Taking centre stage: KAZAKHSTAN

As the centre of global economic activity continues to shift from West to East, Kazakhstan is rapidly reclaiming its role as a bridge between Asia and Europe. With the revival of the ancient Silk Road trading routes, Kazakhstan has re-emerged as a key trading hub for the movement of goods and raw materials between the two continents.

Next June, thousands of people and exhibitors representing more than 100 countries from across the world will descend on its capital Astana for Expo17 to see for themselves how Kazakhstan is rising to the occasion.

This special EBB report focusses on Kazakhstan’s return to the international stage and on the central theme of Expo 2017:

THE FUTURE OF ENERGY
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VIEW FROM THE TOP

The President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev talks about the economic transformation of Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet era, the importance of its strategic location at the heart of the New Silk Road and its role in promoting the use of alternative energy through Expo 2017 Astana.

A NATION TRANSFORMED

With its enormous reserves of oil, minerals, arable land and pastures, Kazakhstan boasts the largest economy in Central Asia. Since President Nazarbayev – himself a former steelworker – took up the reigns of office in 1989, the country has grown from a country largely dependent on its mining sector and primary industries into an upper-middle income economy with GDP per capita of nearly $10.5k. An analysis of the country’s success and its plans for future development.

AT THE CROSSROADS

It is no coincidence that when China’s President Xi Jinping decided to launch his ambitious One Belt One Road initiative, he chose to make the announcement during a visit to Astana. Bordered by both Russia and China, Kazakhstan holds a key location on the historic Silk Road trade route. A review of its plans and potential to capitalise on the creation of a free trade area with a combined GDP estimated at somewhere between $292bn and $1trillion.
Taking centre stage:  
**KAZAKHSTAN**

**BRINGING IT IN**
With some $24bn of Chinese project investment in the pipeline most of which are due to come to fruition in the next few years, Kazakhstan is expecting its FDI total for 2016 to hit $10bn, almost double last year’s figure. An interview with Umirzak Shukeyev, CEO of the Samruk-Kazyna sovereign wealth fund and the man responsible for orchestrating this remarkable return to form.

**JUST CAPITAL**
Chosen to be Kazakhstan’s new capital as recently as 1994, modern-day Astana has risen from the steppes with extraordinary speed. A combination of the elegant and the spectacular, the city is one of the most striking examples of urban planning and development to have been realized in the past 200 years. A quick guide for visitors to Expo 2017.

**GOING GREEN**
In 2012, President Nazarbayev committed Kazakhstan to be generating 50% of its electricity from renewable and alternative energy sources by 2050. It is just one component of a comprehensive initiative to turn the country from one of the world’s premier hydrocarbon energy producers to a model “green” economy that also includes water resource conservation, agriculture and waste management, and measures aimed at reducing carbon emissions. Is it going to make it?
TAKING CENTRE STAGE
On June 10, Astana will begin welcoming visitors to EXPO 2017, the quadrennial world fair, where over 100 countries will showcase their goods and services. This is the first time that a major international exhibition of this kind is coming to a country from the former Soviet Union. For three months, the capital of Kazakhstan will become the focus of the global debate on the future of energy.

CLIMATE CHANGE
From flooding to world poverty to the decimation of flora and fauna, the effects of climate change are all-pervasive, but also the subject of huge debate and controversy. An interview with a leading expert who outlines the issues, solutions – and how big the gap remains between the two.

ENERGY SECURITY
Throughout the history of mankind, territorial disputes have been behind most wars and conflicts. Today, however, a regular source of energy supply is just as high on the agenda of most developed and emerging economies. A review of the major potential flashpoints, and steps being taken to guarantee the world's energy security.
ENERGY STORAGE
Securing a reliable source of energy is only half the story; working out how to store it to level out peaks and troughs in demand has also turned into a major challenge. It has been estimated that world-wide demand for grid-scale energy storage will reach more than 185.4 gigawatt-hours (GWh) by 2017 – approximately the same amount of electricity that New York City consumes in 17 days. A look at the companies and technologies making this happen.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS
More than one billion people around the world still have no access to energy and almost three billion do not have access to clean cooking. With energy poverty continuing to limit economic development, stifle people’s life chances and trap millions of people into extreme poverty, sustainable energy has an important role to play in providing universal access to all. An investigation.

Taking Centre Stage: Kazakhstan is a Special Report from Eurasian Business Briefing

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