeline.

The gas supply and transit agreement will create “an open road” for exports to Europe, said Murat Heydarov, adviser to the head of the State Oil Co. of Azerbaijan, or Socar, which is a partner in the Shah Deniz field, according to Bloomberg.

Assistant professor Osman Nuri Aras from Fatih University said at the congress that the Caspian Sea Basin had gained great importance for Europe in the post-Soviet Union energy region, providing alternatives to Russian pipeline routes.

- Azerbaijan to ship more gas to Europe via Turkey, ministry official says

Azerbaijan has agreed to ship more gas to Europe via Turkey, an Azerbaijani energy ministry official announced Monday.

The official said it was not immediately clear whether Azerbaijan was intending to join Nabucco, a major pipeline project to bring natural gas from Central Asia and the Middle East to Europe to diversify the continent's energy sources and reduce Russia's dominance. Speaking on condition of anonymity, he said Azerbaijan and Turkey will sign a deal Monday for the shipment of 11 billion cubic meters (400 billion cubic feet) of gas, some of which will be consumed in Turkey. The shipments would start by 2017. Turkey currently receives some 6 billion cubic meters (212 billion cubic feet) of gas from Azerbaijan and pumps some of that amount to Greece.

- Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH welcomes gas agreement signed by Azerbaijan and Turkey

Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH welcomes the agreement that was signed in Ankara today between Azerbaijan and Turkey defining terms for the transit of gas to Turkey and Europe, Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH said.

"This is a step ahead in the right direction", Reinhard Mitschek, Managing Director stated. Azerbaijan and Turkey have signed an agreement on a package of gas issues in Istanbul yesterday.

A declaration for the transit of Azerbaijani gas through Turkey and the cost of gas within the first and second stages of development of Azerbaijan gas condensate field Shah Deniz has been signed by Azerbaijani Minister of Industry and Energy Natiq Aliyev and Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Taner Yildiz with the participation of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan. SOCAR President Rovnag Abdullayev (State Oil Company of Azerbaijan) and Botas (Turkish state pipeline company) general manager Fazil Senel signed an agreement on terms and mechanisms for the sale and transit of Azerbaijani gas. Construction of gas pipeline is planned to be launched in 2011, the first supplies - in 2014.

Social Front

- International training on youth and conflict management held in Azerbaijan

An international training on the role of youth in maintaining peace and conflict management will be held on June 5-12 in Oguz region in Azerbaijan.

The event will be co-organized by Azerbaijan Youth and Sport Ministry, Irani Public Union and Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport.

The training will bring together 40 representatives from Europe's 18 countries. The opening ceremony of the event will be held on June 7.

- Azerbaijani official: Azerbaijan has the lowest crime rate in the region

Azerbaijan is one of the leading countries in the region for the minimal number of crimes per 100,000 people, Deputy Interior Minister Oruj Zalov said at the First International Conference "Policing with the support of society" organized jointly with the OSCE Baku Office.

"Azerbaijan recorded 22,000 crimes in 2009, that is, on average, 225 crimes for every 100,000 people. This is the lowest figure among the former Soviet Union countries. The number of crimes associated with premeditated murder, banditry and looting sharply decreased," Zalov said. He said this achieved due to the law enforcement bodies' successful work in the field of operational crime detection and prevention.

He said the Ministry's "102" call service receives on average 2,200 calls per day. "Most of them are not connected with the work of internal affairs, and we refer these petitions to the relevant structures," he said.

The district service's activity was strengthened after developing the draft on amendments to the law on police together with OSCE, Zalov said noting that district services communicate with the public through community councils.

"The most active representatives of the district services are represented in these councils. They conduct discussions on the problems in these areas at least once a month and raise questions to address these problems before the relevant bodies," Zalov added.

OSCE Baku Office Head Ambassador Ali Bilge Cankorel said more effective service to people is the basis of the idea of public support to police.

"I am confident that this will give some impetus to the cooperation of the police and society," Cankorel said.

Kazakhstan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Uzbek Border Guards 'Blockade Kazakh Village'

ARNASAI, Kazakhstan -- Officials of a village near Kazakhstan's southern border with Uzbekistan say they have been cut off by Uzbek border guards for several days, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

Arnasai village governor Basymbek Kalzhigitov told journalists today that the Shardara-Zhetysai highway has been blocked by Uzbek border guards since June 7. Part of the highway crosses Uzbek territory.

After the delimitation of the Kazakh-Uzbek border several years ago, Arnasai became an exclave surrounded by Uzbek territory. The northern part of the village is connected with Kazakhstan via the Shardara reservoir. The village population is approximately 650. According to Kalzhigitov, the village has enough food to last three days, but some families have already run out of drinking water.

The Uzbek side has not given any explanation for blocking the highway. Officials from South Kazakhstan Oblast's Shardara district are currently holding talks on the situation with their Uzbek counterparts.

- Gates, in Baku, seeks to shore up Afghan supply chain

The United States sought to shore up a link in its supply chain to Afghanistan Sunday, sending Defense Secretary Robert Gates to Azerbaijan, a transit point that has complained about not getting enough attention.

Gates, in Baku, seeks to shore up Afghan supply chain

BAKU (Reuters) - The United States sought to shore up a link in its supply chain to Afghanistan Sunday, sending Defense Secretary Robert Gates to Azerbaijan, a transit point that has complained about not getting enough attention.

Since 2001, tens of thousands of military aircraft and supply trucks have crisscrossed Azerbaijan by air and land, carrying U.S. and NATO forces and equipment to the war zone. The Pentagon wants to make sure there are not any problems that could slow President Barack Obama's 30,000-troop surge.

As part of the Obama administration's campaign to keep Azerbaijan on board, Gates sandwiched a less than 24 hour stop in Baku, the capital, in between talks in Asia and Europe about the crisis on the Korean peninsula and the war in Afghanistan.

He said the trip was spurred, in part, by "concerns in Azerbaijan that we weren't paying enough attention to them." "It's important to touch base and let them know that in fact they do play an important role in this international coalition," Gates told reporters on his plane before landing.

To underline the message that the United States was paying more attention to Azerbaijan, Gates hand delivered a letter to President Ilham Aliyev from Obama to make clear "we have a relationship going forward," a senior defense official said.

Gates is the most senior U.S. official to visit Azerbaijan since Obama came to office last year, and he made clear more high-level exchanges were planned.

The United States wants to expand military-to-military relations, from training to exercises, officials said.

As part of the outreach effort, the Pentagon sent a senior defense official to meet with the Azeris and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has spoken by phone to Aliyev.

Though the United States has expressed concern over Azerbaijan's human rights record in the past, it was unclear whether Gates would press the issue in Baku.

CONCERNS ABOUT NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Aliyev has been particularly critical of Washington's role in its festering conflict with Armenia over the breakaway mountain region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan believes that the United States has been siding with Armenia in the conflict over the rebel region, where ethnic Armenians backed by Armenia threw off Azeri rule in the early 1990s in a bloody war. A peace deal has never been signed. Gates will try to allay Aliyev's concerns about Nagorno-Karabakh, an official said without elaborating. Azerbaijan is part of what the United States refers to as the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), which also involves Russia, Latvia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Disruption fears have risen in recent months.

In April, operations at a U.S. air base in Kyrgyzstan, an important support hub for the war, were briefly suspended after violent riots toppled then-president Kurmanbek Bakiyev. It is unclear how long the new government will keep the base open.

Gates said the United States has "multiple avenues" to route supplies to Afghanistan to limit the impact of any disruptions in any one country.

Economic/Energy Front

- Kazakhstan, China to form joint venture to build pipeline

(SRI) - Kazakhstan and China will create a joint venture in July to build the Beyneu-Bozoy-Akbulak gas pipeline, the Oil and Gas Journal reported citing a Kazakh oil and gas executive.

Kazakhstan will reportedly have a 50-percent stake in the \$3-billion project. The gas pipeline, which will take gas from fields in western Kazakhstan to the south of the country, could potentially link up with the Central Asia Gas Pipeline, connecting gas-rich Turkmenistan with China. China will provide \$2.5 billion to finance the construction while Kazakhstan will allocate \$500 million from the budget, Bolat Nazarov, Managing Director for Gas Projects at the Kazakh national oil company KazMunaiGas, said.

Nazarov told journalists in Astana that all preliminary work has been completed.

"The technical plan and the route have been finalized," he said. Construction on the pipeline is expected to begin in the second half of 2010 and be completed in 2012. The 1,500-km gas pipeline will have a capacity of 10 billion cubic meters a year.

- China, Kazakh pipeline expansion on Hu visit agenda

Chinese president Hu Jintao will sign an agreement to increase crude pipeline capacity from Central Asia during a trip to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan next week, part of China's efforts to diversify oil sources. Hu will also attend the annual meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a regional security grouping that is led by China and Russia. Regional economic development will also be on the agenda there.

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will attend the meeting, Chinese assistant foreign minister Cheng Guoping said, but added that there are currently no plans for a Sino-Iranian bilateral meeting.

During the Kazakh leg of his visit, Hu will sign a deal to start feasibility studies for the phase-two expansion of the landmark Kazakh-China crude pipeline, said a PetroChina official based in Almaty.

Plans are to double the capacity of the line to 400,000 barrels per day by 2013, but the study will consider whether to revamp the existing 620 km (385 miles) pipeline from Kumkol to Atasu, or to build a new line.

Phase I of the expansion, a 794 km line connecting Kenkiyak and Kumkol, was completed about a year ago, allowing China access to the vast oil deposits in western Kazakhstan.

The Sino-Kazakh line accounts for roughly 4 percent of China's total crude imports, which hit a record high of more than 5 million bpd in April.

It is now pumping at its full capacity of 200,000 bpd, said the official.

Chinese planners worry that the country's increasing dependence on crude oil imports makes China strategically vulnerable over the long shipping routes, and therefore have been pursuing overland pipeline projects. But crude imports from Central Asia carry their own risk, since they pass through Xinjiang. That frontier region is home to the Uighurs, a central Asian people who chafe at religious and linguistic restrictions of Chinese rule and at economic policies that favour Chinese migrants and corporations.

Hu will seek cooperation from Kazakhstan in combating "East Turkestan" separatism, Cheng said.

China blames separatists for unrest in the region, including bloody riots in Urumqi last July that grew out of protests over the killing of Uighur migrant workers in south China. Hu's visit to Uzbekistan will also be marked by deals to expand infrastructure and agricultural cooperation, Cheng said.

The SCO membership comprises China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Iran, Pakistan, Mongolia and India are observers, while Belarus and Sri Lanka have the lesser status of dialogue partners.

The bloc's activities have focused on military cooperation, intelligence-sharing and the fight against terrorism and drugs. The interim foreign minister of Kyrgyzstan will attend the meeting, Cheng said. China has taken a cautious view on a bloody April revolt in Kyrgyzstan. Cheng said only that China "hopes and believes" the interim government will take steps towards establishing a legally based government.

Social Front

Kyrgyzstan

Political Front

- Grenade Explosion In Kyrgyzstan Injures Four

At least four people were injured when a grenade exploded in Kyrgyzstan's northern city of Tokmok today, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. The press service of Kyrgyzstan's Healthcare Ministry told journalists that all four were injured by flying glass.

The Ministry for Emergency Situations said an unknown person threw the grenade in a trade center at around 16:00 local time. No other casualties were reported.

An investigation is under way.

- Death Toll In Kyrgyz Violence Rises To 50

Kyrgyz health officials say at least 50 people have died in clashes between rioters and security forces overnight in the southern city of Osh. More than 660 others were injured in the city as clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth spilled over into battles with security forces.

Kyrgyzstan's interim government declared a state of emergency and imposed a night curfew in Osh and surrounding districts after ethnic clashes late on June 10 led to looting, arson, and gunfire.

Today, several groups of people from different ethnic groups are trying to calm down the angry crowds in different parts of the city.

Timur Kamchybekov, deputy mayor of Osh, told RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reporter on the scene that provocateurs in camouflage masks are shooting at representatives of both main ethnic groups in the city in order to further provoke ethnic hatred.

The situation remains tense throughout the southern region, with the Kyrgyz Akipress news agency reporting gunfire from several towns.

Kyrgyzstan's interim government appealed today to retired police and army officers to travel to Osh to prevent ethnic clashes which it said risked escalating into civil war. The 24.kg news agency quotes government spokesman Azimbek Beknazarov as saying "the authorities will be grateful for any [retired officer] volunteers who are ready to help prevent civil war in the south of Kyrgyzstan."

In Bishkek, interim government leader Roza Otunbayeva told reporters that help is needed "to calm the situation down." She said she had signed a letter to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev appealing for aid. Meanwhile, international rights group Human Rights Watch group has called for the international community to take action to help Kyrgyz authorities get control of the situation. In a statement, Human Rights Watch's Central Asia adviser, Andrea Berg, who is in Osh, called for involvement by the United Nations Security Council, saying the international community should take immediate action to help the Kyrgyz government prevent what she called "wide-scale interethnic conflict." The statement added that gas has been shut off in Osh to prevent fires, and some neighborhoods have been left without electricity. Russia, China and the United States have all issued appeals for calm and for the conflicts to be settled peacefully.

The unrest in the Osh region follows the violent ouster in April of former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who is from the region.

- **Kyrgyz Officials Escape Attack In Bishkek**

BISHKEK -- Two senior Kyrgyz officials were attacked by a crowd of young Kyrgyz in Bishkek today, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

Interim government Deputy Chairman Temir Sariyev and Deputy Interior Minister Kubanychbek Kadyrov were trying to persuade a group of young people not to travel to the southern city of Osh, where at least 37 people were killed in clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbek youths. Several of the group's members then tried to assault the two men.

An RFE/RL correspondent who was at the scene reports that security guards and police managed to protect the two officials and helped them to escape into the parliament building. The group of young Kyrgyz men was demanding that the interim government provide them with a bus to travel to Osh.

RFE/RL correspondents report that young Kyrgyz from different parts of the country are trying to reach Osh, while the interim government is trying to prevent what leader Roza Otunbaeva called "the flow of people" from reaching the city.

- **Some local officials bear pressure upon members of election committees in Kyrgyzstan**

In Kyrgyzstan some local officials bear pressure upon members of election committees forcing them to leave as Central Election Committee reports.

CEC suggested examining reasons why appointed members of election committees retire. Thus, CEC receives reports that some akims and other officials forces members of election committees to abdicate. Members of polling site commissions' stand pressure

ostensibly from criminal structures. CEC is worried by such reports and fears that such facts can cast aspersions on work of CEC and serve as reason for blaming in corruption and unfair work.

- participation of ethnic minorities in political life is crucial for Kyrgyzstan

The United States of America calls for sensitivity to ethnic issues and the inclusion of all ethnic groups in the development in the republic, the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek informs.

“Participation of ethnic minorities in political life is crucial for Kyrgyzstan, the message reads, The U.S. Embassy has been following closely the issue of inter-ethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan. Resolving the questions of participation and representation of minorities in public life is crucial to stability, governance, and freedom in Kyrgyzstan. With the upcoming referendum on constitutional reform and the pre-October election period, we call for sensitivity to ethnic issues and the inclusion of all ethnic groups in the development of Kyrgyzstan into a fully democratic society, the statement said.

Geo strategic Front

- U.S., Kyrgyzstan in talks on fuel supplies at key air base - U.S.

(AFP)- The Pentagon said Thursday it is in talks with Kyrgyzstan's provisional government about fuel supplies for its operations at Manas air base, a key transit point for US troops headed to Afghanistan.

US, Kyrgyzstan in talks on fuel supplies at key air base: US

The Pentagon said Thursday it is in talks with Kyrgyzstan's provisional government about fuel supplies for its operations at Manas air base, a key transit point for US troops headed to Afghanistan.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said the military's current fuel contract expires August 1, and a Defense Department team was in Bishkek to review "technical" requirements for a new fuel contract. Fuel supplies at the base were briefly interrupted in late May, forcing the suspension of flights by KC-135 tanker planes out of the base to conserve fuel.

The disruption followed an attempt by the provisional government to impose a value added tax (VAT) on subcontractors supplying fuel to the US military, Whitman said.

The US side argued that the fuel was exempted from taxes under a US-Kyrgyzstan military cooperation agreement signed with the previous government, which was ousted in April after a bloody uprising.

The provisional government later suspended the VAT tax, at least temporarily resolving the dispute, but the issue may arise again under the new contract.

So Whitman said the US team was conducting "technical discussions to review in detail with the provisional government the requirements in order to ensure secure, reliable, uninterrupted supplies of fuel."

Manas is a key hub for US air refueling tanker planes and for the giant transport planes that ferry US troops and supplies to and from Afghanistan.

NATO has increasingly relied on the Manas base, outside Bishkek in the country's north, as 30,000 additional US forces deploy to Afghanistan.

But the US military presence has irritated Russia, placing Kyrgyzstan at the center of a big power rivalry for regional influence.

Kyrgyzstan last year threatened to close the base after receiving a promise of more than two billion dollars in aid and loans from Moscow, which many saw as a sign of Russian resentment over the American operation.

Bishkek eventually agreed to keep the US base open after Washington more than tripled the rent paid to use Manas.

The US base operates round-the-clock, carrying out mid-air refueling missions and medical evacuations while transporting tens of thousands of troops and hundreds of tonnes of cargo every month.

- Roza Otunbayeva says successful referendum to provide equitable dialog with neighbour states leaders

Successful constitutional referendum in Kyrgyzstan would provide Kyrgyzstan with a platform for equitable dialog with leaders of neighbour states, Roza Otunbayeva, the President of transition period said Wednesday.

The Kyrgyz Leader underlined that the situation still remains “stressed”. We are to build democracy and the first step would be a referendum. Only then we would prove able to hold a dialogue with neighboring leaders on equal terms. Still we solve questions of present interest by means of official letters or special envoys. For example an issue with state borders: Kyrgyzstan sent several times a request for Nursultan Nazarbayev. It should be noted that Kazakhstan is full of goodwill to cooperate with Kyrgyzstan, Roza Otunbayeva concluded.

- US base bargaining

Bishkek hurt Washington’s reputation by sound jobbery scandal around US Transit Center at the Kyrgyz airport “Manas”. However, US “knockout” can appear to be deceptive...

Billion margin

Pentagon has stopped refueling aircrafts in Manas Transit Center in response to big stink. US military was accused of aiding and abetting corruption and was demanded to reconsider jet fuel contracts immediately. Official Bishkek has a suspicion that fuel money can be used for inciting situation across the country.

Fuel supply to Manas Transit Center had become focus of attention of Kyrgyz law enforcement body since power had been changed in Kyrgyzstan. There is a belief that jet fuel business is very profitable and it is no wonder that families of former presidents of Kyrgyzstan fed at it.

Jet fuel for Manas Transit Center was supplied by foreign companies who were the final point in the chain created during Askar Akaev era. Kyrgyz resellers sold them Russian fuel bought by privilege prices. Russian fuel, as unofficial channels inform, was supplied only for needs of Kyrgyzstan but milieus of former presidents gained \$1 billion through fuel transactions and this amount of money was lost on a way to the treasury.

One month to go before upheavals Kremlin officially sounded suspicions that Bishkek sold Russian fuel to third party, a geopolitical rival of Moscow. However, previous government of Kyrgyzstan declared that they are not aware of fuel reselling while new government has revealed hard-hitting facts and rising spout of debate touched US Congress forcing to start investigation.

Washington sent several high-ranking envoys to Bishkek and no one admitted that issues of US base were discussed at meetings with the interim government. Recent after USA and Kyrgyzstan unexpectedly stated agreement about Transit Center and Americans have

made pre-schedule transferring of \$15 million for first quarter of lease. However, major question of fuel supply bringing \$ 200 thousand annually for Kyrgyzstan is still open. According to US officials the question of fuel supply is under consideration. Meanwhile Bishkek is ready to suggest Pentagon alternative variants of supply though it is unclear which ones. The one thing is clear Bishkek is not going to cut fuel prices. US base continues operating to help in “war against world terror” while major question of political background of scandal remains without answer.

Bargains

US base became object of bargaining between Bishkek and Washington many times. The question of base closing is being debated permanently as favorite topic of local politicians. So, this is not a surprise that the interim government had tried to take advantage of the base.

Debates about reconsideration character of cooperation with USA had started after April events. Deputy Head of the interim government Almazbek Atambaev accused Washington of sustaining “corrupted regime”. Law and enforcement agencies started investigation for confirming statement of high-ranking official. To find facts of using “fuel schemes” was an easy case as it was well known but security officials preferred to turn blind eye to them. Selective tactics of the interim government shifted the base topic from political level and USA hurried to take advantage of that.

“We have been given assurances by the new leadership in Kyrgyzstan that the United States will retain access to the Manas air base,” US Secretary of State Clinton said. She noted that Washington had discussed the issue with Russia because Moscow has allowed the Pentagon to transport materials and troops destined for Afghanistan across Russian airspace. However, her statement doesn’t mean success of US diplomacy. The interim government of Kyrgyzstan in spite of anti-bribery declamation and making a good leg to Russia wasn’t able to consider closing US base in the country as Kyrgyzstan must inform American about base closing within 6 months prior to end of the agreement. The time is up on March – before power change. Besides, the interim government being not legitimate doesn’t have rights to solve the problem of US base. USA mentioned this fact saying that they will leave if people of Kyrgyzstan will insist on that.

What is next?

Obviously, USA understands instability of their military presence in Kyrgyzstan. Maybe this is a reason why west experts consider Kyrgyz anti-bribery campaign as leverage for rent increase of Manas Transit Center.

Today the only legitimate guarantee of US base existence is the interim president Roza Otunbaeva. The interim government is still hesitating about closing US base but there are no warranties that new cabinet of ministers will agree to keep it.

In autumn 2010 elections of legitimate parliament will be held. New parliament will form legitimate cabinet of ministers and following political traditions Transit Center will be the focus of their attention. The base lets local politicians feel own importance as international players able influence USA.

History of independent Kyrgyzstan showed “games” with super powers are dangerous but such conclusions are unpopular now in Bishkek especially as USA plays into the hands of new Kyrgyz government. Thus, USA stated about their readiness to help in search and returning of stolen funds. US Ambassador Tatyana Gfoeller noted that Treasury Department of the US has possibilities for finding and freezing of secret

accounts. At the same time Washington envoys persuade Kyrgyzstanis that military presence of USA is not a reason for trouble. Michael McFaul stated in Bishkek that USA doesn't have plans of long-term using the base; they are going to close it as soon as war in Afghanistan will end. USA in every possible way has made assurances that in the near future need for US base existence in Central Asia will disappear. But how can we explain current discussions about US base establishing in Kazakhstan? There is no reasonable answer.

- Roza Otunbayeva and NATO Special Envoy discuss Public Security Issues

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert F. Simmons and the President of transition period of Kyrgyzstan Roza Otunbayeva discussed Public Security Issues.

Reportedly, Ms. Otunbayeva reported about the reasons of April events, current socio-political situation, socioeconomic status in the country, as well as she told about measures on preparation for the upcoming referendum and parliament elections.

- Vladimir Putin: US troops depends on Bishkek's decision

The US troops stay in Kyrgyzstan depends on Bishkek's decision, stated Russian Prime-Minister Vladimir Putin at a press conference after negotiations in Istanbul, RIA Novosti informs.

According to the agency, in such a way Russian Premier commented the question whether Moscow will undertake any steps so that Americans leave Manas. The question of location of American military base in Kyrgyzstan is exclusively within the competence of the management of this country, emphasized Vladimir Putin, and added: "Everything will be as the Kyrgyz administration decides".

- Kazakhstan special envoy arrives to Kyrgyzstan

Kazakhstan has sent a special envoy Bolat Utemuratov to Kyrgyzstan. Bolat Utemuratov was appointed by official Astana after tragic April events that ousted president Bakiyev. Mr. Utemuratov will meet president of transition period Roza Otunbayeva on 10 June, 2010.

"The fact of appointment of special envoys by Russia and Kazakhstan for settlement of situation in Kyrgyzstan – testifies support provided for the interim government, Bolat Utemuratov has stated during his first visit to Kyrgyzstan.

He expressed concerns and alarm by all this violence in the south regions of Kyrgyzstan.

Vladimir Rushailo appointed a special presidential envoy for developing closer relations with Kyrgyzstan. Rushailo stated that his visit to Tashkent he made under a commission of Dmitry Medvedev. During the meeting he had a constructive dialogue on developments in the region.

- NATO Secretary General's Special Representative arrives to Kyrgyzstan

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert F. Simmons is to arrive to Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the NA 24.kg.

According to preliminary information, on 10 June 2010, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative will meet with the President of transition period, Head of the Interim Government Roza Otunbayeva, as well as with other representatives of the new administration of the country. The agenda is still being defined. The parties may discuss

the issues concerning the dislocation of the Transit Center at the Manas International Airport.

Mr Simmons served as Deputy Director of the Office of Regional Political and Security Issues in the Bureau of European Affairs. During the period he was Deputy Director, he managed U.S. policy in connection with NATO, the OSCE, and European security architecture. The issues he covered included NATO enlargement; NATO adaptation, including the creation of EAPC and PfP; and the development of the role of the OSCE. Previously he was assigned as Deputy Political Advisor to the U.S. Mission to NATO and U.S. Representative to the NATO Political Committee. Education: Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service (BSFS), Georgetown University, Washington, DC MA, The School of Advanced International Studies, The John Hopkins University, Washington, DC.

Economic/Energy Front

- In Kyrgyzstan GDP increased by 9.7 percentage points

In Kyrgyzstan GDP increased by 9.7 percentage points comparing with 2009 as National Statistic Committee KR reports.

By its data GDP increased by 5.5 percentage points without consideration output of mining company Kumtor

Output of industrial products was raised by 56.8 per cents. Rates of growth of mining industry are 45.6 per cent, manufacturing industry - 67.8 per cent, energetic – 13.1 per cent.

GDP of agriculture, forestry and hunting was increased by 2.2 percentage points. Rates of growth of constructions are 29.3 per cent. Permanent investments raised by 13.1 per cent. Inflation comparing with 2009 is 2.8 per cent while average monthly earned increased by 13.7 per cent and amounts 6 thousands 424 soms. Number of jobless was decreased by 1.4 per cent. Today by official date number of unemployed reaches 66.7 thousands in Kyrgyzstan.

Social Front

- Kyrgyz Religious Board Elects New Mufti

Former Kyrgyz mufti Murataaly-Hajji Juman-Uulu stepped down in April.

BISHKEK -- Kyrgyz Muslims have elected Ruslanbek Jumagulov as their new official leader, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

Duishon-Hajji Abdyltaev, a member of the Interim Committee of Kyrgyzstan's Muslims, told journalists in Bishkek that Jumagulov was elected mufti by Muslim clerics on June 10. Jumagulov has been working as a kadi, or Islamic judge, in Kyrgyzstan's northern Chui region.

Former Kyrgyz mufti Murataaly-Hajji Juman-Uulu stepped down after the ouster of Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiev in early April. Abdushukur Narmatov, who was elected to succeed Juman-Uulu, resigned soon afterwards.

Suyun-Hajji Kuluev, who was named as a temporary successor to Narmatov, was severely beaten by unknown assailants during a religious gathering on June 6. The press service of the Muftiat, the country's highest religious authority, told RFE/RL that the attackers shouted that Kuluev must resign.

Tajikistan

Political Front

- Tajik Opposition Party Member Jailed For Election Fraud

DUSHANBE -- The Vakhsh district court in Tajikistan's southern Khatlon region today sentenced opposition party member Muhammadruzi Burhonov to one year in prison for election violations during the February 28 parliamentary vote, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Burhonov is a member of the opposition Islamic Renaissance Party, and also a member of the local electoral commission.

Judge Anvar Qurbonov told RFE/RL that Burhonov was found guilty of voting on behalf of members of his family. He said six ballot papers filled out by Burhonov were confiscated.

Burhonov's lawyer Abdurahmon Turaev admitted that Burhonov had voted for his elderly father and his wife and daughter, who were sick. But Turaev added that Burhonov had obtained permission to do so from the local electoral commission head.

Turaev said he had expected the court to hand down a suspended sentence. He said he is now considering asking a higher court to reconsider the verdict.

The Islamic Renaissance Party, the largest opposition party in the country, described the verdict as "made-to-order." Party first deputy chairman Saidumar Husayni, who is a member of the Tajik parliament, told RFE/RL the charges against Burhonov were not proven in court and he was sentenced unfairly.

According to the official results of the February election, the Islamic Renaissance Party received 7.5 percent of the vote. Its leaders say the real figure is more than 30 percent. They claim the ruling People's Democratic Party of President Emomali Rahmon rigged the results to secure victory.

Burhonov said after his trial that it was the first trial on such charges, and he hopes it will be the last.

Burhonov is the first person in 18 years to be jailed for election fraud in Tajikistan.

Geo strategic Front

- Iran's President In Tajikistan For Talks, Water Conference

Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad has arrived in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, where he is to hold talks with his counterpart Emomali Rahmon and attend a UN-sponsored international conference on water security.

Rahmon's office said the two leaders would discuss Iran's participation in Tajik energy projects, as well as a number of regional and international issues.

From Tajikistan, Ahmadinejad is expected to head to China for a visit to the Shanghai Expo.

- Tajik Journalists Picket Uzbek Embassy Over Rail Holdup

At an earlier protest, Tajik students also demanded the resumption of rail links.

DUSHANBE -- More than 20 journalists protested today outside the Uzbek Embassy in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, to demand an end to what they call Uzbekistan's ongoing economic blockade of Tajikistan, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

The protesters chanted "Release Tajik freight cars!" and demanded a meeting with Uzbek Ambassador Shohqosim Shohislomov.

An embassy employee who declined to give his name asked the journalists to leave and come back to meet the ambassador after the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit scheduled for later this week.

Abduazimi Abduvahhob, one of the protesters, told RFE/RL that the demonstrators took part in the protest not only as journalists, but also as representatives of a new generation of young Tajiks angry at decades of confrontation between Central Asian leaders.

Another journalist, Abdulazizi Vose, told RFE/RL that Uzbekistan's blocking of rail freight bound for Tajikistan is becoming a national issue, not just a dispute between two national leaders or two governments.

It was the first protest rally by Tajik journalists outside the Uzbek Embassy in Dushanbe. Tajik students abroad earlier staged similar protests outside the Uzbek embassies in Bishkek and Washington.

Tajikistan's state rail company estimates that more than 2,500 freight cars, including some transporting NATO supplies to Afghanistan, are held up in Uzbekistan.

Two weeks ago, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan said it "may have to re-route some shipments" that are stranded in Central Asia after Uzbekistan suspended rail traffic to Tajikistan's southern Khatlon district.

Uzbekistan has described the rail delays as technical. But Dushanbe has criticized the Uzbek moves as an "attempt to blockade Tajikistan" in retaliation for the Tajik government's plans, opposed by Tashkent, to build a huge hydropower station in Roghun.

- Criticism For Tajik Response To 'Biased' Russian Comments

Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky referred to Tajikistan as a 'failed state.'

DUSHANBE -- Tajik independent journalists and analysts have criticized the belated official response to Russian officials' negative remarks about the country, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrohkhon Zarifi summoned Russian Ambassador Yury Popov on June 7 and handed him a protest note about the remarks, made by Russian nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky and chief public health inspector Gennady Onishchenko.

Zhirinovsky, the head of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, said last month that Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have failed as independent states and should be incorporated into the Russian Federation as the ninth federal district.

Onishchenko, who banned the import of dried fruit from Tajikistan after an outbreak of polio there, referred to the floods that hit Tajikistan last month as "divine retribution."

Tajik Foreign Ministry spokesman Davlat Nazri told RFE/RL that the Tajik leadership considers these remarks "biased" and "frivolous."

The Foreign Ministry said in its protest note that the ban on imports of dried fruit from Tajikistan has caused serious problems for farmers, especially in the north of the country. Independent Tajik media too have criticized those statements, but also the response from Dushanbe.

Irshod Sulaimoni, the chief editor of the independent weekly "Millat," noted that the protest note came "only after independent media criticized the Tajik government's silence in this regard."

Journalist Rajabi Mirzo connected the protest to an upcoming summit of a regional security organization that is dominated by Russia. Analysts told RFE/RL that by handing over a formal protest note to its ally Russia, Dushanbe also seeks to underscore its foreign policy priorities on the eve of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Tashkent later this week.

- E.Rahmon, M.Encha discuss situation in region and Afghanistan

DUSHANBE. June 9. "Asia-Plus" -- Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon met with the visiting Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia Miroslav Encha to discuss current situation in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

According to the President's press service, the sides paid much attention to removal of artificial barriers which are being created in the region on the way of free movement of people, goods and services in Central Asia.

The sides have also discussed counter-narcotic cooperation and situation with the growth of drug production in Afghanistan.

- Emomali Rahmon to hold talks with Islam Karimov in Tashkent

DUSHANBE. June 4. "Asia-Plus" -- On June 10 this year Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon will leave for Uzbekistan's capital of Tashkent to take part in a regular summit of heads of SCO member states, a reliable source in the government of Tajikistan told the AP.

According to the source, Tajik President will be accompanied by President Adviser for International Affairs Erkin Rahmatulloev, Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrohon Zarifi, Tajik Interior Minister Abdurahim Kaharov and other officials.

"In the course of his official visit to Tashkent Tajik leader will hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao and his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov," the source said, adding that Emomali Rahmon may also meet with leaders of other SCO member states in bilateral format.

Many Tajik experts believe that the talks between heads of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan can settle many problems between Dushanbe and Tashkent which accumulated in the past years.

Economic/Energy Front

- World Water Conference Opens in Dushanbe

DUSHANBE -- A UN-sponsored international water conference has opened in Dushanbe, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Participants will assess implementation of the goals set by the UN for its Water For Life Decade (2005-2015), such as reducing the proportion of people worldwide without access to safe drinking water.

Addressing the conference, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon proposed designating 2012 the Year of Water Diplomacy in order to "promote and strengthen cooperation and dialogue and create new approaches to regulating water relations."

Rahmon implicitly blamed downstream states in the region for the drying up of the Aral Sea -- arguably Central Asia's biggest environmental problem.

"In recent years, more than 100 large reservoirs have been built in lower-reach countries. The total volume [of those reservoirs] is 1.5 times greater than the current area of the Aral Sea," Rahmon said.

Rahmon defended Tajikistan's hydropower projects, including construction of the Roghun hydropower station on the Vakhsh river, a tributary of the Amu-Darya which flows through Uzbekistan and into the Aral Sea.

Uzbekistan objects strongly to that project as filling the huge reservoir will considerably reduce the volume of water from the Vakhsh that reaches the Amu-Darya.

Rahmon affirmed that Tajikistan never causes any problems for other peoples and countries of the region, nor does it want to. He said Tajikistan will take those countries' interests into account.

Representatives from more than 70 countries and 65 international organizations, including UN Undersecretary Sha Xukan, are participating in the conference.

Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad will address the forum on June 9.

Uzbekistan, the strongest critic of Tajikistan's water and hydroenergy projects, is represented at the conference by a small delegation headed by a deputy economy minister.

- **Gazprom Subsidiary Raises Gasoline Price In Tajikistan**

DUSHANBE -- Gazprom-Neft-Tajikistan, which controls some 60 percent of the gasoline market in Tajikistan, has announced a retail price hike of over 25 percent, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Gazprom-Neft-Tajikistan, a subsidiary of Russia's Gazprom Neft oil and gas producer, said the new gasoline price at the pump will be between 4.40 and 4.50 somonis (just over \$1) per liter. The Russian government imposed higher tariffs on the export of oil products to Tajikistan on May 1.

The price of gasoline at filling stations in Dushanbe today ranged from 4.20--4.50 somonis per liter, compared with less than 4 somonis before the announced price increase.

Amonullo Ashur, the head of Tajikistan's state antimonopoly agency, told RFE/RL that they are monitoring the situation and will probably ask the Russian company to review its new prices, which Ashur described as "excessive." Separately, Gazprom-Neft-Tajikistan says it is concerned that 260 of its freight cars carrying gasoline are currently stranded in Uzbekistan due to an ongoing dispute between the Tajik and Uzbek governments. A spokesman said the delay has cost the company \$1.3 million.

- **Tajik Farmers Seek New Markets In Wake Of Russian Import Ban**

DUSHANBE -- Farmers and businessmen in Tajikistan's northern province of Sughd are desperately seeking new markets following a ban by Russia on the import of dried fruit and nuts from Tajikistan, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Russia's chief consumer protection body imposed the ban one month ago in response to an outbreak of polio in Tajikistan.

Ubaydullo Obidov, a Tajik state rail company official in Sughd, told RFE/RL that eight freight cars of dried fruit have already been sent back from Russia.

Russian news agencies report that about 5,326 tons of Tajik dried fruits and walnuts have been confiscated from sale in Novosibirsk alone.

Anvar, a Tajik businessman who sold dried fruits in Moscow but has now returned to Sughd, told RFE/RL that he and fellow exporters were ordered by the Russian health inspection authorities to remove all their products from sale or they would be confiscated. The Sughd region of northern Tajikistan is the country's main exporter of dried fruits and walnuts and provides about 90 percent of such products.

Local farmers complain that the Russian ban has already affected their business. Tajikistan usually exports dried apricots and raisins to Russia, but on the eve of new harvesting season, prices have fallen by almost half, from 5,000 somoni (about \$1,200) to 3,000 somoni (about \$700) for the yield from each hectare of apricot orchards.

Sughd officials are desperately trying to find new markets for the region's fruit.

Local health authorities rejected as "groundless" their Russian counterparts' allegations that dried fruits could contain the polio virus. They want the World Health Organization to rule in the dispute.

- China to allocate 85m yuans to Tajikistan

DUSHANBE. June 10. "Asia-Plus" -- Yesterday Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon, who is currently on his official visit to Tashkent where he will take part in the summit of heads of SCO member states, met with his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao.

The sides have discussed issues of bilateral and multilateral Tajik-Chinese relations, Tajik President's press service reports.

"Tajik President said that China is Tajikistan's strategic partner and we are interested in further development and strengthening of our relations. On his turn, Chinese President Hu Jintao said China is ready to strengthen relations with Tajikistan and expressed his support to strengthening of independence and economic development of Tajikistan," the source reported.

Tajikistan President also expressed his satisfaction over successful implementation of economic and infrastructural projects, which have significant importance for Tajikistan, and highly evaluated the quality and speed of work of Chinese companies involved in construction of roads, bridges, electric power lines, tunnels and mining enterprises in Tajikistan, press service has said.

"The sides have outlined that even despite the global economic crisis, trade turnover between Tajikistan and China has increased up to \$1,5b," the source said.

China's leader assured his Tajik colleague that China will continue to provide comprehensive assistance to Tajikistan for strengthening of its national economy. "It has been stressed that the issue of allocation of preferential credits to Tajikistan from SCO credit fund, which has \$10b at its account, is being discussed these days. Chinese President also said that the government of China will allocate 80m yuans (6,7 yuans = one USD) to support Tajikistan's economy and extra 5m yuans to eliminate consequences of this year's disasters," the source said.

The sides have also confirmed their intention to cooperate on the all-year-round functioning of Qulma-Karasu customs crossing at Tajik-Chinese border.

Social Front

- UNICEF gives opportunity to Tajik children to be heard

DUSHANBE. June 9. "Asia-Plus" -- Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon and the visiting UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang have attended National exhibition of drawings "Water by children's eyes", organized by the Ministry of Education and supported by UNICEF.

The overall goal of the exhibition is to provide children of Tajikistan with an opportunity to express their views and concerns over water related problems and lack of drinking water in households and schools all over the country.

The exhibition is part of the entire series of events dedicated to the High-Level International Conference on the medium-term overview of the process of implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" for 2005-2015 in Dushanbe.

According to UNICEF Office in Dushanbe, more than 1.300 drawings have been submitted by boys and girls from Tajikistan. According to head of the Department of

Science and Innovations of the Tajik Ministry of Education Mirzosharif Shodiev, best 130 drawings will be presented at the three-day exhibition.

Turkmenistan

Political Front

- Elections to local governments to be held December 5

The Mejlis of Turkmenistan passed a resolution setting the date of elections to the regional, district and city people's councils. Chairwoman of the national parliament Akja Nurberdieva signed the relevant document. As the Ashgabat correspondent of Turkmenistan.ru reports, elections to the district and city people's councils with the status of district will be held on Sunday, 5 December 2010.

The early elections to the regional people's councils and city people's councils with the status of region will take place on the same day.

Geo strategic Front

- Turkmen, Chinese leaders hold talks in Tashkent

President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who arrived in the capital of the Republic of Uzbekistan to attend the summit of the Shanghai Organization of Cooperation (SOC), has met with President Hu Zintao of the People's Republic of China on June 11.

During the talks, the Turkmen and Chinese leaders exchanged views on the key aspects of the Turkmen-Chinese cooperation, having confirmed the sides' mutual interest in the further build-up of the economic partnership, which has enormous potential and prospects. Interaction in the fuel and energy sector became a separate topic of discussion, the Turkmen State News Agency (TDH) reports.

Economic/Energy Front

- Turkmenistan to attend 31st session of Commission on Caspian Sea bio-resources
Chairman of the State Committee for Fisheries of Turkmenistan Amanmyrat Sahadov will attend the 31st session of the Commission on the Caspian Sea Biological Resources to be held in Tehran, the capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on June 13-17, 2010. Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov signed the relevant resolution, the Ashgabat correspondent of Turkmenistan.ru reports.

- Turkmenistan to develop potable water supply program

During the Cabinet of Ministers meeting, June 10, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov signed a decree that prescribes drafting a comprehensive program of providing all settlements of the country and, first of all, nurseries, preschool and educational institutions, hospitals, public catering establishments with pure potable water. The signed document follows up the instructions made at the session of the Council of Elders of Turkmenistan held in Dashoguz on May 14, 2010, and sets up the State Commission responsible for designing this program, which has to be developed by December 1, 2010, and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers of the country.

The project on supplying remote villages, settlements and pastures of Turkmenistan, preschool institutions, schools and other educational institutions, hospitals, public catering establishments with potable water will be implemented in the framework of the National Program on radical improvement of social and living conditions of the population of villages, settlements, cities of districts and district centers for the period till 2020, the funding of which will be doubled starting from 2011.

- Ashgabat to host Turkmen-American business forum

Ashgabat will host political consultations between Turkmenistan and the US delegation and the Turkmen-American business forum in June. This was announced by Vice-Premier of the Turkmen government and Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov at the Cabinet of Ministers meeting yesterday.

As Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov said at the meeting, "the United States of America has been and remains an important strategic partner with which Turkmenistan intends to develop further the equal cooperation on the long-term and mutually beneficial basis."

Social Front

- Turkmenistan, USA extend narcotics control agreement

Today, the Turkmen Foreign Ministry has held the ceremony of signing the third Amendment to the existing Letter of Agreement of September 2001 on Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Assistance between the Government of the United States and the Government of Turkmenistan.

Vice Premier and Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov, on behalf of the Turkmen government, and US Charge d'Affaires a.i Sylvia Reed Curran, on behalf of the US government, signed the document.

According to the press release of the US Embassy in Ashgabat, the Amendment extends the ongoing cooperation and adds a new dimension by allowing for additional funding to establish and support a forensic scientists and investigators project. The new project is designed to increase cooperation between forensic scientists of the State Counter-Narcotics Service of Turkmenistan and criminal case investigators. The forensic scientists and investigators project is a continuation of earlier assistance efforts that included a forensic laboratory development project and counternarcotics project.

Under the new project, U.S. law enforcement experts, primarily forensic scientists from the Drug Enforcement Administration, will provide training assistance on evidence collection, crime scene investigation, and forensic examination. The project will also provide basic supplies and equipment to the counternarcotics units and forensic scientists for field-based evidence collection.

- Turkmen delegation to attend international UN conference on water

Turkmen president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov signed a document authorizing Vice Premier of the Turkmen government Myratgeldi Akmamedov to attend the High Level International Conference on the Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life," 2005-2015 held under the United Nations aegis.

As the Turkmenistan.ru correspondent was informed in the press service of the Turkmen leader, the conference will take place on June 7-9, 2010, in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan

Political Front

- Implementation of legal expertise law considered

President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov signed the law on legal expertise on 1 June. The document regulates relations in the field of legal expertise in the country.

The new law outlines general norms and rules ensuring the independence of the legal experts and their conclusions.

The document will play an important role in further improvement of the legal system of Uzbekistan, vice justice minister G.Hidoyatov said at the conference on the law implementation.

The law, among others, describes rights and obligations of legal experts, as well as issues related to conducting legal expertise and its financial, organizational, scientific, methodical and other aspects.

Geo strategic Front

- SCO summit opens in Tashkent

The summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization opened in Tashkent on Friday with a meeting of the heads of states of the SCO member states.

President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of China Hu Jintao, President of Russia Dmitriy Medvedev and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

During the talks, the leaders considered issues of improvement of the activity of the SCO and its bodies, development of cooperation in the political, trade-economic and humanitarian spheres, strengthening regional security and stability, joint fight against terrorism, religious extremism and separatism, drugs and arms smuggling, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as situation in Afghanistan.

- Protest near Uzbekistan embassy in Washington

WASHINGTON. June 7. "Asia-Plus" – At least 20 Tajik students gathered early in the morning on June 4 near Uzbekistan's embassy in Washington urging Uzbekistan's government to remove transport blockade of Tajikistan.

The protesters were about to hand an open letter addressed to Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov to Uzbek diplomats but the embassy called the police, organizers of the protest told the AP.

Two police vehicles which arrived shortly after the phone call did not stop the action which continued till the end of the day. By the evening text of this letter, pictures and video were placed on web-forum of Tajiks in the United States at www.tajik.us.

- President of Turkmenistan arrives in Uzbekistan

President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguli Berdimuhamedov arrived in Uzbekistan on 11 June for participation as a guest in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev welcomed the high guest at the Tashkent airport.

The SCO summit will be held under the chairmanship of the President of Uzbekistan. The leaders will consider issues of further development of SCO, improvement of activity of its bodies, political, economic and humanitarian cooperation of member states, strengthening SCO's ties with international and regional organizations, as well as problems related to security and other issues.

- Meetings of Presidents

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov on 10 June at Kuksaroy met with President of the Russian Federation Dmitriy Medvedev, who is in Tashkent to attend the summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

“I am pleased to welcome you in Tashkent on the eve of the major SCO forum and I am convinced that the upcoming meetings and negotiations within it will have a high and rather constructive note,” Islam Karimov suggested.

Dmitry Medvedev conveyed his high appraisal of Uzbekistan’s presidency in SCO and expressed confidence that negotiations within the summit will be pretty meaningful and useful and undoubtedly facilitate enhancement of international stability and regional cooperation.

The two leaders exchanged views on a wide range of issues related to Uzbek-Russian relations, as well as regional and international topics. Presidents Karimov and Medvedev drew attention to the consistent fostering of bilateral cooperation in political, trade and economic, cultural, humanitarian and many other areas. Uzbekistan and Russia interact effectively also on multilateral format within the framework of many international bodies. President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov at Kuksaroy June 10 held talks with Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who is taking part in the summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tashkent.

“The constructive attitude of participants of SCO’s Tashkent summit is a fine starting point for our industrious work within this forum that in its turn will surely have a positive effect on raising the efficiency of the entire Organization,” Islam Karimov underscored.

The Kazakh President observed in response that “the efforts by the Republic of Uzbekistan during its presidency in SCO have served as a model in the perfection of its structures and decision-making mechanisms in critical areas of regional politics. Just taking a look at the agenda and the list of documents to be signed in Tashkent convinces one of SCO’s amplified role in general.”

During the talks the two sides discussed issues concerning the expansion of Uzbek-Kazakh dialogue at the highest level and exchanged views on hot topics of cooperation. The presidents talked about rational use of Central Asia’s water and energy resources, and bilateral cooperation within international institutions.

Regional security issues, particularly those related to countering terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and other threats, have also been deliberated during the meeting.

President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov at Kuksaroy June 11 met with President of Mongolia Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj who is attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Tashkent as the head of an observer nation.

“Your participation in the SCO summit meeting will enrich its content”, Islam Karimov assured his colleague. “This is your first visit to Uzbekistan as President of Mongolia, and I think it will prove to be a good opportunity to get acquainted with the culture and ancient history of our nation, its economic potential, and also to discuss the prospects of Uzbek-Mongolian relations”.

Interaction between our countries is built on the principles of mutual understanding and interest in developing relations in various sectors of economy. The enormous potential of Uzbek-Mongolian cooperation has barely been used to a full extent. The two nations have similar approaches to issues related to countering contemporary threats to regional and international security. Mongolia highly appreciates Uzbekistan’s efforts to promote stability in Central Asia and address the situation in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan and Mongolia have sought to build up bilateral political relations. In order to boost cooperation, a round of consultations between foreign ministries of the two countries was held on September 23, 2009, in Ulan Bator, capital of Mongolia.

During the meeting at Kuksaroy, President of Mongolia thanked cordially the head of our state for the warm welcome and applauded the level of organization of SCO summit. Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj expressed confidence that new opportunities for expanding trade and economic relations with Uzbekistan will provide a powerful impetus to consolidating bilateral cooperation.

- Emomali Rahmon to hold talks with Islam Karimov in Tashkent

DUSHANBE. June 4. “Asia-Plus” -- On June 10 this year Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon will leave for Uzbekistan’s capital of Tashkent to take part in a regular summit of heads of SCO member states, a reliable source in the government of Tajikistan told the AP. According to the source, Tajik President will be accompanied by President Adviser for International Affairs Erkin Rahmatulloev, Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrohon Zarifi, Tajik Interior Minister Abdurahim Kaharov and other officials.

“In the course of his official visit to Tashkent Tajik leader will hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao and his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov,” the source said, adding that Emomali Rahmon may also meet with leaders of other SCO member states in bilateral format.

Many Tajik experts believe that the talks between heads of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan can settle many problems between Dushanbe and Tashkent which accumulated in the past years.

- President of Afghanistan arrives in Tashkent

President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation as observer in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev welcomed the high guest at the Tashkent airport.

The SCO summit will be held under the chairmanship of the President of Uzbekistan. The leaders are expected to consider issues of further development of SCO, improvement of activity of its bodies, political, economic and humanitarian cooperation of member states, strengthening SCO’s ties with international and regional organizations, as well as problems related to security and other issues.

- President of Russia arrives in Tashkent

President of Russian Federation Dmitriy Medvedev arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev welcomed the high guest at the Tashkent airport.

The SCO summit will be held under the chairmanship of the President of Uzbekistan. The leaders are expected to consider issues of further development of SCO, improvement of activity of its bodies, political, economic and humanitarian cooperation of member states, strengthening SCO’s ties with international and regional organizations, as well as problems related to security and other issues.

- President of Pakistan arrives in Tashkent

President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation as observer in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev welcomed the high guest at the Tashkent airport.

The SCO summit will be held under the chairmanship of the President of Uzbekistan. The leaders are expected to consider issues of further development of SCO, improvement of activity of its bodies, political, economic and humanitarian cooperation of member states, strengthening SCO's ties with international and regional organizations, as well as problems related to security and other issues.

- President of Kazakhstan arrives in Tashkent

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev welcomed the high guest at the Tashkent airport.

The SCO summit will be held under the chairmanship of the President of Uzbekistan. The leaders are expected to consider issues of further development of SCO, improvement of activity of its bodies, political, economic and humanitarian cooperation of member states, strengthening SCO's ties with international and regional organizations, as well as problems related to security and other issues.

- President of Tajikistan arrives in Tashkent

President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon arrived in Uzbekistan on 10 June for participation in the session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, hosted by Tashkent.

Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev welcomed the high guest at the Tashkent airport.

The SCO summit will be held under the chairmanship of the President of Uzbekistan.

The leaders will consider issues of further development of SCO, improvement of activity of its bodies, political, economic and humanitarian cooperation of member states, strengthening SCO's ties with international and regional organizations, as well as problems related to security and other issues.

- Tashkent to host 10th SCO heads of states summit

The 10th session of the Council of heads of states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will be held in Tashkent on 11 June.

On the invitation of the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, who is chairing the SCO, the heads of states and delegations of SCO member and observer countries will take part in the summit.

Presidents of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan will attend the session as guests. Representatives of international organizations SCO has partnership ties with, including the UN, CIS, ASEAN, SCTO and EurAsEC, will also be present.

The summit participants will exchange opinions on a range of regional and international problems.

Among the issues on the agenda are deepening multilateral cooperation within the SCO, strengthening understanding, stability and security in the world and stable development of countries and regions.

Signing of a number of important documents is expected during the summit, including the Declaration of heads of SCO member states, the Regulations on the order of adoption of new members to the organization and the Rules of SCO procedure.

- Uzbekistan-China: Toward enhancing cooperation

At the invitation of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao arrived June 9 in Tashkent on state visit.

Relations shaped between the two nations are historically deep-rooted, dating back to more than a thousand years and thriving most during the era of the Great Silk Road. The mutual cultural appeal and trade relations between Maverannahr and the Celestial Empire were indisputably critical in disseminating the culture of tea, cotton, silk, paper and other products that have since enjoyed incomparable demand worldwide.

The particular attention paid to the viewpoint of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in addressing international issues, speaks for a high political standing of the country, a permanent member of UN Security Council. The dynamic growth of its gross domestic product, and the fact that it is among the top ten economies in the world in terms of foreign trade and export volumes, lays bare China's economic power.

In the twenty-first century, relations between Uzbekistan and the PRC have been vibrant in all aspects meeting the realities and requirements of our times. Today they comprise political cooperation in the international arena, joint efforts in countering terrorism, religious extremism and separatism, mutually beneficial interaction in trade, economic, investment, cultural and humanitarian spheres.

Official welcoming ceremony of Chinese President has been hosted at Kuksaroy June 9. The guard of honor lined up for the distinguished guest. Then Islam Karimov and Hu Jintao rose to the podium, followed by state anthems of Uzbekistan and China being played flamboyantly. The two leaders reviewed the guard of honor.

During the presidents' one-to-one meeting, the sides exchanged views on a wide range of issues related to advancing the Uzbek-Chinese relations, as well as regional and international topics of common interest.

Mutual confidence and political cooperation have been consolidated, with partnership in trade, economic and humanitarian spheres expanding. The two nations support one another in the international arena in promoting their vital interests by augmenting cooperation in the framework of the United Nations (UN), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and other international institutions. The two sides join their efforts in boosting regional security.

President Karimov said Uzbekistan highly appreciates its cooperation with China, based on mutual trust, respect and interest in deepening comprehensive interaction. As the head of nation stressed, our country supports enhancement of its interaction with China in all areas in the spirit of the Interstate Agreement on Partnership Relations of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 2005. Our republic is principally interested in expanding cooperation in energy, transportation, trade, telecommunications and other industries.

Hu Jintao maintained that China considers Uzbekistan as a time-tested friend and important partner. President of the PRC expressed his country's willingness to carry on with the rewarding cooperation with our republic in implementing the arrangements of strategic nature reached during summits.

The Chinese leader highly praised Uzbekistan's activity as chair nation of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and noted in particular that the Joint Declaration on

Cooperation between the Secretariats of the UN and SCO signed in Tashkent this April was a momentous event.

Presidents of Uzbekistan and China continued negotiations in a broader format with the participation of official delegations. Amid global financial and economic downturn, issues of curtailing its impact and preventing its devastating effects become central to intergovernmental cooperation. In order to address concerns in this area, the two countries have focused on expanding interaction in trade, economic, investment and financial spheres.

In this regard, joint projects in the financial sector have included interest-free and long-term soft loans provided by the government and Export-Import Bank of China. Owing to the Chinese credit line assigned for SCO member states, around 20 infrastructure projects worth over 600 million US dollars have been developed in Uzbekistan. The sum total of implemented projects in our country through soft loans from China has amounted to 127 million US dollars, while the volume of those in progress reaches 547 million dollars.

Investment cooperation has also been enlarging. In this direction, interaction is dynamically growing in the oil and gas, mining and other industries. For instance, China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) has had exploration work in the Aral Sea, Ustyurt, Bukhara-Khiva and Ferghana investment blocks.

In recent years, Uzbekistan and China have stepped up economic cooperation. While the volume of bilateral trade amounted to 1.2 billion US dollars in 2008, the figure exceeded 2 billion in 2009.

The agreements reached within the framework of investment cooperation include attracting investments from China worth 2 billion US dollars. Nonetheless, these indicators hardly correspond to the potential of cooperation between the two nations. Enormous opportunities for productive interaction provide transportation, logistics, construction, telecommunications, high-tech sectors. In particular, our countries can utilize the vast resources inherent in the free industrial zone in Navoi.

During the talks, the sides exchanged views on intensifying relations in cultural and humanitarian sphere, in the travel industry in particular. Set up in 1998, Uzbekistan-China Friendship Society has proved vigorous in advancing humanitarian cooperation, while the Chinese government – on a bilateral basis as well as within the SCO – provided scholarships for forty Uzbek students for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Following the negotiations, the heads of state signed the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Expansion and Development of Partnership Relations of Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China. Governments of the two countries inked a number of agreements on cooperation in energy and high-tech areas, the one concerning accreditation, as well as the one related to opening a credit line to support small and private entrepreneurship.

At the meeting with media representatives, Islam Karimov and Hu Jintao stressed that a trustful, friendly and businesslike atmosphere characterized the talks. Leaders of the two countries expressed confidence that the agreements reached will serve to enhance Uzbek-Chinese relations and improve the welfare of the two peoples.

State visit of President of the People's Republic of China to Uzbekistan continues.

Economic/Energy Front

Social Front

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