

May 2017

Economics

Russia [banned](#) Tajikistan's Somon Air from flying to Moscow in response to Tajikistan's decision to prevent Yamal airlines from operating a flight between the Russian city of Zhukovsky and Dushanbe.

The Uzbek national carrier Ozbekiston Havoyollari [flew](#) from Tashkent to Dushanbe for the first time since 1992.

Oil production at Kazakhstan's Kashagan oil field is [expected](#) to more than double between now and the end of 2017 to 370,000 barrels per day (bpd).

A delegation from Saudi Arabia, including the Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources and the heads of oil and gas, chemical and mining companies, visited Kazakhstan to [hold talks](#) with Kazakh officials. They discussed expanding cooperation across hydrocarbon, chemical, nuclear and renewable energy projects.

The eight meeting of the Kazakhstan-China Cooperation Committee was [held](#) in Astana. It included a high-level meeting on bilateral cooperation between Kazakh First Deputy Prime Minister Askar Mamin and Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli.

Kazakhstan [announced](#) that it will begin exporting gasoline and diesel fuel in 2018.

Kazakh oil production will [decrease](#) in May and June in line with its commitments under the OPEC oil production cut. Kazakhstan has committed to reduce oil output by an average 20,000bpd in the first six months of 2017.

The European Union [announced](#) the launch of nine new projects in Kazakhstan, with a total value of almost €3.76 million.

A forum between Palestinian and Turkmen business leaders and experts is [scheduled](#) to take place in Ashgabat in early May.

A Turkmen newspaper [reported](#) that Turkmenistan would construct high-voltage transmission lines across Iran in order to begin exporting electricity to the Caucasus.

The Uzbek rail operator Uzbekistan Railways [received](#) delivery of a second high speed electric train from Spain.

The Uzbek and Turkish foreign ministers [signed](#) a program of cooperation for 2017-2018 following consultations between the two countries' foreign ministries.

Politics

A Kazakh court [found](#) labour union activist Nurbek Qushaqbaev guilty of inciting an illegal two-week workers' strike. He was sentenced to 30 months in prison.

Kazakh authorities will work to [transliterate](#) the Kazakh language from the Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin alphabet by the end of 2017.

The former head of the Kazakh Journalists Union Seitqazy Mataev had his prison sentence [shortened](#) from six years to 32 months following an amnesty.

The Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev [criticised](#) the increasing popularity of some Islamic clothing, such as body-length black garments for women and men's ankle-length trousers. He expressed his desire to ban the clothing, which he said was 'incompatible' with Kazakh tradition.

President Nazarbaev and the Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov [signed](#) an agreement that resolves the two countries' outstanding border disputes.

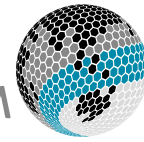
The sixth meeting of foreign ministers from Central Asia and Japan will [take place](#) in Ashgabat.

Three Kyrgyz opposition politicians were [convicted](#) of plotting to overthrow the government. Lawyers indicated that they would appeal the verdicts.

The Tajik president's eldest son Rustam Emomali [won](#) a seat in the Dushanbe city legislature with 85 percent of the vote.

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Tajik authorities [enforced](#) a new rule that requires state media outlets to address President Emomali Rahmon by his full title: The Founder of Peace and National Unity — Leader of the Nation.

17 officials from Tajikistan's top anti-corruption agency, including its deputy director, were [arrested](#) on charges related to taking bribes, document forgery and abuse of office.

The Turkmen President Berdymukhammedov [announced](#) that he had sacked his country's highest ranking energy official Yashigeldy Kakaev. Although the president claimed Kakaev had underperformed, it signalled deeper troubles in the Turkmen hydrocarbon sector.

The nephew of the late Uzbek President Islam Karimov was [transferred](#) from jail to house arrest in Kiev, Ukraine. He was arrested in January on charges of forgery and embezzlement.

The Afghan President Ashraf Ghani made his first visit to Australia, where he [met](#) with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. Hundreds of Hazaras held a protest in Canberra during the visit.

The US [boycotted](#) a summit held in Moscow on Afghanistan. Although it was to be attended by Afghanistan, Iran, India, Pakistan and a number of the Central Asian republics, a US Department of State spokesman accused Russia of attempting to assert 'unilateral' influence in the region.

The foreign ministers of Turkmenistan and Iran [met](#) in Ashgabat to discuss energy cooperation and the Caspian Sea.

Security

Two Iranian warships [docked](#) at Kazakhstan's Aktau port in the Caspian Sea, marking the Iranian navy's first official visit to Kazakhstan.

Eight suspects that were [arrested](#) in connection with the St Petersburg train bombing hailed from the Central Asian republics.

A recent Islamic State video that profiled ethnic Uighur fighters and made threats against China has prompted [speculation](#) that China will increase security cooperation with the neighbouring Central Asian republics.

An Uzbek citizen was [shot dead](#) and a Kyrgyz national wounded in the Russian city of Khabarovsk in an incident that investigators believe was a hate crime.

The Tajik President Emomali Rahmon [met](#) with the visiting commander of US Central Command General Joseph Votel to discuss military cooperation and enhancing regional security and stability.

Relatives reported that Tajik authorities had [arrested](#) the son of the former senior Tajik military officer Colonel Gulmurod Halimov. Halimov left Tajikistan to join the Islamic State group in 2015.

The US [announced](#) that the Uzbek-born Abdurakhmon Uzbeki, who is believed to have been involved in the New Year's Eve Istanbul nightclub attack, had been killed in a ground operation in Syria. Uzbeki was a senior Islamic State official.

Uzbek authorities [arrested](#) the brother of the alleged Stockholm truck attacker.

Russia made 12 extremism-related [arrests](#) in Kaliningrad Oblast. All of those arrested were reportedly of Central Asian descent.

A Taliban [attack](#) on an Afghan army base in northern Afghanistan killed more than 140 Afghan soldiers and wounded many others. The attack represented the deadliest violent incident in the country since July last year.

The former Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whose Hezb-e Islami militant group signed a peace agreement with the Afghan government last year, held [public talks](#) with government representatives in eastern Afghanistan for the first time.

The Taliban [announced](#) the beginning of its annual spring offensive.

