

November 2016

Economics

The Uzbek Minister of Labour Aziz Abdukhakimov [reported](#) that more than 462,500 people found jobs in the first half of 2016.

A US\$4 billion economic action plan was [signed](#) by Kazakhstan's National Economy Minister Kuandyk Bishimbayev and the Russian Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev.

Uzbekistan's acting President Shavkat Mirziyoyev [said](#) that a new free economic zone will be established in Urgut district in Samarkand.

Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov [hosted](#) a meeting to discuss the first stage of the Asia International Railway Transportation Corridor, which will link Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to China's extensive rail network.

Turkmenistan and Russia are [expected](#) to expand business relations through the newly established Turkmen-Tatar Business Forum.

The Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev [signed](#) ten agreements worth more than 60 billion tenge (US\$181.55 million) during a visit to Saudi Arabia.

The UN [reported](#) that the rate of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan increased by 10 percent in 2016.

A new natural gas reserve was [found](#) at the Halkabat site in eastern Turkmenistan.

Kazakhstan's uranium operator Kazatomprom and Russia's Center for Uranium Enrichment [signed](#) an agreement on joint uranium enrichment projects during Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Astana.

Kazakhstan's government [reiterated](#) its January 2016 ban on the wearing of hijabs, head scarves and other clothing that 'directly or indirectly promotes religion' in schools.

The US Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon [met](#) with the acting Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Uzbekistan. Shannon stressed the US's interest in broadening the bilateral relationship, including through investment and high technology cooperation.

Politics

The Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev [declared](#) that Kyrgyzstan supports Georgia's territorial integrity during a two-day visit to Tbilisi.

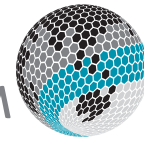
The four-party ruling coalition in Kyrgyzstan [collapsed](#) following the Social Democratic Party's (SDPK) decision to withdraw.

Turkmen officials [announced](#) that the presidential election will be held on February 12, 2017.

Kazakh officials [reported](#) that Turkmenistan had temporarily suspended visa-free travel for Kazakhs living close to the Turkmen border.

Representatives of the Georgian and Kyrgyz governments [signed](#) an agreement to enhance bilateral economic, security and educational relations.





The Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev [announced](#) that his country is preparing to transition from its current presidential-parliamentary political system to a parliamentary system in the near future.

Several women [accused](#) the Kazakh Minister of Culture Arystanbek Mukhamediyuly of sexual harassment. Mukhamediyuly denied the accusations.

The Chairman of the Uzbek Central Election Commission (CEC) Mirza-Ulugbek Abdusalomov [announced](#) the formal start of the presidential election campaign.

A Tajik court [sentenced](#) two lawyers from the banned Islamic Renaissance Party to 20 years in prison.

A court in Kazakhstan [sentenced](#) the head of the Kazakh Journalists Union and his son to a total of 11 years in jail on charges of tax evasion and embezzlement.

Security

Flights were [cancelled](#) and passengers evacuated from Almaty International Airport after a jar containing banned substances was found in an airport rubbish bin.

Gunmen shot and [killed](#) dozens of Afghan civilians in central Afghanistan, prompting protests against the government's inability to protect lives.

Several al-Qaeda militants, including two Arab and four Pakistani nationals, [were killed](#) in a US airstrike in eastern Afghanistan.

A number of alleged Islamist terrorists and their supporters were [tried](#) in a high profile court case in Kazakhstan.

The US embassy in Kyrgyzstan [warned](#) about the risk of terrorist attacks in the country.

Tajikistan and China [undertook](#) joint counterterrorism military training exercises on the Tajik-Afghan border.

Nine people including six soldiers were [killed](#) when a military helicopter crashed in Uzbekistan.

The Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar [signed](#) a peace deal on behalf of Hezb-i-Islami on September 29.

Afghan forces [participated](#) in battles for several days to [push](#) the Taliban back from the key northern city of Kunduz.

At least 18 people were [killed](#) and 24 injured in two separate attacks on Shi'a holy sites and mosques during Ashura commemorations in Afghanistan.

The Afghan government and the Taliban [re-started](#) informal peace talks in Qatar, although a Taliban spokesman denied that the talks had taken place.

A gunman wearing Afghan army uniform in Kabul [killed](#) two and wounded three American citizens.

At least eight police officers were [killed](#) in an attack in the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar.

Kazakh security forces [arrested](#) three terror suspects in Almaty.

Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov [announced](#) his country's intention to build the capacity of the Turkmen navy to ensure maritime border security.

