

The Conway Bulletin.

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EBRD snubs rights groups and approves loan for Azeri pipeline

>> Azerbaijan has had increasingly acrimonious rows with pro-democracy campaigners

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) approved a \$500m loan to a consortium lead by Azerbaijan building a gas pipeline to Europe, despite concerns over the Azerbaijani government's commitment to democracy (Oct. 18).

The loan approval is a major victory for Baku and for governments in central Europe which didn't want an important piece of infrastructure, that they hope will reduce their dependence on gas from Russia, derailed by rows over NGO laws and political plurality in Azerbaijan.

Rights activists accused the EBRD of duplicity after it had said loans were linked to good governance scores.

In a statement announcing the loan for \$8.6b Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP), the central section of the 3,500km-long \$40b Southern Gas Corridor, the EBRD said that it had applied transparency and governance rules to the project.



Astana unveils bust of Yuri Gagarin

Kazakhstan's space agency unveiled a bust of Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. It is one of dozens of busts of Gagarin sent around the world by the Russia-backed Dialogue of Cultures group (Oct. 20). (Pic: Dialogue of Cultures)

“(The Southern Gas Corridor) will strengthen Europe's energy security, promote interconnectivity and open gas markets,” its statement said.

Azerbaijan has a 58% stake in TANAP, Turkish national pipeline company Botas has a 30% stake and BP owns a 10% stake.

In March, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an intergovernmental group, suspended Azerbaijan's membership. Azerbaijan responded to the EITI suspension by quitting the group altogether and accusing it of overstepping its remit.

Tajikistan starts registering homosexuals

DUSHANBE -- The authorities in Tajikistan have started a register of “proven homosexuals” who need to be regularly tested for HIV/AIDS (Oct. 17).

AFP said that the Zakonnost newspaper, published by the state prosecutor general, had reported that 367 people had been placed on the

list, triggering outrage from rights groups.

“Drawing up a registry of gay and lesbian Tajiks should trigger alarms throughout the region,” said Shawn Gaylord of the US-based Human Rights Watch.

Unlike in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, homosexuality is not

banned in Tajikistan although it is taboo.

Gay, lesbian and bisexual rights in the region have been retreating over the past year. Last month reports from Baku said police were detaining homosexual men and the Guardian reported this week that the only gay nightclub in Bishkek was closing.

Comment

Kyrgyzstan shows it is a maturing democracy

Brainteaser no. 26

>> Kyrgyzstan and Georgia are the region's two most vibrant democracies. High-profile elections in both countries over the past week showed that they are in good shape, writes James Kilner

Two elections in two of the Central Asia and South Caucasus region's most vibrant democracies cemented the ruling parties' control over politics. In both Kyrgyzstan and Georgia the party in power won their elections more easily than analysts had predicted.

Sooronbay Jeenbekov won a presidential election in Kyrgyzstan with 54% of the vote on Oct. 15 and, six days later, Kakha Kaladze won the Tbilisi mayoral election with 51% of the vote. In both cases, the election had been expected to have gone to a second round. Instead, Jeenbekov and Kaladze's opponents were blown away.

Kaladze's rise appears unstoppable and many analysts are tipping him to go all the way to the top. A political novice in 2012, the ex-international footballer campaigned hard for the Georgian Dream coalition when it unseated the United National Movement party of former president Mikheil Saakashvili in a parliamentary election. He was rewarded with the energy ministry. In a country that has no resources of oil or gas, this is a tough brief -- the focus is on imports and Georgia's role as a transit route -- but, by all accounts, he ran it well. Now, as mayor of Tbilisi, he has a more high-profile platform to use as a springboard.



But, although in Tbilisi we may be witnessing a future Georgian PM move through his gears, Kyrgyzstan's vote appears more important, and not just because of the vote.

It was a tough battle for Jeenbekov. The campaign lasted for months and was scarred by accusations from both sides that the other was engaged in various forms of foul play.

Jeenbekov is the dour former PM. He was not a natural campaigner and looked wooden against Omurbek Babanov, his main opponent. Babanov came second with a disappointing 33% of the vote. He had hoped to take it to a second round but although he complained of voter intimidation, ballot stuffing and other problems, he conceded gracefully.

This for Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia was a great success. Here was a political figure who had had a disappointing night at the election and harboured genuine voter grievances and yet he was conceding.

Kyrgyzstan's elections have been tinderboxes in the past sparking two revolutions. Heading an election campaign in Kyrgyzstan carries great responsibility. Babanov knew that after losing the election, to best serve Kyrgyzstan he had to stand aside. This is surely the important sign of a maturing democracy in Kyrgyzstan, the only one in Central Asia, that Western observers had been looking for.

>>See page 3 for news reports

This is, possibly, the world's only quiz dedicated to Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Win a highly-coveted Bulletin branded Parker jotter pen by answering these questions:

A) Which town am I in?

- This town is a centre of the country's car manufacturing sector. (This is the second consecutive week we have started with this clue.)

- This town is located in a volatile part of the country.

- A journey to the capital is complicated by having to cross a range of mountains.

B) Where is this statue?



(All answers for Brainteaser no. 26 to editor@theconwaybulletin.com)

The answers to Brainteaser no. 25 are:

A) Kostanay, northern Kazakhstan.

B) This statue is one of Central Asia's newest and most short-lived statues. It is called Erkindik, or Freedom in Kyrgyz, and was built in 1999. It was erected to replace Lenin in central Bishkek in 2004. Seven years later the statue was pulled down and moved to a nearby intersection after witnesses two revolutions.

The Conway Bulletin. - Independence, integrity, brevity

Editor - James Kilner

Reporting coverage in Central Asia and the South Caucasus: The Bulletin has correspondents on retainers in Almaty, Bishkek, Dushanbe and Tbilisi and part-time correspondent in Yerevan. For Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, The Bulletin employs local reporters now based outside their home country to help with coverage. Cross Fell Ltd owns The Conway Bulletin. It is registered in England and Wales as company no. 0755115. Our ISSN is 2397-6624.

KG POLITICS

Jeenbekov wins Kyrgyz presidential vote

BISHKEK – Sooronbay Jeenbekov, a former PM, won a presidential election in Kyrgyzstan with 54% of the vote (Oct. 16).

The election had been expected to be close but Mr Jeenbekov's nearest rival, another former PM, Omurbek Babanov, won 33% and conceded. He grumbled about ballot stuffing and other problems with the voting system but his concession ensured that any potential for post-election demonstrations was neutralised.

Importantly, too, western election observers said that although there had been problems with the election, it was broadly fair and representative.

In a statement, the OSCE's vote monitoring team said pressure had been applied on voters, resources had been misused and there had been vote-buying but it also praised the transfer of power.

Doris Fiala, head of the Council of Europe observers, said: "Yesterday's voting was transparent and voters could make their choices freely among a wide range of candidates. This is a sign of the growing political maturity of Kyrgyz society. As for the election campaign – cases of restrictions on freedom of expression were reported, as well as of misuse of public resources."

And this assessment is important. The build-up to the election had been lively and excitable. Kyrgyz take their accolade as the only genuine democracy in Central Asia seriously and this vote was considered the first genuine election contest in the region's 26-year post-Soviet history.

Mr Jeenbekov, dour and steady, was seen as the continuity candidate. He was backed by the outgoing president Almazbek Atambayev, who easily won an election in 2011 and was standing down after one 6-year term, as stipulated by the constitution.

GE POLITICS

Ex-AC Milan footballer wins Tbilisi mayor vote



>>Kakha Kaladze celebrates with supporters after hearing the exit poll

>>Facebook

>> Election wins across country confirms GD dominance

TBILISI -- Former AC Milan football star Kakha Kaladze, who ran as the candidate of the governing Georgian Dream coalition, won a mayoral election in Tbilisi, easily defeating rivals in what had been expected to be a close contest (Oct. 21).

The outright win in Tbilisi and other major cities in Georgia -- Poti, Rustavi and Batumi -- confirmed the Georgian Dream's dominance over Georgian politics and the weaknesses of its opposition, especially the once all-powerful United National Movement party of former president Mikheil Saakashvili.

Last year the Georgian Dream won 115 seats in the 150-seat parliamentary elections and the only one of the five mayoral races that it failed to win outright on Saturday was in Kutaisi, where its candidate won 48.7% of the vote. The election in Kutaisi will go to a second round.

Celebrating his victory for a position that many analysts consider to be the second most powerful elected post in Georgia after the PM, Mr Kaladze, a former energy minister, said: "We all see the problems that concerns the city and understand full

well the steps we should take in the future to address these problems. I am ready to work. I am ready to serve my city, Tbilisi, and Tbilisites."

Mr Kaladze won 51% of the vote. The United National Movement party's Zaal Udumashvili, a former newsreader, polled 16.5% of the vote and was beaten into third place by Aleko Elisashvili, who scored 17.5%. Voter turnout was 43%.

This had, typically for Georgia, been an acrimonious campaign.

Despite his success as a tough and rugged central defender, he won 83 caps for Georgia and the Champions League twice with AC Milan, Mr Kaladze cuts a divisive political figure.

As energy minister, Mr Kaladze was blamed for cutting a secretive deal with Russia in January to ensure gas supplies. His mayoral campaign focused on controversial plans to pull down Khrushchev-era apartment blocks and build more roads.

Sauve, ambitious and a favourite of the Georgian Dream's billionaire backer Bidzina Ivanishvili, most analysts suspect that the 39-year-old Mr Kakhadze has his eye on either the PM position or the presidency.

POLITICS

GE: Missile sent to the Netherlands

Georgia sent a Buk anti-aircraft missile to the Netherlands in February as part of a Dutch investigation into the shooting down of an Malaysia Airlines passenger jet in 2014 by Ukrainian rebels (Oct. 17). Investigators suspect that a Buk anti-aircraft missile supplied by Russia was used to shoot down the jet. The plane had taken off from Amsterdam and 193 of the 298 dead passengers and crew were Dutch.

UZ: Chechnya's Kadyrov visits Ramzan Kadyrov, Chechnya's pro-Russia leader, flew to Tashkent to discuss economic cooperation with Uzbek president Shavkat Mirziyoyev (Oct. 17). Although no deals were announced the meeting is symbolically important. Human rights groups accuse Mr Kadyrov of a series of abuses. In contrast, Mr Mirziyoyev is trying to improve Uzbekistan's human rights record since taking over last year from the autocratic Islam Karimov.

KG/KZ: Row continues

A row between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan that kicked off when Kazakh Pres. Nursultan Nazarbayev met with a leading opposition candidate in this month's presidential election appears to have worsen. The two sides met for talks but Kyrgyzstan said it would reject \$100m in aid Kazakhstan had agreed to give it when it joined the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015 (Oct. 19).

CORRUPTION

KZ: Corruption trial of ex-minister begins

The trial began of former Kazakh economy minister Kuandyk Bishimbayev, who is accused of taking bribes linked to a glass production factory in the south of the country and also during a house building programme he was

overseeing for the government (Oct. 19). Mr Bishimbayev, 37, had been seen as a rising star before his arrest in January.

KZ: Ex-pension chief charged Prosecutors in Kazakhstan charged the former head of the state's United Pension Fund, Ruslan Yerdenev, and other former senior staff with embezzlement (Oct. 18). The United Pension Fund has been a major source of frustration for the government. It forced private pension funds to merge into a single state-managed fund in 2015. Since then, though, the fund has performed poorly and lost millions, a performance that the government has come under pressure to explain.

SPORT

TM: First golf club opened Turkmen president Kurbanguly Berdimukhamedov opened the country's first golf course (Oct. 17). The course is situated just outside Ashgabat and was designed by US champion Jack Nicklaus. Turkmenistan is synonymous with desert and not lush putting greens.

COTTON

UZ: Cotton processing company broken up Uzbekistan's government has disbanded Uzpahtasanoatexport, the company created by former president Islam Karimov in 2015 to control the country's cotton-picking industry (Oct. 18). Pres Shavkat Mirziyoyev has pledged to rid Uzbekistan of forced cotton pickers and Jonas Astrup, a technical adviser to the UN's ILO in Uzbekistan described the unwinding of Uzpahtasanoatexport as "another sign of systemic change".

ECONOMY

GE: Foreign trade rises 12% Georgia's foreign trade turnover topped \$7.56b in the first nine months of the year, Geostat reported, an increase of 12% from

the same period in 2016 (Oct. 19). This is the highest foreign trade turnover recorded by Georgia since 2014. The region's economies have been battling a decline since mid-2014 when oil prices crashed and Russia fell into a recession.

RETAIL

TJ: Petrol station owner flees The Umed-88 chain of petrol stations in Tajikistan appears to have been disbanded after President Emomali Rakhmon criticised its owner Radjabali Odinayev for not paying back a loan from the finance ministry taken some years ago (Oct. 14). Media reported that Mr Odinayev has now fled abroad and that the Umed-88 branding on the company's 70 petrol stations has been removed.

POLITICS

GE: President signs off on constitutional changes After resisting and complaining about it for months, Georgian president Giorgi Margvelashvili reluctantly signed into law a series of changes to the constitution pushed through by the ruling Georgian Dream coalition (Oct. 19). He called the changes a "one-party" document. The main changes will mean that Georgia switches to a full system of proportional representation and does away with directly elected presidents. The new constitution will also ban the sale of land to foreigners, a controversial law.

INFRASTRUCTURE

GE: New metro station opens More than 21 years after construction work began, Georgian PM Giorgi Kvirikashvili opened the University Station on the city's metro line (Oct. 17). Building work on the metro station was halted in 1996 when Tbilisi's funds ran dry. The 84m lari (\$33m) project was finally finished with financial support from the Asian Development Bank.

EBRD approves first projects in Uzbekistan since 2007 - P.7

Kcell says that the number of business users is rising - P.7

Markets: TBC pushes up 4% to 10-week high; Nostrum O+G falls - P.8

Kazakh Central Bank to bailout of four more banks

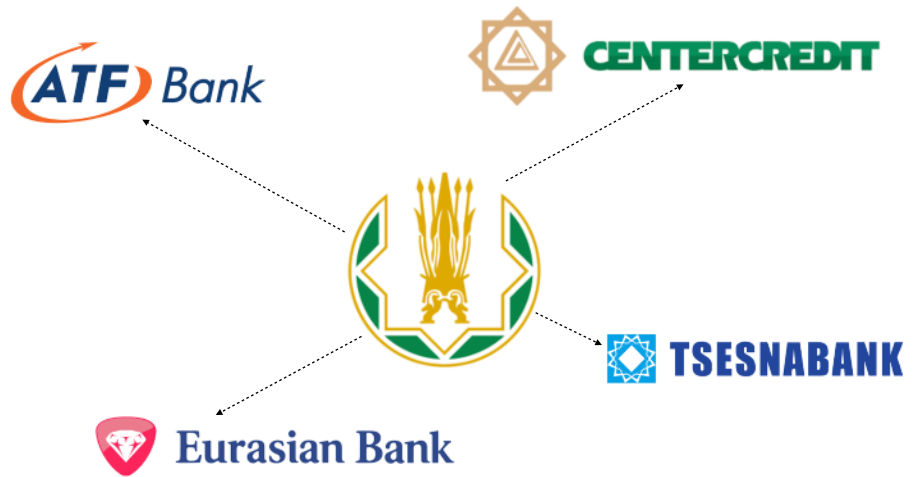
>> Banks will received around \$1.2b in support from the Central Bank to buy up bad debt

ALMATY -- Kazakhstan's Central Bank effectively signed off on a 410b tenge (\$1.2b) bailout plan for four mid-sized banks, highlighting the finance sector's structural weakness (Oct. 18)

Announcing the plan to buy up bad debt from ATF Bank, Eurasian Bank, Tsesnabank and Bank CenterCredit, the Kazakh Central Bank said that it would pay for the bailout with cash set aside in its Stability Fund created in August.

"These banks and their major shareholders presented plans to improve financial stability, improve the quality of assets and reduce the level of non-performing loans, as well as written commitments to capitalise the banks," the statement quoted Central Bank chief Daniyar Akishev as saying.

This has been a difficult year for Kazakhstan's banking sector with the impact of a heavy economic downturn still being felt. Bad debt



>> The Kazakh Central Bank is bailing out more banks

>>CB Data

levels have spiked since a collapse in oil prices in 2014, hitting an estimated 11% of all loans, and a recession in Russia hit Kazakhstan's economy. In 2015, the tenge lost half its value.

The Central Bank has prioritised building confidence. It has said it will spend heavily to stave off a banking collapse. In February it announced a 2 trillion tenge (\$6.5b) fund to prop

up the sector and in August it said it would spend \$3b buying bad debt.

And, in between, it helped to merge the country's two biggest banks -- Kazkommertzbank and Halyk Bank -- which included buying up 2.4 trillion tenge (\$7.5b) of debt.

Combined, ATF Bank, Eurasian Bank, Tsesnabank and Bank CenterCredit hold assets \$16.9b.

AM GOLD

Singapore company buys Armenian gold

YEREVAN -- Dragon Group International, a Singapore-listed electronics company, agreed to buy 100% of Armenian gold miner Coeur Gold for around \$367m (Oct. 19).

According to Dragon's press releases, Coeur Gold owns gold

mining assets in Armenia and is registered in the Seychelles.

Dragon CEO, Michael Loh Gnee, said the purchase, a mix of cash and shares, had been driven by the company's strategy to diversify away from electronics.

"With increased demand from countries such as India and China and from the increase of technology features which use gold such as chip sets in mobile phones, this is a rare opportunity to acquire these exceptional assets," he said.

BANKING + FINANCE

GE: TBC secures loan

Georgia's TBC Bank said that it had agreed a syndicated loan of \$106m to support business and trade in Georgia (Oct. 20). The loan was provided by Netherlands Development Finance Company, OPEC's Fund for International Development, Atlantic Forfaitierungs, London Forfaiting Company and others. It highlights just how strong international finance companies consider Georgia's finance sector to be.

KZ: Central Bank considers help for RBK

The Central Bank said that it was considering aid for RBK Bank after the bank limited cash withdrawals earlier this month because of a lack of liquidity and ditched a planned merger with rival Qazaqi Bank (Oct. 18). RBK Bank and Qazaqi Bank had been plotting a merger since May but unexpectedly scrapped the plan.

KZ: AIFC wants to become crypto-currency centre

The Astana International Finance Center (AIFC) said that it has signed a deal to develop a crypto-currency with Malta's Exante (Oct. 17). Kairat Kelimbetov, the AIFC chairman, said: "We believe that the AIFC can become an international hub for blockchain operations and the development of the digital assets market is our key priority in the near future." The AIFC is the project that Pres. Nursultan Nazarbayev hopes with project Kazakhstan as a global financial centre. It plans to host an international stock exchange.

TJ: 2,000 staff laid off at Agroinvestbank

Agroinvestbank, one of the two biggest banks in Tajikistan, has fired 2,000 employees, the Tajik service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reported (Oct. 16). Media reported that the layoffs were part of an overhaul plan designed by foreign

consulting companies.

Agroinvestbank, and the rest of the Tajik financial sector, has been struggling in the past few years and have only survived on state handouts. The reforms are designed to attract foreign investors such as the EBRD and the IMF.

TELECOMS

KZ: Kazakhtelecom likely to be first Kazakh IPO in 2018

Kazakhtelecom may be the first Kazakh state-owned company to list on a foreign stock exchange next year, Dauren Tasmagambetov, head of asset restructuring at sovereign wealth fund Samruk Kazyna, told Reuters in an interview (Oct. 16). Kazakhtelecom is one of a handful of major IPOs of Kazakh state-owned companies expected next year. The national airline Air Astana and the nuclear agency Kazatomprom, are also expected to be sold. Stakes will be sold on the new Astana stock exchange and either in London or Hong Kong.

MANUFACTURING

KZ: Glass factory to produce smartphone screens

Orda Glass, the glass-making factory near Kyzlorda in southern Kazakhstan, will start making thin glass for smartphones and laptops, the company chairman Yerzhan Sagimbayev, told media (Oct. 14). Construction of the factory is expected by the end of Q1 2018. It should provide work for 1,000 people. Orda Glass was at the centre of a corruption investigation at the start of the year involving the then-economy minister, Kuandyk Bishimbayev.

INT. TRADE

UZ: Trade deal with Iran

At a meeting in Tehran, Uzbek and Iranian companies agreed a deal worth £25m to export and import agricultural and textile products, media reported (Oct. 18). No more details of the deal were released

although it is important because it shows how these two countries, once considered pariah states, have been making new trade deals over the last few years.

KZ: Trade with EEU rises

Kazakhstan's trade with other members of the Kremlin-lead Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) rose to \$10.8b in the first eight months of the year, the Kazakh economy ministry said, an increase of over 31% from the same period in 2016 (Oct. 17). The data is likely to be a reflection of how the economies of the former Soviet Union have improved in the last 12 months as much as the effectiveness of the EEU. Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Armenia are members of the EEU.

OIL+GAS

TM: New refinery planned

Turkmenistan is building a gas refinery plant at Ovadandep, near Ashgabat, media reported (Oct. 21). Official reports said that the Japanese industrial company Kawasaki Heavy Industries was helping to build the plant. When construction is complete, the plant will be able to process 1.785b cubic metres of gas into 600,000 tonnes of 92 petrol, reports said. Turkmenistan suffers from a lack of refinery capacity. Last year it said that it wanted to increase its refinery capacity to 30m tonnes of refined products/year.

KZ: CPC to pump 25% more oil this year

The Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), that pumps oil mainly from the Tengizchevroil project in northwest Kazakhstan around the Caspian Sea to Novorossiysk on Russia's Black Sea, plans to export 55m tonnes of oil this year (Oct. 18). This is slightly below an earlier forecast but up from 44.3m tonnes exported in 2016. Earlier this month CPC launched a new pumping station in Atyrau, part of a capacity increase.

UZ FINANCE

EBRD approves first funding since 2007 for Uzbek projects

>> Funding approval highlights improvement in Uzbekistan's business outlook

TASHKENT -- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) approved funds for its first projects in Uzbekistan in a decade, giving Uzbek business a major boost (Oct. 18).

A couple of days later, the European Investment Bank, another intergovernmental development bank, said that it had signed a deal with Uzbekistan to start lending to small businesses, public infrastructure projects and green energy schemes.

Earlier this year, the EBRD said that it was going to reopen an office in Tashkent and start lending once again. Now it has officially approved funding for two projects.

The first is a \$10m loan to Agromir Juice, one of the biggest fruit juice manufacturers in Uzbekistan, to help build a new warehouse near Samarkand.

The second is a loan of \$100m to the Central Bank -- \$70m to support small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and \$30m to fund an increase in international finance. Uzbekistan



>> The EBRD's head office in London

>>EBRD

has scrapped its two-tier foreign exchange system and allowed ordinary Uzbeks to take cash out of the country.

"The Project seeks to foster competitiveness by increasing the availability of financing to private SMEs," the EBRD said in a note.

The EBRD has been one of the biggest investors in Central Asia since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 but it quit Uzbekistan in 2007 after falling out with then-president

Islam Karimov over his human rights abuses. Former PM Shavkat Mirziyoyev took over as president in September 2016 after Karimov died and has focused on opening up the country and wooing investors, including the EBRD.

Persuading the EBRD to invest in the country will give Mr Mirziyoyev a boost and, despite corruption and human rights problems, will persuade Western companies that Uzbekistan is, once again, a place to invest.

KZ TELECOMS

Kcell says that business users are rising

ALMATY -- Kcell, Kazakhstan's biggest mobile operator, said that revenues had risen by 1.6% to 37.5b tenge (\$111m) in the third quarter of the year compared to the same period in 2016 (Oct. 20).

In his comments, Kcell CEO Arti Ots said that although there had only been a slight rise in revenues, profit margins had increased because of a 15% rise in business users powering

year-on-year growth in net sales and profits for the first time since 2014.

"This performance was driven by an increase in subscribers and further growth in our B2B business, and was underpinned by continued growth in the Kazakh economy and stabilisation in the domestic telecoms market," Mr Ots was quoted as saying.

Kcell's results are considered a bellwether for the Kazakh economy.

It has picked up this year for the first time since a collapse in oil prices in 2014 and a recession in Russia triggered a downturn.

Although the quarterly revenue figures are barely better than last year, their lowest since 2009, they do show that the Kazakh economy has stabilised. Kcell is part-owned by Sweden's Telia and by the Kazakh government.

MARKET NEWS

>> TBC Bank rises 4% >> Nostrum Oil & Gas falls 6% >> Oil prices inch up >> Cotton falls 2.5%

CURRENCIES

Armenian dram	481.34/\$1	↓ 0.12%
Azerbaijani manat	1.6991/\$1	—
Georgian lari	2.4846/\$1	↓ 0.27%
Kazakh tenge	334.5/\$1	↓ 0.3%
Kyrgyz som	68.61/\$1	↓ 0.3%
Tajik somoni	8.78/\$1	—
Turkmen manat	3.5/\$1	—
Uzbek soum	8,057/\$1	—

STOCKS

Centerra Gold	C\$9.12	↓ 1%
Central Asia Metals	255.75p	↓ 0.2%
KAZ Minerals	821p	↓ 3.4%
Tethys Petroleum	Delisted	—
Nostrum Oil & Gas	384p	↓ 6.1%
Caspian Sunrise	8.75p	↓ 0.2%
Bank of Georgia	3,446p	↑ 2.4%
Georgia Healthcare	350p	↑ 3%
TBC Bank	1,702p	↑ 4.1%

COMMODITIES

Oil (Brent)	\$57.75/b	↑ 1.1%
Gold (spot)	1,280.47/oz	↓ 1.6%
Copper	\$316.55/lb	↑ 1.1%
Cotton	\$66.88/lb	↓ 2.5%

Editor's note: These tables normally measure the weekly change in the price of stocks, commodities and currencies. In this instance, the data measures the change in the week ending Oct. 20 2017.

Kyrgyz som stabilises after favourite wins presidential election

It was a docile currency market this week. All the currencies of the region ticked up or down by less than a third of a percentage point.

The Kazakh tenge appears to have stabilised, after a tumultuous period, at around 334/\$1. It's been a rollercoaster period with the Central Bank having to warn that it will step in if needed.

A election in Kyrgyzstan failed to move its som currency. It traded at roughly the same level it has all month – at around 68.5/\$1. This is a major upturn since a 10-month low

in July of around 69.6/\$1. Analysts said that the election victory of Sooronbay Jeenbekov had ensured stability and continuity. If Omurbek Babanov, his nearest challenger, had won the currency could have been in for some volatility.

In Georgia, the lari inched up to 2.484/\$1. This is just off an earlier six-week low.

Since a fall in August and September to around 2.5/\$1 from 2.4/\$1, the lari has been stable – buoyed by a generally strong economy.



>>Georgian lari vs US dollar

>>Bulletin Data

TBC Bank pushes up 4.1% to a 10-week high; Nostrum Oil & Gas falls 6%

TBC Bank, the Georgia-based London-listed bank, pushed up by over 4% to over 1,700p, its highest level since the beginning of August. TBC Bank started the year at 1,455p. Analysts said that a syndicated loan of \$100m, announced on Oct. 20, highlighted its high regard in the international banking sector and helped to push up the value of its shares.

Nostrum Oil and Gas, the London-list and Kazakhstan-

focused oil and gas company, was the week's biggest loser, down by 6% to 384p. It is now approaching lows last seen in November 2016 when its share price was at below 360p. At the end of May, Nostrum's share price had been 531p.

Of the other companies in the region listed on major stock exchanges, KAZ Minerals was down by 3.4%, Centerra Gold was down by 1%, Bank of Georgia was up 2.4% and Georgia Healthcare up by 3%.