

Shinzo Abe to visit five Central Asia nations



ASTANA - TOKIO.KAZINFORM - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe has started a tour of five Central Asian countries this week. The Prime Minister will arrive in Kazakhstan on Monday. His trip would be the first by a Japanese Prime Minister to Central Asia since Junichiro Koizumi visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in August 2006. On the eve of his visit to Astana, Mr. Abe gave an

interview to "Kazinform" News Agency.

What were your considerations when deciding to visit five Central Asian countries? How do you assess the state and prospects of Japan-Kazakhstan relations?

First and foremost, I would like to note that I had the good fortune to hold a conversation with President Nursultan Nazarbayev for three times. Each time he kindly invited me to visit Kazakhstan. Today, I am filled with joy and hope from the fact that, finally, I will make my first visit to Astana - capital of your beautiful country.

Japan has consistently supported the process of state construction in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries since gaining their independence, in particular in the areas of infrastructure development. In 2004 Japan together with the countries of the region established a dialogue "Central Asia + Japan" in order to strengthen the regional cooperation needed to ensure stability and development in Central Asia. I will begin my trip by visiting Kazakhstan to promote the export of Japanese nuclear plant technology and equipment.

As it is known, these countries are facing current challenges such as the development of transport and logistics infrastructure, trade, use of water and energy resources, prevention of drug trafficking, strengthening border controls, etc.

With pleasure I would like to note that relations between Japan and Kazakhstan since the establishment of diplomatic relations in January 1992 have been developing rapidly and smoothly.

Both Japan and Kazakhstan suffered from nuclear tests in the past and will continue to spearhead efforts

for banning nuclear weapons. In addition, in recent years Japanese companies in exploration and extraction of natural resources, as well as production industry, started to actively operate in Kazakhstan's market.

Japan and Kazakhstan are increasing a number of citizens of one country who occupy a prominent activity in the other. For example, it is widely known that Astana city was masterplanned by Kisho Kurokawa - famous Japanese architect. In addition, Japanese Mr. Shigeo Katsu is rector of the Nazarbayev University, a leading university of Kazakhstan. It is worth noting that recently Kazakh volleyball player Sabina Altynbekova has signed up with Japan's GSS Sunbeam club. In addition, Sabina is one of the most popular volleyball players on Instagram. I sincerely wish Ms. Altynbekova success in our country.

Being twice elected Prime Minister of Japan, how do you plan to lead the development of the country? What are your hobbies and what kind of sports do you like?

Three years ago, I was giving a promise to voters to "restore Japan". Thanks to reduction of control, technical innovations and effective use of human resources our country is on the way to stable economic growth. "Abenomics" economic policy is giving us positive results: creation of new jobs and increase of wages. In the spring of the current year we recorded the highest wages' growth in the last 17 years. At present we aim to surpass already achieved results. I am determined to continue to advance rapidly "Abenomics" in order to bring the GDP to its highest level since the World War II, i.e. 600 billion Japanese yen (USD 5 trillion).

There was a question about how I spend my free time and what kind of sport I am fond of. I spend my time off playing golf.

Thank you very much for the interview.