

July 2017

Economics

Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov [signed](#) a decree establishing the State Service for Fighting Economic Crimes.

President Berdymukhammedov [plans](#) to abolish the country's utility benefits that have provided households with free electricity, gas and water for 25 years.

Kazakhstan's Astana airport was [renamed](#) in honour of the country's President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The World Bank finalized a US\$500 million grant for Afghanistan to [support](#) projects aimed at boosting the economy and Afghan refugees sent back from Pakistan.

The European Union [seeks](#) to extend the Southern Gas Corridor to Central Asia as agreed under the June 2017 European Union strategy.

Uzbekistan's Uzbekneftegaz National Holding Company plans to [undertake](#) several joint offshore projects with Azerbaijani and Turkmen colleagues in the Caspian Sea.

Turkmen officials announced that Turkmenistan will [intensify](#) Turkmen National Oil and Gas Company activity by 2030.

The Board of Central Bank of Uzbekistan will [raise](#) the refinancing rate to 14 percent from 9 percent.

Pakistan aims to [enhance](#) cooperation with Uzbekistan through trade and business.

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a decree that will [allocate](#) US\$2.65 billion for the implementation of 32 investment projects on hydropower development in 2017 – 2025.

Uzbekistan and Spain are set to [enhance](#) trade and economic and investment cooperation.

Politics

Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev [announced](#) that Kyrgyzstan will hold a presidential election on October 15.

Afghanistan is [scheduled](#) to hold its postponed parliamentary elections in October.

In a politically charged court hearing in Kazakhstan, [prominent](#) Kazakh actor Tungyshbai Zhamanqulov was found guilty of embezzling state budget funds allocated to shoot a film.

Kazakh banker Mukhtar Ablaev, a fugitive tycoon and opposition figure, was [sentenced](#) to twenty years in prison.

Rustam Azimov, an influential official in Uzbekistan's government, was dismissed from his deputy minister post. Many [viewed](#) Azimov as a potential successor to the late President Islam Karimov.

Uzbekistan banned 34 computer games over government [claims](#) that they disrupt values and threaten social and political stability.

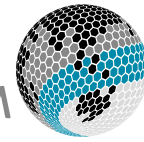


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The two-day summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), comprised of China, Russia, and the Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, was held in Astana, Kazakhstan. At the meeting, Pakistan and India [gained](#) full membership.

Kyrgyzstan's former Prime Minister Igor Chudinov is under [investigation](#) for possible corruption.

The trial of Omurbek Tekebaev, Ata-Meken (Fatherland) opposition party leader, [resumed](#) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Tekebaev upholds that the bribe-taking charges laid against him are false and politically motivated.

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres met with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon. They [discussed](#) issues regarding human rights in Central Asia.

Tajikistan authorities have [banned](#) Tajik citizens under 40 from performing this year's annual hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

Kazakh jailed land activist Max Bokayev entered his third week of hunger strike. Bokayev is [protesting](#) against authorities who refuse to relocate him to a prison in his home region.

On a visit to Afghanistan, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres [urged](#) against militarised strategies to find peace in the war-torn country.

Security

In Kabul, a truck bomb [explosion](#) left over 150 people dead and hundreds injured. It was the deadliest attack in the city since the removal of the Taliban in 2001. Days after the attack, Afghanistan [hosted](#) a peace conference in Kabul with officials from around the world attending.

In reaction to the truck bomb attack, hundreds [demonstrated](#) against the government while accusing it of failing to protect its citizens. At least one person was killed and several injured during the demonstrations.

At least 20 people were killed and 100 injured after three suicide bomb attacks were [carried](#) out during a funeral held for one of the victims of the truck bomb attack. In response, Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani called for [dismissals](#) of Afghanistan's top security chiefs.

At least 34 people were killed and 58 injured in a car bomb explosion [outside](#) a New Kabul Bank branch in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Pakistan commenced the [construction](#) of fences along its border with Afghanistan in an effort to boost border security.

Russian officials [announced](#) that its Iskander Tactical ballistic-missile systems were used for the first time outside of the country during military exercises in Tajikistan.

Kazakh citizen Vitaly Nenchenko was [arrested](#) in Uzbekistan. Local authorities claim they found two extremist videos on his phone.

The next round of Syria peace talks [scheduled](#) to be held in Astana in mid-June were postponed to July.

In Kazakhstan, a new religious service was introduced to serious crime inmates. The service aims to [prevent](#) the spread of radical Islamist ideology, extremism, and terrorism among inmates.

In central Kazakhstan, one man died and another was injured after [attempting](#) to extinguish a fire that erupted after part of a Russian rocket fell to earth.

The son of Gulmurod Halimov, former Tajik police colonel who joined the Islamic State (IS) in 2015, will go on trial over [allegations](#) that he tried to join his father in Iraq.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan [denied](#) they are in talks over a peace keeping mission in Syria involving the deployment of troops. Russian and Turkish officials claim otherwise.

