



# ORASAM

## MONTHLY NEWS BULLETIN FROM CENTRAL ASIA

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## SECOND BELT AND ROAD FORUM WAS HELD IN BEIJING



The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was held in Beijing on April 25-27. The forum was attended by delegations from 187 countries, 37 countries of them were represented by heads of state or government. Among the presidents of Central Asia, the forum was attended by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Jeenbekov, the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon. During a briefing for journalists on the 2nd High Level Forum on International Cooperation in the framework of the One Belt, One Road Xi Jinping said: "A total of 283 practical results, including intergovernmental cooperation agreements were achieved during the preparation and holding of the current One Belt, One Road Forum. The conference of entrepreneurs, which took place within the framework of the Forum, was attended by a large number of representatives of the business community and cooperation agreements were

signed totaling more than \$ 64 billion"

The practical results were achieved in six categories, namely: initiatives proposed by the Chinese side, bilateral and multilateral documents signed during or immediately before the second forum, multilateral cooperation mechanisms within the forum, investment projects and lists of projects, financial projects and projects of local authorities and enterprises.

### ***Initiatives proposed by the Chinese side:***

The Shanghai National Institute of Accounting, associated with the Ministry of Finance and Economics of China, together with the CAREC Institute, the Asian Development Bank and the Association of Certified Accountants, will jointly launch an exchange program for accountants from China and Central Asia (China-Central Asia Accounting Elites Exchange Program).

### ***Bilateral and multilateral documents signed:***

The Chinese government will sign a cooperation plan on industrial potential and investment with the government of

Kazakhstan.

The Chinese government has signed documents on cooperation in the field of transport with the government of Kazakhstan.

National railways of seven countries, i.e. China, Belarus, Germany, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Poland and Russia, have signed the rules of procedure for the joint working on the transport of China-Europe container trains. (Rules of Procedures for China-Europe Container Trains).

The Chinese Commission for Banking Regulation and Insurance signed a memorandum of understanding with the Astana International Financial Center (AIFC) and others.

The Ministry of Science and Technology of China have signed cooperation documents for a joint research center and a joint laboratory with the Agency for Science and Technology of Uzbekistan.

The China Customs Service has signed documents on customs inspection and verification and documents on quarantine cooperation with the State Revenue Committee of the Ministry of Finance of Kazakhstan.

#### **Multilateral cooperation mechanisms within the forum:**

The State Tax Administration of China, the State Revenue Committee of the Ministry of Finance of Kazakhstan and the competent tax authorities of other related countries (regions) held a forum of tax administration cooperation in the framework of the One Belt - One Road Initiative.

At the end of the forum, a memorandum on the creation of a mechanism for cooperation in the tax administration of the "One Belt - One Way" initiative and a two-year action plan was signed. China has established energy partnerships with 28 countries, including Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences has created an alliance of international scientific organizations in the region "One Belt - One Road" with 37 national scientific institutions and international organizations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and others.

#### **Investment projects and project listings:**

The National Development and Reform Commission of China signed documents on the lists of priority projects for productive capacity and investment cooperation with the relevant government departments of Kazakhstan, Egypt, Mozambique, Cambodia, Laos and the Philippines.

The Silk Road Foundation has invested in the Dewa Concentrated Solar Power project, the Astana International Exchange and the Yamal LNG project (Yamal LNG is an integrated project for the extraction, liquefaction and supply of natural gas), and in cooperation with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank finances the Oman's National Fiber Optic Broadband Network Project. The Silk Road Fund is investing in the development of tourism in Samarkand and a project in the oil and gas industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

#### **Project Financing**

The China Development Bank has signed loan agreements with relevant institutions in Kazakhstan and Turkey on projects for the construction of roads, mining and energy projects.

The Export-Import Bank of China has signed loan agreements on road projects with the national company KazAvtoZhol of Kazakhstan.

#### **Projects of local authorities and enterprises**

Local authorities and enterprises (of China) invested and built the Zhongtai New Silk Road in Tajikistan, an agricultural industrial park in Tajikistan and built an Uzbek-Chinese science and technology park.

#### **One Belt, One Road and Forums**

The First Belt and Road Forum was held in 2017 and it was attended by 130 countries with 29 presidents or prime ministers. The forums aim to reinforce cooperation mechanisms and support land and sea routes.

One Belt, One Road Initiative was announced by Ji Jinping in Kazakhstan, which is on the land route of China, and in Indonesia on the sea route of China, in 2013. The initiative aims to connect China to Asia, Africa and Europe through Silk Road Economic Belt on the land and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road on the sea. Thus, China will not only maintain its economic growth but also increase its sphere of influence and become a world power. As a part of an initiative reaching beyond Asia, Europe and Africa, China expands to Latin America realizing big budget projects, especially in infrastructure construction in 152 countries.

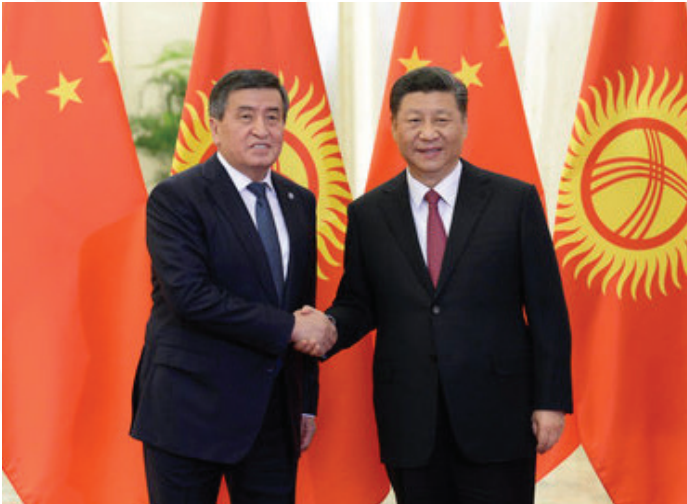
There are criticisms about the excessive investments beyond the capacity of host countries and their profitability, so that they would turn into debt traps at the end and create dependency on China. During the Forum, Xi Jinping addressed these criticisms as well and emphasized collateral interests and the rewards of invested countries.

China states that these are ungrounded criticisms propagated by rivaling countries and that the investments strengthen transit infrastructure, and they will support the economic development, supply cheap goods, increase agricultural output, facilitate industrial advancement, open new work places and decrease regional inequalities by enrichment in host countries through connecting them to the global network of roads.

Some countries with big GDP, such as the USA, Germany, Great Britain, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Japan, Canada, Mexico, India, Brasilia and Australia keep some distance to the initiative, while many countries, such as Turkey, Russia, South Korea, Italy, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Chile, South Africa, New Zealand, have already signed bilateral agreements with China under this framework.

China aims to finalize the project on the 100th anniversary of the People's Republic of China in 2049.

## SOORONBAI JEENBEKOV MET WITH XI JINPING



Xi Jinping admitted that he was impressed by the speech of the Kyrgyz President Jeenbekov at the round table of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. The Press Service of the Head of State reported that the President of Kyrgyzstan, Sooronbai Jeenbekov met with Chairman of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping

as part of a working trip to Beijing, Xi Jinping noted that China “has been and will be a reliable partner and friend of Kyrgyzstan”. The statesman admitted that he was impressed by the speech of Jeenbekov at the round table of the Belt and Road Forum. “The forum was very successful. This happened thanks to your support. Thanks to joint efforts, bilateral relations are developing steadily, which I am very happy about.” stressed Xi Jinping.

The Chairman of the People's Republic of China accepted an invitation from Jeenbekov to visit Kyrgyzstan in June 2019. The President of Kyrgyzstan stated that during the forum “the world heard from Xi Jinping simple and effective recipes for the joint development and preservation of well-being on the globe.” The heads of state discussed development prospects in the areas of transport and roads, including railway communications, interaction against terrorism and extremism, defense, security, increasing exports of environmentally friendly agricultural products from Kyrgyzstan to China, implementing projects in the Kyrgyz Republic to provide the population with clean water, and developing irrigation.

The parties stated the need to intensify cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, education and tourism.

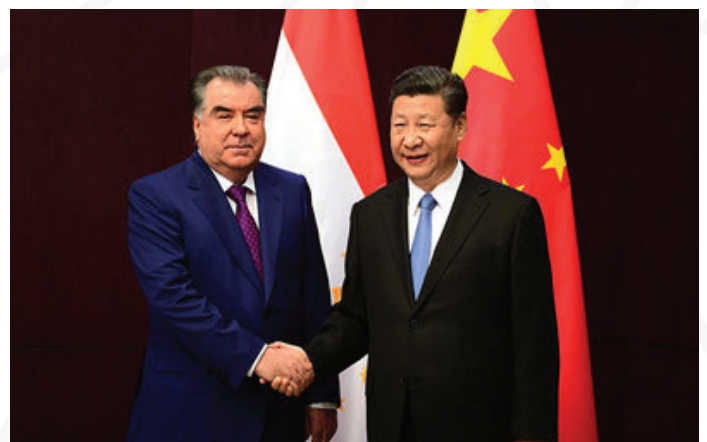
## EMOMALI RAKHMOM MET WITH XI JINPING

The Press Service of the Head of State reported that the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, met with the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping.

The meeting was held in Beijing as part of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

During the meeting, a wide range of issues on partnership strategic cooperation and relations of friendship between Tajikistan and China were discussed. Rakhmon and Xi Jinping stressed that the countries have developed political, economic and humanitarian relations, which expands the possibility of implementing previously reached agreements. The message of the Press Service says: “Rakhmon especially emphasized the positive role of China in the development, support, implementation of projects with the introduction of Chinese capital, increasing the volume of trade between the two countries, the development of the national economy, the effective implementation of the national development strategy, the industrialization of our country and other areas beneficial to both countries.”

Two heads of state also discussed further attraction of Chinese capital to such areas as mining, energy, transport,



and the agriculture in Tajikistan, as well as support for small and medium-sized industrial projects. Both sides expressed readiness to continue joint measures in the fight against the threats and dangers of the modern world, such as terrorism, extremism, separatism, organized transnational crimes and drug trafficking.

## JEENBEKOV'S VISIT TO GERMANY RESULTED IN CONTRACTS OF 1 BILLION EUROS



The Press Service of the Head of State reported that the President of Kyrgyz Republic, Sooronbay Jeenbekov made a press statement on his official visit to Germany. President Jeenbekov declared that there has been a significant intensification of high level political contacts between the two countries after Merkel's visit to Kyrgyzstan in 2016. Jeenbekov said that important political meetings were held with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and the Head of the Bundestag, Wolfgang Schäuble, with whom meaningful and productive negotiations were held. In addition, the president said that in Munich, he met with the leadership of Bavaria, spoke at the Hanns Seidel Foundation about the development of Kyrgyzstan in detail.

Jeenbekov said: "We held a Kyrgyz-German business forum with representatives of the business circles of the two countries. Contacts were established to intensify economic relations. More than 10 documents were signed between governments and departments, a number of contracts and memorandums between our businessmen. The total amount is over 1 billion euro." He also noted that in the future countries could cooperate in commercial and economic sphere, hydropower, industry, agriculture and tourism.

Jeenbekov added that in 2019 a new agreement on partnership and cooperation of the European Union with Kyrgyzstan is expected.

At the meeting with Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Angela Merkel noted that she remembers her visit to Kyrgyzstan: "I still remember how beautiful this country is. You solve your problems -establishing parliamentary democracy, dealing with natural resources, overcoming geostrategic challenges and founding multilateral cooperation. All these topics unite us," said Merkel.

She noted that Germany intends to strengthen bilateral relations in the field of youth exchanges and education.

Angela Merkel stressed that yesterday's economic forum in Munich was a good start to improve economic cooperation. Jeenbekov's visit to Germany took place from April 15 to 16. Earlier, the Head of State met with compatriots living in Germany.

## MORE THAN 60 THOUSAND VISITORS FROM CENTRAL ASIA VISITED TURKEY



In February of 2019, 62 thousand citizens of Central Asian countries visited Turkey.

According to the Trend News Agency, which refers to Turkey's Culture and Tourism Ministry, during this period, most of the visitors coming from Central Asian countries

were from Turkmenistan. "In February 2019 21.2 thousand tourists from Turkmenistan visited Turkey. The share of Turkmen citizens in the total of foreigners visiting Turkey in this period was 1.27 percent." Turkmenistan was followed by Uzbekistan with 16 thousand 600 citizens. However, this is 10.2 percent less compared to the previous period.

15.5 thousand visitors from Kazakhstan visited Turkey in February 2019, which is by 13.2 percent more than in 2018. Kazakhstani citizens make up 0.93 per cent of the total number of foreigners visiting Turkey. In February 2019, 8.7 thousand visitors from Kyrgyzstan came to Turkey. Kyrgyz citizens' share is 0.53 percent in the total number of foreigners visiting Turkey.

This number of foreign visitors includes seasonal workers and shuttle traders as well.

In February 2019, one thousand 670 million tourists visited Turkey and this number is by 9.38 percent more compared to the same period of 2018.

## THE 4TH MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT OF THE TURKIC COUNCIL WAS HELD IN BISHKEK

The Press Service of the Ministry of Transport and Roads of Kyrgyzstan reported that the 4th meeting of the ministers of transport of the Turkic Council was held in Bishkek, on April 17.

Secretary General of the Turkic Council Baghdad Amreyev, Minister of Transport and Roads of Kyrgyzstan Zhanat Beishenov, Vice-Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of Turkey Selim Dursun, Deputy Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development of Kazakhstan Berik Kamaliyev, Head of Transport Regulation Department of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of Azerbaijan, State Secretary Responsible for Transport Policy of the Ministry of Innovation and Technology of Hungary took part in the meeting.

During the meeting, representatives of the transport departments of the Turkic Council confirmed their interest in the development of the Trans-Caspian Corridor and discussed the possibility of demonstration of a container block train and a road caravan along the transport corridor from China to Europe through Turkey.

On the issue of accession of Kyrgyzstan to the Memorandum of Understanding on sister ports, Kyrgyzstan is exploring the possibility of joining the “dry port”. This is due to the growing trade flow along the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan axis. In addition, with the Turkish side the issue of opening



the Osh-Istanbul flight was also discussed and mutual understanding was reached. According to the Minister of Transport of the Kyrgyz Republic Beishenov, the states of the Turkic Council have the chance of becoming an intercontinental transit bridge connecting the economic and transport corridors of China, Central Asia, Russia, the Caucasus and Europe. Speaking about the cooperation with Turkey, the minister added that regular flights on route Bishkek-Istanbul are increasing every year, but there is a need to further increase the flights. “I would like to ask the Turkish side to resume flights with our southern capital, the city of Osh, to Istanbul,” said Beishenov.

## PRODUCTION OF CARS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IN KAZAKHSTAN



Kazakh analytical portal Energyprom.kz reports that the domestic auto industry has increased its output more by 35% and among the buyers of new cars 6 out of 10 Kazakhstanis prefer local manufacturers. According to the results of the first two months of the current year,

Kazakhstan auto industry produced 5.6 thousand cars, by 34.6% more than a year earlier.

East Kazakhstan Region accounted for 65.2% of the production in Kazakhstan with 3.6 thousand cars. One of the two main automotive plants of the country works there in Ust-Kamenogorsk. According to a big construction project, a new automobile plant will be added on an area of 500 hectares in 2020.

Another 34.8% of the production of passenger cars in Kazakhstan falls on the Kostanay Region with 1.9 thousand cars. In January 2019, the share of Kazakhstan's production in passenger cars increased from 50.6% to 61.2%. The share of imports, respectively, decreased from 49.4% to 38.8% per year.

The top five most popular brands of passenger cars of Kazakhstan assembled in the first two months of this year were Lada (2,260 cars), Hyundai (1,469 cars), KIA (602 cars), Chevrolet (126 cars) and Skoda (102 cars). The brands produced by domestic enterprises includes JAC (54 cars), UAZ (21 cars) and Peugeot (7 cars) as well.

## KASSYM-JOMART TOKAYEV MET WITH VLADIMIR PUTIN

After the official welcoming ceremony, the heads of state held talks in narrow and expanded formats.

Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev thanked Vladimir Putin for his congratulations and good wishes on assuming the office of President of Kazakhstan and noted the symbolic value of his first foreign visit to the Russian Federation.

The President stressed the importance of recent interaction between Kazakhstan and Russia.

Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev said: "As the Head of Kazakhstan, I intend to ensure the continuity of the policy of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Elbasy Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev, and also to continue the work on comprehensive and active development of Kazakhstani-Russian cooperation." The President of Kazakhstan mentioned also significance of economic partnership between the two countries, especially in the fields of energy, transport, transit, industry and space.

The President Tokayev underlined: "Russia remains the number one partner in the foreign trade of the Kazakhstan; its share in the trade turnover of Kazakhstan is 19 percent. Investment cooperation is progressively developing. More than 9 thousand enterprises with participation of Russian capital carry out successful activities in Kazakhstan". Russian President Vladimir Putin also stressed the symbolic value of the first visit of Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev to Russia as Head of State and noted the high level of Kazakhstani-Russian ties. Following the consultations at



the highest level, the Joint Statement of the President of Russia and the President of Kazakhstan was adopted. In addition, a number of cooperation documents were signed: Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of gas supply to the Baikonur complex; joint action program between the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the development of industrial cooperation; Bilateral cooperation plan between the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Digital Development of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Defense and Aerospace industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan in industrial, scientific, and technical cooperation.

## TOKAYEV VISITED AKTAU INTERNATIONAL SEA TRADE PORT



Akorda reports that On April 11, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev visited the Aktau International Sea Trade Port. During his visit, Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev

got acquainted with the technical capabilities of the port. He was informed about the current activities of the seaport, the prospects for increasing the volume of cargo transportation in the Caspian Sea, as well as the development of the infrastructure of the resort area of Aktau.

Deputy Prime Minister Zhenis Kasymbek reported that the location of the Aktau port at the intersection of global transport corridors allows shipping of dry goods, crude oil and petroleum products with a total turnover of 17.7 million tons per year. In addition, the President of Kazakhstan examined the rocket-artillery ship "Mangystau", and also got acquainted with samples of military equipment, weapons and equipment of the naval forces of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

## BUS SERVICES BETWEEN TURKESTAN AND SAMARKAND STARTED

The first passengers of the international bus service from Turkestan (Kazakhstan) to Samarkand (Uzbekistan) arrived in Samarkand, on April 14.

According to the Press Service of the Akimat of the Turkestan Region, the journey starts daily at 18:00. Passengers are transported from the Altyn Orda Bus Terminal in Turkestan to the Samarkand Bus Terminal. On the way, stops are provided in Shymkent and in the Uzbek cities of Guliston and Jizzak. The cost of the trip is 4 thousand tenge (\$10.5). According to the authorities, the bus service between Turkestan and Samarkand will increase the flow of tourists coming to the country.

On December 10, 2018, a bus route was launched via Turkestan-Tashkent. Earlier, officials said that buses running between the two countries would be free to cross the border.



The first interregional forum on the development of relations between the two countries was held in Shymkent on November 15.

## TOKAYEV ARRIVED IN TASHKENT FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT



President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev visited Uzbekistan on the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on April 14-15. President of Kazakhstan Tokayev assured President Mirziyoyev of preserving the continuity of the existing foreign policy of Kazakhstan, aimed at expanding and strengthening relations and regional interaction between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The Head of Uzbekistan congratulated Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev on assuming the office of president, noting the role of the First President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his successor Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev in improving relations between the two countries. A number of bilateral documents were signed during the state visit of the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev to Uzbekistan. In particular, the following documents were signed:

- Joint statement of President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev and the President of the Republic of

Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev;

- Agreement on labor activities and protection of the rights of migrant workers;
  - Agreement on cooperation in combating illegal migration;
  - Agreement in the form of an exchange of notes on the procedure for recognizing official documents confirming residence issued by the authorized bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Uzbekistan within the framework of the Agreement between the Governments on the Avoidance of Double Taxation of Income and Property;
  - Program for cooperation between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2019-2020;
  - Agreement on cooperation in the field of air defense;
  - Agreement on the organization of the reception, airfield and technical support and protection of military aircraft on the military airfields;
  - Memorandum on the relationship between the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the establishment of the International Center for Trade and Economic Cooperation Central Asia;
  - Memorandum of cooperation between the Ministry of Information and Public Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Committee on Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- The President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev, and the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, reportedly held a meeting at the Ko'ksaroy Presidential Residence in Tashkent.

## THE PRESIDENTS OF KAZAKHSTAN AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA HELD TALKS IN EXPANDED FORMAT

Akorda reports that the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev held talks with President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in in an expanded format in Nur-Sultan, on April 22.

During the negotiations Tokayev noted that today Kazakhstan and the Republic of Korea are reliable and strategic partners. Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev stressed that South Korea is one of the ten priority countries for Kazakhstan in terms of development of trade, investment and technological cooperation; the steady growth in the volume of mutual trade, so that it reached a record of \$ 4 billion, more than twice the volume of 2017. "Our cooperation in the field of investments is steadily growing. Thus, only the inflow of direct investment from Korea to Kazakhstan amounted to about \$ 7 billion. South Korean business is successfully working in the food, mining and processing, automotive and other sectors of our economy," said the President of Kazakhstan. The presidents noted that the Central Asia–Republic of Korea Cooperation Forum was successfully conducted as a regular multilateral consultative dialogue, and contributed to the strengthening of mutual trust and exchanges between Korea and the countries of Central Asia since the beginning of its work in 2007. The presidents



also agreed to make joint efforts for the development of the Forum. The parties welcomed the holding of the 12th Central Asia–Republic of Korea Cooperation Forum at the level of foreign ministers in Nur-Sultan in October 2019. The parties noted that the Secretariat of the Central Asia–Republic of Korea Cooperation Forum promotes bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects between Korea and Central Asian countries.

President Moon Jae-In expressed his gratitude to the government and people of Kazakhstan for the warm welcome and invited President Tokayev to visit Korea at a convenient time for both sides. President Tokayev accepted the invitation with gratitude.

## KAZAKHSTAN WILL SUPPLY UP TO 2 MILLION TONS OF OIL TO UZBEKISTAN



Up to 2 million tons of oil will be supplied to Uzbekistan from Kazakhstan. Kazakhstani media reported that this is provided by the law on cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector, which was signed by President Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev on April 2.

Energy Minister Kanat Bozumbayev explained: "The implementation of the agreement will contribute to the supply of crude oil to Uzbekistan for processing oil refineries, solving the problem of uninterrupted supply of natural gas from Uzbekistan to the south of Kazakhstan in the autumn-winter period."

Deliveries to Uzbekistan will go through the Kenkiyak-Kumkol oil pipeline and further with transshipment into railway tanks at the Shagyr station. The agreement provides the creation of a coordination council for bilateral cooperation in the energy sector. The report says, the Uzbek side guarantees the timely completion of the construction of the oil transport and oil refining infrastructure on its territory to ensure receipt of the planned volumes of oil.



## **MIGRANTS IN 2018 TRANSFERRED \$ 4 BILLION FROM RUSSIA TO UZBEKISTAN**



On Monday, April 1 the Central Bank of Uzbekistan's press service reported that the remittances of individuals from Russia to Uzbekistan increased by 1.4% in 2018.

The statement announced that "The volume of remittances to Uzbekistan from Russia in 2018 amounted to \$ 3.963 billion". According to the regulator, as compared with 2017, the growth of transfers amounted to 1.4%. The volume of transfers from Uzbekistan to the Russian Federation in 2018 amounted to \$ 402.2 million against \$ 346.3 million a year earlier (an increase of 16%).

As before, Russia ranks first in the transfer of remittances of individuals to Uzbekistan. According to the Central Bank, last year individuals transferred only \$ 5.114 billion to Uzbekistan, which is 0.4% more than in 2017.

According to official data, outside Uzbekistan, which has a population of 33 million, approximately 20% of the working-age population works permanently abroad and 85% of them are in Russia.

## **CHINA WILL PROVIDE UZBEKISTAN WITH A SOFT LOAN OF \$ 25 MILLION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANTS**

With reference to a government decree on April 8, Trend reports that Uzbekistan plans to build two new small hydroelectric power stations on the Dargom Canal in the Samarkand region at the expense of China's soft loans.

The aim of the project is to increase consistently the use of renewable energy sources, increase the balance of energy resources and ensure the most complete satisfaction of the needs of the economy and the population of the country for electricity. New facilities, such as the Shaudar small hydroelectric power station, will be built with soft loans from the Ministry of Commerce of China.

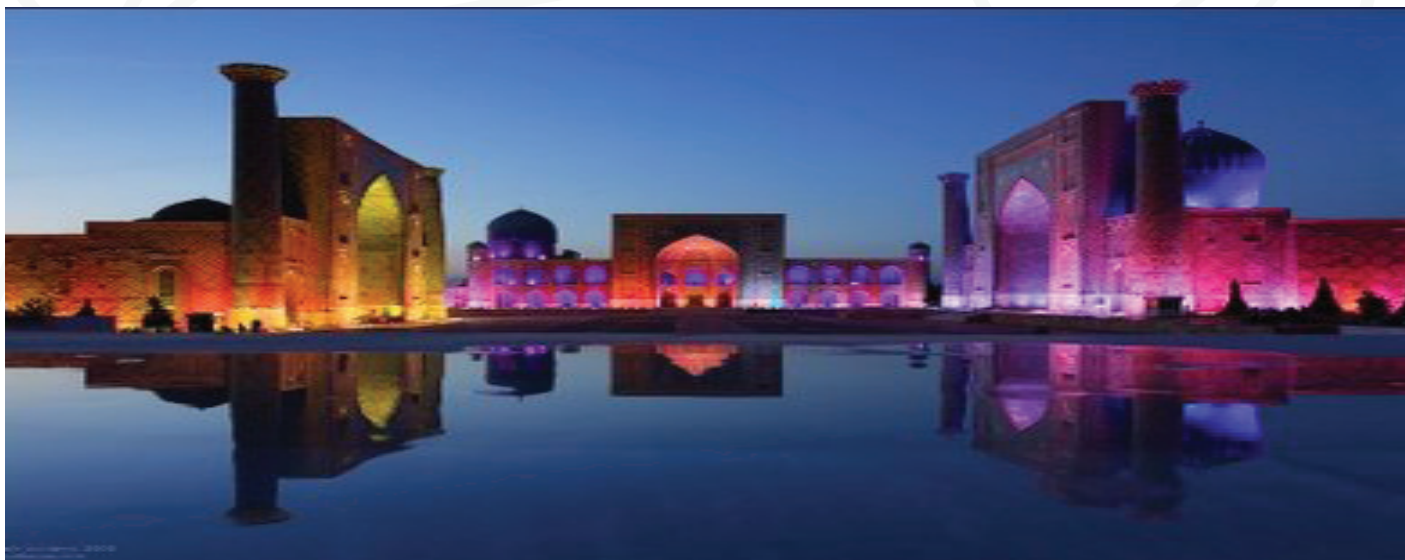
The total cost of projects will exceed \$ 30 million. Construction of hydropower plants is scheduled for completion by the end of 2021.

The Chinese Eximbank will allocate \$ 24.8 million for their implementation, while Uzbekgidroenergo will allocate \$ 5.8 million from its own funds. After the launch, the capacity of the Shaudar small hydropower plant will be 7.2 MW. Each year, the first station will produce 37.8 million kW/h. Now Uzbekistan's need for electricity is 69 billion kW/h,



and about 64 billion kWh are produced. Nearly 86 percent of the energy comes from burning gas and coal, and 14 percent comes from hydroelectric power.

## UZBEKISTAN IS AMONG THE TEN MOST ATTRACTIVE DESTINATIONS IN PILGRIMAGE TOURISM



In 2019, Uzbekistan has been listed among ten most attractive countries for Muslim tourists by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries. According to the report, besides Uzbekistan, Iran and Indonesia are in the top ten of the list, which includes member states of the OIC. Countries, which remain attractive to Muslim tourists

are Turkey, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar, Tunisia and Kazakhstan. The rating took into account the historical and current importance of the country for the Islamic world, as well as the conditions created for Muslim tourists, climate, security and transport services.

## IN UZBEKISTAN THE FLOW OF TOURISTS INCREASED BY 42 PERCENT



In the first three months of 2019, the foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan increased by 42% and amounted to 1.38 million. The Deputy Head of the Government of the Republic Aziz Abdukhakimov announced these data during the Tashkent Travel Mart Exhibition. Abdukhakimov told that 972,000 tourists visited Uzbekistan, in the same period last year. Abdukhakimov reported that revenues from tourism services are also growing with volumes reaching to \$ 246.3 million compared to \$ 184.6 million in the first quarter of 2018 (an increase of 33%).

According to official data, in 2018, Uzbekistan was visited by 5 million 300 thousand tourists, and 4,600,000 of them were from Central Asia.

Tourism revenues amounted to 1 billion dollars, in 2018.

## UZBEKISTAN AND SOUTH KOREA SIGNED AGREEMENTS WORTH OF \$ 12 BILLION

The Press Service of the Head of State of Uzbekistan reported that on April 19, the Presidents of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in signed a joint declaration on a special strategic partnership between the two countries. Documents have been signed between governments and ministries regarding the promotion and mutual protection of investments, the exploration of space for peaceful purposes, cooperation in science, technology and innovation, the creation of the Uzbek-Korean center for cooperation in health care and other fields.

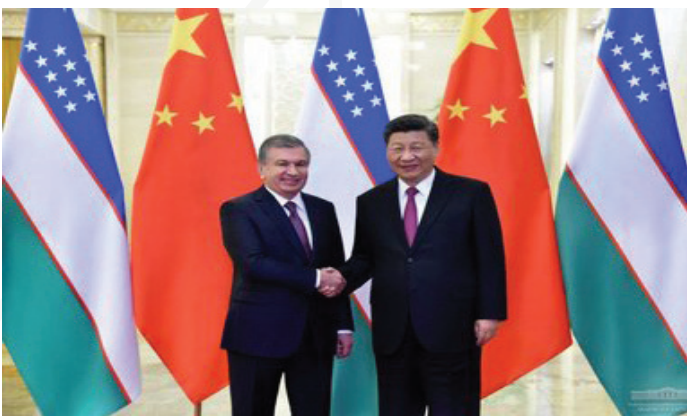
President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said: "Our talks have demonstrated that cooperation between Uzbekistan and South Korea in the politics, economy, trade, investment, culture, humanitarian issues and other fields fully meets the long-term interests of our people, as well as the proximity of positions on regional and international issues, security and stability. The Joint Declaration on Special Strategic Partnership, signed today, testifies that relations between our countries have reached a completely new level".

It was stressed that during the visit, agreements on the implementation of programs and projects in the field of trade, economy, investment, financial and technical



cooperation, totaling more than \$ 12 billion, were signed. President Moon Jae-in added: "I express my deep respect to the President of Uzbekistan – a country on which the attention of the whole world is focused today. Shavkat Mirziyoyev with his reforms in all spheres – politics, economy, social life – leads Uzbekistan to a new era of development. Today, we have assigned to our bilateral relations the status of special strategic partnership. We discussed the mechanisms of its implementation, new areas of cooperation and reached promising agreements."

## MIRZIYOYEV PROPOSED TO INTRODUCE A TARIFF BY RAIL TRANSFORMATION FROM CHINA TO EUROPE



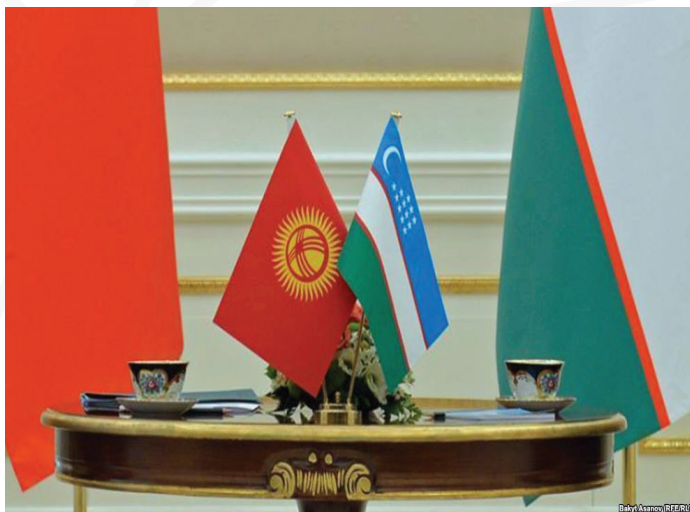
President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev made a proposal to introduce a tariff for rail transportation along the route of the ports on the Yellow Sea - Central Asia - Europe. The Uzbek leader spoke at a round table at the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, and said: "The issues of international and regional interconnectedness have always been and remain relevant for Central Asia, including our country, which does not have

direct access to seaports". In addition, the President noted the relevance of the disclosure of the transit potential of Central Asia and the formation of the economic corridor China - Central Asia - Western Asia.

President Mirziyoyev added: "Great prospects open up here with the launch of the auto-corridor Tashkent - Andijan - Osh - Irkeshtam - Kashgar. [Additionally,] The Uzbekistan – Kyrgyzstan - China and Mazar-i-Sharif – Kabul - Peshawar railway projects have strategic importance. It also seems economically feasible to establish a tariff for rail transportation along the route on the ports of the Yellow Sea - Central Asia - Europe." Shavkat Mirziyoyev invited partners to participate in the activities of the multi-partner Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region under the auspices of the UN, noting that overcoming the adverse environmental consequences of the problem of drying up of the Aral Sea is a joint task.

The President noted that Uzbekistan supported the One Belt, One Road initiative from the very beginning, the implementation of which is an important factor in the sustainable development of the countries of the region.

## UZBEKISTAN RESUMED EXPORT OF CARS TO KYRGYZSTAN



The press service of the company GM Uzbekistan reported that on the eve of April 22, GM Uzbekistan started exporting cars to Kyrgyzstan. The country supplied cars under the brand Ravon.

As previously reported, the company exports cars to Belarus, Afghanistan and Tajikistan as well.

The installation is also carried out at the Kazakhstan plant Saryarkaavtoprom in Kostanay. GM Uzbekistan declared the Year of 2019 as “the year of development of export potential” and today the company is negotiating to expand its activities in this direction, said the autoproducer.

Earlier it was reported that the Uzbek automobile brand Ravon will be collected in Russia. Currently, at the Russian factory Derways work is underway on the installation of the Ravon conveyor. In mid-summer, a pilot installation of models is expected to begin.

## HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN TURKMENISTAN AND KAZAKHSTAN

Turkmenistan Today reports that in Turkmenistan, at a cabinet meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Dadebay Amangeldiev reported to President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on the construction of the Turkmenbashi-Garabogaz-Kazakhstan highway and the new bridge across the Garabogazgol Bay. The publication notes that a two-way road with a width of 22.5 meters and a length of 225 kilometers will be laid from the city of Turkmenbashi, where the international seaport is located, to the border with Kazakhstan. Associated infrastructure facilities will also be built. It is planned to erect a bridge across the Garabogazgol Bay with a length of 354 meters and a width of 21 meters.

The construction of the road and the bridge to the Turkmen-Kazakh border will increase the turnover, the volume of cargo and passenger traffic between the western and northern regions of the country, as well as neighboring states.

The President instructed to finalize the highway project, provide technical expertise and comprehensive analysis from an environmental point of view, as well as create a specialized structure for the construction of roads together with related industries.

Berdimuhamedov stressed that the implementation of such



large projects shows the adherence of Turkmenistan to the chosen peace-loving foreign policy course.

Plans to build a road between Turkmenbashi and Mangystau Oblast of Kazakhstan were announced in April 2018.

## IMF RELEASED GROWTH RATE FORECASTS FOR CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released the April World Economic Outlook. CA-News presented an overview of the countries of Central Asia.

**Kazakhstan:**

The IMF raised its forecast for Kazakhstan's GDP growth to 3.2% this year. In November last year, the IMF predicted the growth of Kazakhstan's economy at 3.1% for 2019. According to the survey, GDP growth in Kazakhstan in 2020 is expected to be 3.2%. The inflation forecast for the republic was 5.5% for 2019 and 5% for 2020.

**Kyrgyzstan:**

The IMF forecast Kyrgyzstan's GDP growth to be 3.8% in 2019 and to grow up to 3.4% in 2020. In 2018, the IMF predicted GDP growth in the country to be 3.5%. Inflation forecast for Kyrgyzstan is 2.2% for 2019, and 4.9% for 2020.

**Tajikistan:**

GDP growth in Tajikistan in 2019 will reach 5%, and in 2020 4.5%. The inflation forecast is 6.7 % for 2019, and 6.2% for 2020.

**Turkmenistan:**

The IMF forecasts GDP growth in Turkmenistan to be 6.3% in 2019, and 6.0% in 2020. The inflation forecast is 13% for 2019, and 9% for 2020.

**Uzbekistan:**

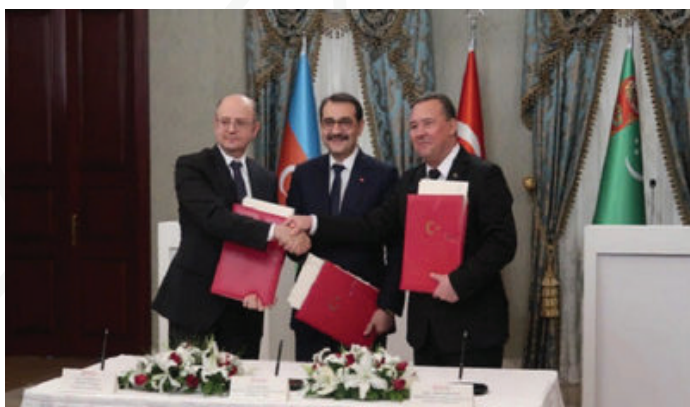
According to the IMF, the GDP growth forecast for



Uzbekistan will be 5% in 2019 and 5.5% in 2020. Inflation forecast in the country is 16.5% for 2019, and 11.9% for 2020.

The report added: "While 2019 started on a weak basis, the global economy is expected to recover in the second half of the year. The U.S Federal reserve, reacting to the growing global risks, suspended the interest rate increase and signaled the absence of intention to raise it until the end of the year."

## TURKMENISTAN, TURKEY AND AZERBAIJAN SIGNED A DOCUMENT ON ENERGY COOPERATION



A trilateral meeting on energy cooperation between Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Turkey took place in Istanbul, on April 19. Turkey was represented at the meeting by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Fatih Dönmez, Azerbaijan by the Minister of Energy Parviz Shahbazov, and Turkmenistan by the Chairman of the state corporation Turkmenecology Shahym Abdrakhmanov.

During the meeting, discussions were held related to the current state and prospects for the development of cooperation between countries in the field of energy.

The participants also noted that in successive meetings of ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan documents, common regional interests and projects such as the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey transport corridor, the Trans-Eurasian superinformation highway and the restoration of the Great Silk Road to formalize a strong base for cooperation in a trilateral format were adopted.

Following the meeting, a joint declaration was signed, implying the expansion of existing cooperation to renewable energy, energy efficiency, green technologies, exchange of experience, strengthening of ties between companies, research centers operating in the oil and gas industry, and energy sector in all three countries, as well as organizing joint exhibitions, conferences and seminars.

Then the parties held a joint press conference to share the results of trilateral agreements.

## TURKMENISTAN AND ITALY HELD POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS ON DEVELOPING COOPERATION

A political consultation meeting was held between Italy and Turkmenistan at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan. The Italian delegation was headed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Manlio Di Stefano, and the Deputy Head of the Council of Ministers, Rashid Meredov.

At the meeting, the parties evaluated the current situation of Turkmen-Italian relations. Along with co-operation in the framework of the UN and the EU. There was also an exchange of views on issues related to regional and international common interests. The EU's new Central Asian strategy was focused on the possibility of diversification.

In this context, Italy, which is one of the key countries of the EU, plays an important role in the implementation of this strategy. During the negotiations, the parties exchanged views on developing and diversifying mutual trade and economic cooperation. At the same time, the delegations stressed the importance of further development in education, science and culture.

At the end of the meeting, an Action Plan was signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International



Cooperation for the 2019-2020 years. Deputy Minister Di Stefano, who spoke to the members of local and foreign press, said that he came to Turkmenistan to attend at the political consultation meeting and had very efficient negotiations.

Noting that they are evaluating economic cooperation issues, the Deputy Minister stated that they would like to cooperate closely with Turkmenistan.

## TAJIKISTAN AND SOUTH KOREA SIGNED A MEMORANDUM



Tajikistan and South Korea signed documents to establish cooperation in the field of tourism in Dushanbe, on April 1. The Chairman of the Committee for Tourism Development under the Government of Tajikistan, Nu'mon Abdughafforzoda, met with the President of the Association of International Tourism of the Republic of Korea, Yu Jek. As reported by Tajik News Agency Avesta, during the meeting, prospects and opportunities of cooperation in the tourism sector between Tajikistan and South Korea were discussed.

In particular, they discussed the issues of holding a business forum of travel companies of the two countries,

organizing thematic exhibitions, possibilities of studying the South Korean experience.

They also discussed the possibility of organizing courses for workers in the tourism sector of Tajikistan and exchange of tourists.

Following the meeting, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Committee for Tourism Development of Tajikistan and the Association of International Tourism of the Republic of Korea.

According to the Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Tajikistan, 363 South Korean citizens visited Tajikistan, in 2018.

## RUSSIA AND TAJIKISTAN SIGNED SEVERAL AGREEMENTS



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, who arrived in Moscow for an official visit, held meetings in Kremlin, on April 17.

The Official website of the Russian President reports: "We discussed key issues of bilateral relations, measures for the further development of mutually beneficial cooperation in the political, trade, economic, cultural, and humanitarian and other fields, and current regional problems"

Following the talks, a number of documents were signed:

1. Agreement between the Government of Russia and the Government of Tajikistan on the construction and technical equipment of educational institutions which provide trainings in Russian in the cities of Dushanbe, Kulyab,

Khojent, Bokhtar and Tursunzade.

2. Agreement between the Government of Russia and the Government of Tajikistan on the organized recruitment of citizens of Tajikistan for the implementation of temporary employment in Russia.

3. Agreement between the Government of Russia and the Government of Tajikistan on cooperation in the field of tourism.

4. Protocol on amending the Agreement between the Government of Russia and the Government of Tajikistan on cooperation in the supply of petroleum products to the Republic of Tajikistan from February 6, 2013.

5. Agreement between the Interior Ministry of Russia and the Drug Control Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of tackling illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors for 2019–2021.

6. Agreement between the Federal Customs Service (Russian Federation) and the Customs Service under the Government of Tajikistan on simplifying the procedure of customs operations when moving goods and vehicles between the Russian Federation and Tajikistan.

7. Agreement on scientific cooperation between the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan.

8. Agreement on cooperation in the field of the aluminum industry between Public joint-stock Company VTB Bank and the State Unitary Enterprise "Tajik Aluminum Company".

## EMOMALI RAHMON: TAJIKISTAN EXPECTS A NEW MIGRATION AMNESTY IN RUSSIA

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon hopes to hold the next stage of Amnesty for Tajik labor migrants in Russia. This has been declared following a meeting between Emomali Rahmon and the Speaker of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin, held in Moscow, on April 17.

The Head of Tajikistan said that there are still open questions in the migration sphere that "require attention". According to Emomali Rahmon, simplification of procedures for registration and obtaining a patent for work, determination of the legal status of a family member of migrant workers are among the issues requiring attention. The Tajik President noted that Dushanbe expects to move to the next stage of Amnesty for Tajik labor migrants. In addition, Dushanbe will ask Moscow to simplify procedures for migration registration and obtaining patents for its citizens. In 2017, more than 122,000 migrant workers from Tajikistan, who committed administrative offences in Russia, were amnestied.

According to the official data, more than 1 million citizens of Tajikistan work in Russia.

Russia remains an active economic partner of Tajikistan. Last year the volume of trade between the two countries was more than \$1 billion, and Russia's investments in the



economy of Tajikistan exceeded \$1.6 billion.

Emomali Rahmon arrived in Russia with an official visit on April 16. On April 17, he held a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, during which the parties signed a number of bilateral documents, including an agreement on the organized recruitment of migrant workers from Tajikistan to Russia..

## MOSCOW AND DUSHANBE WILL SIGN NEW AGREEMENTS ON MIGRATION



Russian Ambassador to Tajikistan Igor Lyakin-Frolov said that Russia and Tajikistan would soon sign new agreements in the field of migration. The documents will be signed during the upcoming official visit of the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to Moscow on April 17. During the visit, the Head of Tajikistan will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. It is also planned to sign a number of bilateral agreements aimed at the further development of multilateral cooperation between the two

countries.

Earlier, during his visit to Tajikistan on February 5, 2019, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov noted that this package of documents is necessary in order to completely remove migration from the shadows and to provide comfort to the labor migrants.

Meanwhile, according to a source in the Tajik Ministry of Labor, the draft agreement on the organized recruitment of migrants between Russia and Tajikistan suggests that the Russian employer, included in the special list of the Ministry of Labor, is obliged to send applications to employment agencies for specialists, as well as to inform about problems with the registration of documents.

In turn, according to the project, the authorities of Tajikistan will have to inform their citizens about employment opportunities in the Russian Federation in safe and secure places, select candidates for vacant places, provide them with professional training, and facilitate the return of migrants' after the expiration of the contract or violation of Russian legislation.

There are about one million migrant workers from Tajikistan in Russia.

According to various sources, their transfer of remittances account for more than one third of Tajikistan's GDP.

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