

February 2017

Economics

Kazakhstan's Foreign and Economic Ministers were [replaced](#) by the country's long-term President Nursultan Nazarbaev. No reasons were given.

Former Economy Minister of Kazakhstan Quandyq Bishimbaev was [detained](#) for an alleged bribery case.

Kazakhstan's oil production [decreased](#) by 1.8 percent in January - December 2016, compared to the same period in 2015.

In western Kazakhstan hundreds of oil workers are on hunger strike in protest [against](#) the closure of a confederation of independent trade unions. Dozens of these workers now face a court hearing based on a local court's claim that their hunger strikes are illegal.

The Turkmen state gas company Turkmengaz [cut](#) gas exports to Iran over a longstanding debt dispute between the two countries. According to Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister, Iran has repeatedly violated its trade obligations stipulated under the gas contract. The head of Turkengaz was [fired](#) in relation to the dispute.

Turkmenistan [plans](#) to build a gas and chemical complex in the settlement of Kiyarly – Balkan region, Turkmenistan – near the Caspian Sea.

The Turkmen government [revealed](#) its plans to build a powerful transmission line along the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline.

China is set to [construct](#) a solar power plant, worth US\$147 million, in Uzbekistan.

Politics

Nine candidates have officially [registered](#) to run in Turkmenistan's presidential elections.

Uzbekistan's parliament [submitted](#) a bill to enforce the law on combating corruption.

Uzbekistan has [postponed](#) by four years a plan to grant citizens from over 27 countries visa free travel to Uzbekistan.

By presidential [decree](#), Abdusalom Azizov was appointed as the new Interior Minister in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan and Afghanistan held their first [round](#) of political consultations in the Uzbek capital Tashkent. Economics, trade and the future of Afghanistan's security and development were discussed.

Uzbekistan and South Korea will [extend](#) their bilateral cooperation in the year 2017.

A Tajikistan court has [extended](#) the prison term of prominent Tajik human rights lawyer Buzurgmehr Yorov to 26 years. He represented the Islamic Renaissance Party leaders in court. Yorov is among at least five human rights attorneys targeted by authorities in connection with their work.

Russia's ambassador to Tajikistan Igor Lyakin-Frolov stated Moscow's [intention](#) to expand its air force deployment to Tajikistan.



The head of Kazakh's Unified Pension Fund and the director of funds financial department were [arrested](#) over corruption charges.

Kazakh President Nursultan made a two-day official [visit](#) to the UAE. The two countries' leaders [signed](#) several cooperative agreements during the President's visit.

Syrian cease fire talks [brokered](#) by Russia, Iran and Turkey were held in Kazakhstan's capital Astana.

Former Kazakh Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov's prison term was [shortened](#) from 8 years to one year and seven months.

A Kazakhstan court [convicted](#) two land activists to five-years jail for their role in organizing protests in opposition to a proposed land privatization scheme.

Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov [appointed](#) two new deputy chairmen of Turkmenistan's Cabinet of Ministers, Dadebay Amangeldyev and Bayram Annameredov.

Security

After a [major](#) security operation in three parts of Central Asia, 16 members from various criminalised Islamist groups were arrested.

Tajik authorities are [investigating](#) claims made by Afghan officials that Russian engineers are repairing Taliban tanks and other heavy weapons in Tajikistan. Russian authorities have denied these allegations.

At least 13 Afghan teachers have been [kidnapped](#) by Islamic State militants at a school in the Haska Mina District, north of Afghanistan.

Hundreds of Shia Muslims [demonstrated](#) in Western Afghanistan against increasing attacks carried out by the Islamic State.

An anti-Taliban militia leader and two others were killed in a [blast](#) at an Afghan Buzkashi match.

An Afghan member of parliament, alongside several others, were [wounded](#) in a bomb blast in Kabul.

At least 38 people were [killed](#) in twin bomb attack near the Afghan Parliament in Kabul. A further seven people were killed by a suicide-bomb attack in Helmand province, south of the country. The Taliban claimed responsibility for both of the attacks.

Seven people were killed, including five diplomats from the United Arab Emirates, in a [blast](#) at a government guest house in southern Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan's ground troops [held](#) military exercises in the east, west and south of the country.

Five people including one Russian national have been [sentenced](#) to 10 years over human trafficking charges in Kazakhstan.

CENTRAL ASIA TIES TO ISIS/TERRORISM

Several Central Asian citizens have been arrested and convicted in relation to terrorism offences across the globe. Turkish police [arrested](#) Uzbek citizen Abdulkadir Masharipov, alongside several others from Central Asia, for their alleged involvement in the Istanbul New Year's Eve terror attacks. A [further](#) two individuals of Uyghur ethnicity from China were arrested. Kyrgyz officials [announced](#) that the Kyrgyz passport holder, originally suspected for his involvement in the New Year's Eve attacks, is no longer a suspect in the case. Central Asian authorities are grappling with rising extremism throughout the region. A Kazakh teenager was [convicted](#) for planning terror attacks in Kazakhstan and Russia, while a Kazakh citizen residing in New York was found [guilty](#) over providing material support to the Islamic State. Meanwhile, Russian authorities [arrested](#) a Tajik national over extremism related charges.