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**Celebrating  
the 80th  
Anniversary of  
the Victory in  
the Great  
Patriotic War**

**80**  
**VICTORY!**



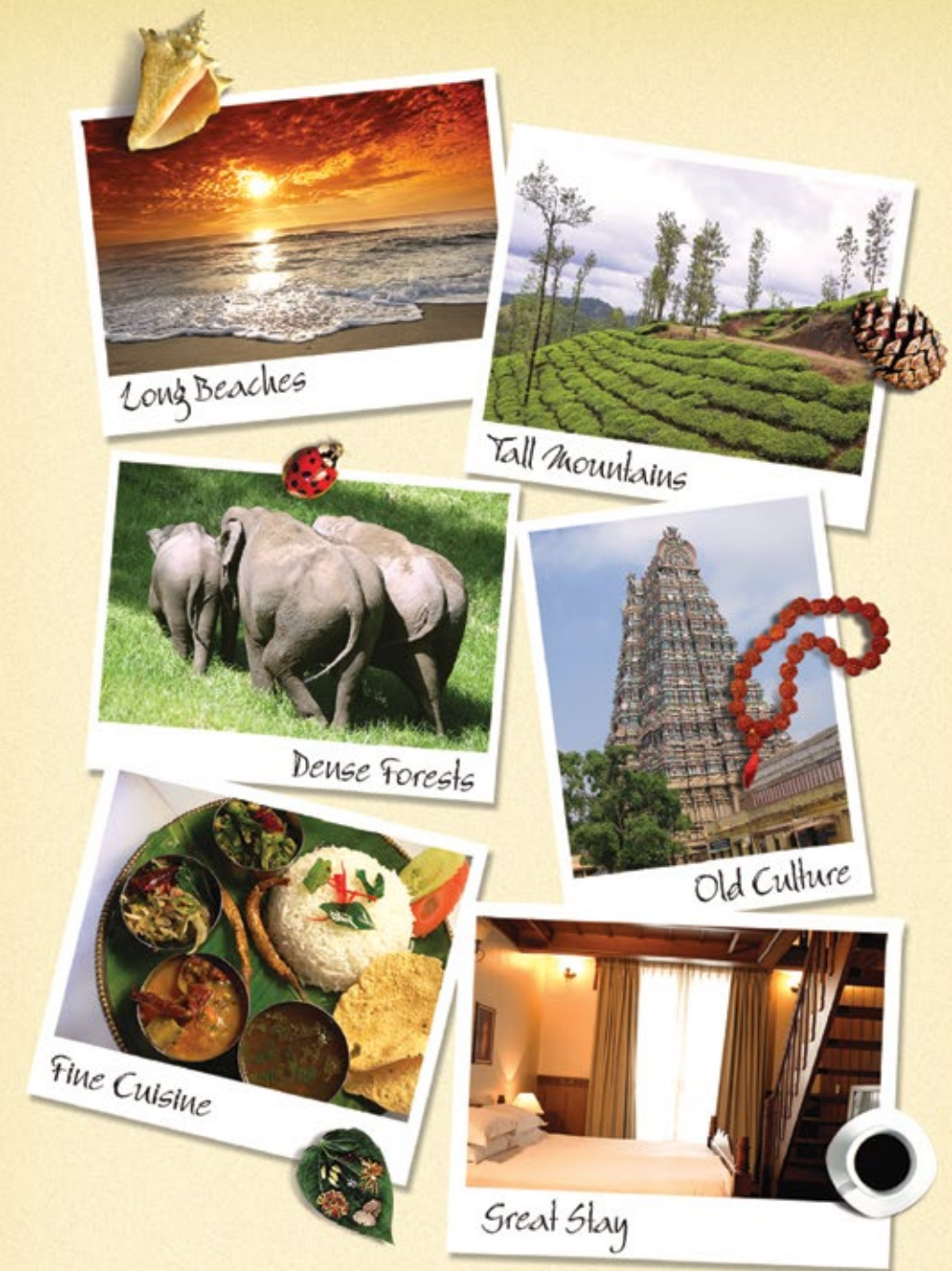


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*The veterans of the Great Patriotic War embody the highest ideals of courage, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication to their homeland. Through unimaginable hardship and against overwhelming odds, they defended their nation with resilience and resolve, leaving a legacy carved into the very fabric of history. Their deeds, marked by quiet heroism and steadfast unity, continue to inspire generations. As custodians of peace hard-won through suffering, they remind us that freedom is not given, but earned through the valor of those who stand firm in the face of darkness. Their legacy shall endure with honor and gratitude.*

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Address by **Denis Alipov**  
Russian Ambassador to India  
dedicated to the 80th Anniversary of  
the Soviet Victory over fascism

This year, on May 9, we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Soviet people's victory over Nazism. Eighty years ago, the world witnessed the end of a conflict that had plunged humanity into its darkest depths. The misanthropic ideology driven by hatred and a relentless pursuit of domination wrought devastation across continents, reducing vibrant cities to ruins and extinguishing millions of innocent lives. The Holocaust, mass executions, forced labor, and widespread starvation were not distant tragedies but lived horrors endured by countless individuals. These were not faceless statistics, but fathers, mothers, daughters, sons – each with dreams, hopes, and lives stolen too soon. When the enemy invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, it was not solely the soldiers who stood in defence of their homeland – it was an entire nation that rose as one. This struggle was

not confined to the front. We honor the millions of women and children who, on the home front, labored tirelessly – producing steel, sewing uniforms, constructing tanks, harvesting crops. In every republic of the Soviet Union – from the factories of Russia and Ukraine to the cotton fields of Central Asia, from the workshops of the Caucasus to the mines of Kazakhstan – the war effort was a united struggle. On the morning of June 22, 1941, the many peoples of the Soviet Union stood shoulder to shoulder – taking their first, and for many, their last stand. The Victory was forged not only on the front lines but in the quiet, relentless determination of those who kept the nation alive behind them. For countless families across Europe, it was the Soviet soldier who brought not only the end of war, but the return of hope. Streets that once echoed with boots of occupation rang once more with the sounds of freedom. This victory was not solely a Soviet triumph – it was a victory for all of humanity. It marked the moment when light reclaimed a world teetering on the brink

of perpetual darkness. India, too, stood in solidarity during these tumultuous times. The Indian people demonstrated unwavering support for the global fight against fascism. Over two and a half million Indian soldiers volunteered to serve in the British Indian Army, making it one of the largest volunteer forces in history. They fought bravely across various theatres – from the deserts of North Africa to the jungles of Southeast Asia – exhibiting unparalleled courage and resilience. Notably, in 1941, Indian divisions played a crucial role in ensuring that vital supply lines to the Soviet Union through Iran remained open. This brutal and heinous war left permanent scars on mankind and those who fearlessly stood up against the Nazi plague. The Soviet Union paid an unbearable price for this Victory – more than 27 million Soviet citizens perished – soldiers, partisans, prisoners, civilians. The soil of Eastern Europe remains hallowed by their sacrifice. Let us never forget their memory and let such an appalling tragedy never be repeated!



## Marching with Memories

Annually in May, Russian people all over the world arrange the traditional “Immortal Regiment” rally dedicated to the celebration of the anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War. New Delhi hosts it as well. Arranged by the Russian Embassy in India and the Russian House in New Delhi the rally gathers hundreds of Russian and Indian citizens, students of local universities, representatives of the Russian foreign missions in India and members of their families walking with portraits of their relatives who participated in the war.

**INSIDE: SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR, BEGINS ON PAGE 18.**

From the Editor

## The unbreakable spirit of the Soviet people

The history of the people of Russia is filled with remarkable examples of bravery, self-sacrifice, and steadfastness in struggle and records several patriotic wars, during which the entire nation rose up to drive out enemy forces. Everyone knows how courageously the people fought in the Battle of the Ice on April 5, 1242, when they defeated the “paper knights” of the Livonian Order.



The Tri-Service contingent of the Indian Armed Forces comprised 75 all ranks and marched in the Victory Day parade in Moscow along with contingents of Russian Armed Forces and 17 other countries in 2020.

Much later, in 1812, the Russian people defeated Napoleon, who dreamed of ruling the world. He was forced to flee from the country with the pitiful remnants of his shattered army. At that time, the entire nation took up arms against the enemy. Even peasants and ordinary women armed themselves to defend their homeland. Eighty years ago, the history was repeated, that no patriot has forgotten, nor will they ever forget, the atrocities committed by Nazis against the Soviet people. Hitler had openly declared that Germany's goal in the war was to establish Nazi hegemony over all of Europe and demanded that all European nations and people accept the “new order”. Nothing but a system of brutal oppression and enslavement, this “new order” sought to subjugate the entire nations and their people. It was the Soviet Union and the Soviet people - Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Kazakhs, Armenians, Azerbaijanis and many others - who defeated the Nazism, liberated Europe from this plague and put an end to the misanthropic ideology. The bravery and courage of the Soviet soldiers and ordinary citizens saved the continent and the entire planet.



## YOU SAID IT...

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world rallied around the US-led order. The dollar benefited immensely, expanding into new global markets. Today we see the opposite. Now, it's becoming increasingly clear that the US dollar, and the system built around it, is entering its difficult stage. As economic and geopolitical confidence in the US fades, many are turning to more stable stores of value. Gold is leading that shift. — **Pragata Ghosh**, NEW DELHI

**Kyrgyzstan is actively coordinating efforts in sustainable development, with a particular focus on economic growth, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Key areas of expansion include improving access to education and digital technologies, supporting vulnerable groups, and addressing social inequality. But there is still a need to consolidate efforts to achieve the goals of the 2030 agenda.** — **AIZIREK IMANALIYEVA**, Email

The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a small elite is not a product of communism, but rather of capitalism. It is worth noting that China is neither truly communist nor entirely socialist, which may help explain why most Chinese people support their government's policies. According to official claims, China's development model has lifted 800 million people out of poverty and appears to enjoy overwhelming support from the Chinese population. — **Dr. Pratik Shirdhankar**, PUNE

**We must treat history as a mirror that reflects the current status quo, even as history itself follows an upward spiral. It is essential to connect history with present-day reality. Many events occurring today have already happened in the past. Therefore, we should delve into history and study the underlying logic behind those events. Moreover, we must learn to distinguish between history and myth.**

— **DINESH KATHIRAVAN**, Chennai

start talking about this. Yes, the goals are different, yes, the countries are different, but the principles remain the same. Certainly, mistakes will be made, but in the end, we must move forward thoughtfully to achieve our more important goals. — **Zaverbhai Patel**, AHMEDABAD

The 20th century was filled with ideological chimeras, but the 21st century requires rational thinking, practicality, and stability. This is the point on which the world should agree. Russian President Vladimir Putin is the first to

No country should subscribe to a “big brother, small brother” relationship with others, nor should they form alliances to bully other nations. What one country should seek from another is mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. It can be said that China has supported Russia's economy in various ways during the period of sanctions. However, it is also true that China needed Russia to counter the aggression of the United States and its western allies. In doing so, China ultimately safeguarded its own interests. — **Prof. Anindya Majumdar**, KOLKATA

Russia has always aspired to be European, and in many ways, it is. However, Russia is also Asian; most of its landmass lies in Asia, and many of its indigenous people are of Asian descent. Russia should take pride in both its European and Asian attributes. This unique blend sets it apart from any other nation in the world. Therefore, Russia should embrace its individual identity and reflect this in academic, political, geographical, and economic discourse. In fact, one could even argue that a new continent, Eurasia, should be officially recognized. — **Abdulhay Naimov**, EMAIL

The whole world is at a crossroads; unexpected events are dragging nations and entire regions into armed conflicts. Nothing like this has ever happened on such a scale in human history. While economic integration is progressing, there is also resistance to the unification of states, particularly those we once considered part of the so-called Third World. One could say that the control over

natural resources, or perhaps even the evolutionary process itself, is a fundamental reason behind the increasing number of armed conflicts. — **Prof. Utsav Kainikkara**, JAIPUR

There is a significant flaw in BRICS; it is overly idealistic. While it is good to hope that the world might somehow transform into a paradise, history teaches us that idealism alone is not enough. Of course, BRICS should not create a shared power structure like NATO. But BRICS members can develop a kind of non-aggression pact and mechanisms to ensure that sanctions, embargoes, and other neo-colonial tools do not hinder the progress of BRICS nations. — **Dr. Ujjwal Singh Dutta**, JALANDHAR

Despite significant progress in human rights, universal enjoyment of these rights remains unmet. Key challenges include managing the growing refugee crisis from regional conflicts, reducing poverty worsened by development gaps and pandemics, and tackling unsustainable development driven by climate change and environmental degradation. — **Pragata Ghosh**, NEW DELHI

Uzbekistan is steadily implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and has made significant progress in reducing poverty, improving access to education, moving towards a green economy, and promoting gender equality. Because its leadership recognizes that while addressing global problems, no country should forget about maintaining the sustainability and well-being of its population at the national level. — **Hamsini Hariharan**, CHENNAI

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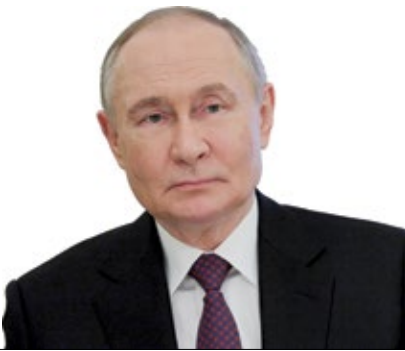
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“Quoted”

So that a system is created that takes into account each other's interests, and a mechanism for finding compromises is created.

Vladimir Putin, President of Russia

I would like the world to be balanced and for the emerging multipolar system to take into account to the maximum extent possible the interests of all participants in international communication. So that a system is created that takes into account each other's interests, and a mechanism for finding compromises is created. I hope that we will be able to create such a system - in any case, we should strive for this.



Kelaghayi, a symbol of wisdom and beauty

IN 2014, KELAGHAYI WAS recognized as an object of intangible cultural heritage of humanity. “People express their emotions, thoughts and values through the *Kelaghayi*. It is not just an element of clothing, but a means of communication that unites generations and cultures.”



Kelaghayi is a traditional, hand-woven silk headscarf from Azerbaijan.

It was this understanding that became decisive for UNESCO specialists, who unanimously voted for its inclusion in the representative list.

For Azerbaijani women, *Kelaghayi* has always been a must-have accessory that protects them from both the hot sun and cold wind as silk is cool in summer and warm in winter.

Today, *Kelaghayi* comes in a wide range of different patterns and looks; has been enriched with new content, and has become even more diverse and beautiful. This became possible thanks to the efforts of the First Lady of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva, whose contribution

to this process is truly invaluable. Thanks to her initiatives, *Kelaghayi* has received a worthy place in the world cultural space. *Kelaghayi* production is a complex process, which involves masters of a number of professions, including a tailor, a dyer of *Kelaghayi* fabric, a pattern artist and an ornament smith. Making this accessory weighing 125 grams, requires two days to paint and apply patterns. Nowadays ancient silk headscarf

continues to captivate the fashion industry. *Kelaghayi* has turned into a source of inspiration for many fashion designers around the world.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



1. In which year, Russian new year celebrations shifted to September?
2. When did the Soviet Union launch its first artificial satellite?
3. When was World Backup Day started?
4. When is birthday of storyteller Hans Christian Andersen?
5. When was Pushkin's novel Eugene Onegin published?

Answers of the April 2025 quiz

1. The Americans celebrate Spaghetti Day on January 4. Spaghetti is their favorite pasta. In 2000, 1.3 million pounds of spaghetti were sold in country's grocery stores. If all the spaghetti sold were lined up, it would encircle the Earth nine times!
2. The passport system was introduced in the USSR on December 27, 1932. These were documents meant for local residents and contained information about the date of birth, nationality, social status, attitude to military service, marital status, etc. Military personnel, disabled people and collective farmers did not have passports. Only with special permission could a peasant obtain a passport and move to another place of residence.
3. India's first newspaper was Hicky's Bengal Gazette, which was started on January 29, 1780. It was a weekly English newspaper started by an Irishman, James Augustus Hicky.
4. On January 4, 1908, at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, ballerina Anna Pavlova first performed the choreographic miniature “The Dying Swan.” The poetic image presented by Pavlova became a masterpiece and a symbol of Russian ballet.
5. November 24 is the birthday of the famous American psychologist and writer Dale Carnegie, author of the book “How to Win Friends and Influence People.” On this day, his books are displayed in the most prominent place in American bookstores.



Ala-Archa national park is always fascinating. Founded in 1976 and located 30 kilometers from Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, the park covers an area of about 165 square kilometers, and its altitude ranges from about 1,500 meters at the entrance to a maximum of 4,895 meters at the end. It is divided into four zones, with recreation and sports mountaineering zones open to everyone. Ala-Archa is considered one of the most beautiful places in Kyrgyzstan and is often visited by state guests and official delegations.

Iran shows off underground military might

IRAN HAS RELEASED VIDEO showing a massive underground missile facility filled with a cache of high-powered weaponry. The footage, shared by Iranian state media on March 25, showed Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Mohammad Baqeri and Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Aerospace Force commander, showing off what Iranian media said was an “underground missile city.”

Some of Iran's most advanced weapons are seen mounted on vehicles parked in the underground tunnels. The release of the video comes at a moment of high tensions between Iran and the United States.

Farzan Sabet, a researcher specializing in nuclear nonproliferation and Middle East politics at the Geneva Graduate Institute, said Iran has made similar displays of its military strength in the past.

“During times of tension, they'll find various ways to signal their offensive military power, their defensive military power, and their deterrence capabilities. And so, one of the things they do, for example, is test missiles or carry out military exercises,” Sabet told *Radio Liberty*.



Hossein Salami (left), head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and Amir Ali Hajizadeh, head of the Guard's Aerospace Force, touring an underground missile base in an undisclosed location in Iran.

Uzbekistan officially joins Eurasian Development Bank

UZBEKISTAN HAS BECOME THE seventh member of the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) and the third-largest shareholder, holding a 10 percent equity stake. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a law approving the country's accession to the institution. Uzbekistan's membership in the Bank is expected to open up new opportunities for the country, particularly in modernizing transport infrastructure, developing the energy and water sectors, and accelerating industrial and agricultural growth. The expansion of the Bank's membership also brings benefits to existing member states, including enhanced industrial cooperation, strengthened trade relations, and improved food security.



Uzbekistan's accession to the EDB will open new opportunities for modernizing transport infrastructure, energy, and water sectors, as well as accelerating the development of industry and agriculture.

The decision to admit Uzbekistan as a member of the EDB was approved by the Bank's Council on July 16, 2024. The Eurasian Development Bank is an international financial institution that invests across Eurasia. For over eighteen years, the Bank has worked to strengthen economic ties and promote comprehensive development among its member countries. Current members of the EDB include Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan.

Major initiative to go green in Tajikistan

RECENTLY, IN THE MONTH OF MARCH, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and Chairman of the Majlisi Milli Majlisi Oli, the mayor of Dushanbe Rustam Emomali visited a nursery of rare plants, flowers and shrubs near the capital, where they got acquainted with the cultivation of seedlings. According to the press service of the head of state, the land area of the nursery is 45 hectares; more than 100 types of rare colors and shrubs, 40 species of decorative trees are grown here; and the seeds of many plants have been brought abroad. The aim of the nursery is to adapt the species and varieties of plants imported from the outside to the climate of Tajikistan. For this, a greenhouse equipped with modern technologies is built on the area of two hectares in the fluorite - breeding farm.



President Emomali Rahmon plants a tree during the inauguration ceremony of the new nursery.

In the greenhouse, experienced specialists grow heat - loving trees, flowers and shrubs and adapt to the climate of Tajikistan. Recall that in Tajikistan the national program “Kishvari Sabz” for 2023-2027 and the “State Program of landscaping of Tajikistan for the period until 2040” have been adopted, which are designed to turn the country truly into a green country.

Turkmenistan strengthens its role in transport corridors

TURKMENISTAN IS ACTIVELY DEVELOPING regional cooperation in the energy and transport sectors, said Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedov March 19. He made the remarks in his address to participants of the international conference “The Role of Interregional Economic Cooperation in Ensuring Sustainable Development” in Ashgabat on March 19, 2025.



The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan hosted the International Conference “International Year of Peace and Trust: the Role of Interregional Economic Cooperation in Ensuring Sustainable Development” in Ashgabat on March 19, 2025.

ment” in Ashgabat, local media reported. Berdimuhamedov highlighted the growing opportunities for international projects and multilateral partnerships in Central and

East Asia. He emphasized that Turkmenistan continues to implement major energy, transport, and infrastructure projects, strengthening its cooperation with global partners and international organizations. According to the President, Turkmenistan is becoming a key hub in international transport corridors, as demonstrated by

large-scale infrastructure developments. In September 2023, the country launched a new phase of construction on the Turkmen-Afghan border, including the Serhetabat-Torghundi railway bridge, the Serhetabat-Herat gas pipeline, and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan power transmission lines. Berdimuhamedov also underscored the importance of the North-South transport corridor, which links Central and South Asia to ports in the Indian Ocean, enhancing regional transit potential. Additionally, Turkmenistan is modernizing its energy infrastructure and expanding electricity exports to meet the growing global demand for energy resources.

Afghans have more cos in Uzbekistan than Koreans

AS OF APRIL 1, 2025, there are 15,739 foreign-invested companies operating in Uzbekistan, according to a report released by the National Statistics Committee on April 17. Of these, 4,031 are joint ventures, while 11,708 are wholly foreign-owned enterprises. In March alone, the number of foreign-invested companies increased by 236. Notably,

136 new companies were established with the participation of Chinese investors, bringing the total number of Chinese-backed companies to 3,711, the



highest among all countries. China is followed by Russia with 3,033

companies, and Türkiye with 1,942. For the first time, Afghanistan has entered the top five with 672 companies, surpassing South Korea, which now has 663. The countries by number of companies in Uzbekistan: China - 3,711; Russia - 3,033; Türkiye - 1,942; Kazakhstan - 1,082; Afghanistan - 672; South Korea - 663; UAE - 352; Tajikistan - 329; India - 317; USA - 310; Kyrgyzstan - 309; Azerbaijan - 278; Great Britain - 240; Belarus - 230; Germany - 217; Turkmenistan - 209; Pakistan - 148; Japan - 92.

Kyrgyzstan may limit number of mosques

AUTHORITIES IN KYRGYZSTAN are planning to impose a limit on the number of mosques, temples, and other religious facilities in populated areas. A draft of the government proposal has been submitted for public discussion. According to the State Commission for Religious Affairs, a campaign was launched in 2021 to officially register religious facilities across the country that had been constructed but were operating without registration. At that time, 644 such facilities were found to be functioning without official registration. Additionally, by early 2023, over 200 more religious facilities under construction were identified.



The central mosque of Imam Sarakhsi was built by Türkiye's religious authority and opened on September 2, 2018.

It is noteworthy that the number of requests for financial assistance to the authorities to complete the construction of religious facilities is increasing daily. It has also been observed that in some settlements, up to 10 religious buildings are operating in close proximity to each other. If approved, the new regulations, however, will not apply to already existing religious facilities.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with the Taliban's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi during a visit of Afghanistan's delegation to Russia in October 2024.

Russia removes Taliban from list of terrorist organizations

ON APRIL 17, THE Supreme Court of Russia announced that the Taliban has been removed from the country's official list of terrorist organizations, following a request from the Prosecutor General, according to TASS. The decision takes effect immediately. The court hearing was held behind closed doors. This move follows changes made in 2024 to Russia's law on counterterrorism. Under the updated law, a court can suspend the ban on an organization if it stops promoting, supporting, or committing acts of terrorism. The Taliban is the first group to be removed from the list under the new rules. Lawmakers explained that this legal change was meant to fix a gap in the system. Despite not officially recognizing the Taliban-led government, Russia has continued political contact with the group. In January 2024, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Russia is in touch with the Taliban but

“Moscow will continue its course on developing political, trade and economic ties with Kabul.”

— SERGEY LAVROV  
RUSSIA'S FOREIGN MINISTER

of Afghanistan and acts as the country's actual government. President Putin said that, despite existing problems, Russia needs to build a relationship with Kabul. Other countries in the region have made similar moves. In 2023, Kazakhstan removed the Taliban from its terrorist list, and in September 2024, Kyrgyzstan also took the Taliban off its list of banned organizations.

Turkmenistan introduces electronic visas

On April 18, 2025, Turkmenistan enacted a significant change to its visa policy by introducing an electronic visa (e-visa) system, aiming to simplify the entry process for foreign nationals. **Key features of the new E-Visa system:** Simplified application process, applicants can now complete a streamlined online form, eliminating the need for a visa support letter. **Processing Time:** The e-visa is typically processed within 2 to 5 business days, though this may vary based on application volume and other factors. **Validity and entry:** The e-visa is valid for single entry only. Once you exit Turkmenistan, the e-visa cannot be used for re-entry. Travelers must enter through designated entry points such as airports and certain border checkpoints.



e-Visas are issued based on the purpose of travel processed within the information system of the state migration service of Turkmenistan.

**Requirements:** Applicants must have a passport valid for at least six months beyond the intended stay, provide proof of accommodation, show evidence of sufficient funds, and possess valid health insurance covering the duration of their stay. While the law has been adopted, the office of President Serdar Berdimuhamedov will determine the specifics regarding the types of e-visas available, their issuance procedures, and validity periods. Travelers interested in visiting Turkmenistan should monitor official channels for updates on the e-visa application process and ensure they meet all entry requirements before planning their trip.

China reveals a new vehicle, and it's not electric

AS WORLD POURS BILLIONS into the EV transition and hydrogen remains stuck in experimental stages, Chinese engineers are forging a third path, one where electric power is no longer the only answer. Chinese auto giant Geely has unveiled the Emgrand M100 Hybrid, a vehicle powered by methanol. Its powertrain combines an electric motor with a 1.8-liter internal combustion engine adapted for methanol fuel. The combined output is an impressive 264 horsepower, remarkable for a B-segment hybrid platform. What makes this technology special is that it doesn't require a massive overhaul of existing infrastructure. A methanol-powered engine can utilize current technical solutions, and the fuel itself allows for carbon recycling from the atmosphere.



Unlike some models, Emgrand operates entirely on methanol rather than a combination of methanol and gasoline.

Geely's synthetic fuel could be a game-changer for regions with harsh climates, where battery efficiency drops rapidly. The innovation promises not only environmental benefits but also economic advantages; methanol is cheaper, and the Emgrand platform is already available in China in both hybrid and pure methanol versions.

Opening of First IT Hub in Kyrgyzstan held in Bishkek

ON APRIL 10, 2025, the opening ceremony of Kyrgyzstan's first IT hub within the Technopark was held in Bishkek, with the participation of President Sadyr Japarov. In his address to the attendees, the President noted that the IT hub is not merely an office center, but a space dedicated to the development of advanced technologies and innovation. "Today, we are launching the IT hub, which will become a vital foundation for the future development of our country. Once, there was a factory on this site that made a significant contribution to the national economy. Years have passed, times have changed, and now, thanks to the initiative of entrepreneurs and the support of the state, a modern platform for IT businesses is opening here. Let this new IT hub become a symbol of progress and prosperity for all of us," the head of state emphasized. The first stage of the IT hub's development was implemented back in 2023. Currently, 250 resident companies operate within the Technopark, which also houses 115 separate offices and 344 open-space workshops.



Kyrgyzstan improves its position in Global Soft Power Index

KYRGYZSTAN HAS MOVED up two positions in the Global Soft Power Index - 2025, ranking 146th with 28.8 points, according to a study published by *Brand Finance*. Kyrgyzstan entered the index for the first time in 2024 and took the last position. This year, the country improved its performance by two points due to a number of indicators. The most significant of them were Education and Science (+21), as well

as People and Values (+10). At the same time, the country worsened its positions in such indicators as



Kyrgyzstan entered the Global Soft Power Index for the first time in 2024 and took the last position.

Sustainable Future (-9) and Familiarity (-3). The first place in the

ranking was taken by the United States of America with 79.5 points. Second place for the first time was taken by China with 72.8 points. The index is conducted annually and assesses the influence of each country participating in the rating in culture, business and diplomacy. The rating is based on a survey of more than 170,000 people from more than 100 countries. This time, *Brand Finance* assessed the global image of 193 UN member states.



Rare earth metals at a plant in Veliky Novgorod.

Russia has the upper hand in rare earth metals

Russia, the US, Canada, Australia, and China are expected to become the key players in the rare earth metals market over the next 10 to 15 years. However, extracting these metals requires significant financial investments and advanced technologies, resources that Russia possesses. Russia will be able to fully meet its domestic demand by producing 7,500 tons of rare earth metals annually. The country's reserves are estimated at about 20-30 million tons, ranking second in the world. In contrast, the US remains almost entirely dependent on imports of rare earths from China, Malaysia, and Japan. For other countries, the solution lies in forming joint ventures or collaborative projects. Australia and Canada are most likely to establish such partnerships, which would include supplying rare earth metals to the US.

IT Park officially opened in Dushanbe

AN OFFICIAL OPENING of the IT Park Dushanbe, the first fully-fledged innovation center in the country aimed at developing the digital economy and technologies, took place on April 7 2025.

The opening ceremony was attended by Dushanbe Mayor Rustam Emomali as well as representatives from the most advanced and innovative companies in the country.

This event can rightfully be considered a landmark step in the development of Tajikistan's technological sector. The IT Park will offer benefits and

guarantees for residents, including: 0 percent tax on profits, VAT, dividends,

and local taxes; reduced income tax and social security rates; and creating a favorable environment for technological growth and international cooperation.



The Mayor of Dushanbe Rustam Emomali at the opening ceremony.

Tajikistan's economy grows despite global crises

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, despite the impact of two major global crises and external factors, Tajikistan's national economy has grown at an average annual rate of 7.7 percent. This was announced by

reached 153.4 billion somoni, with a real growth rate of 8.4 percent. This growth was primarily driven by a 20 percent increase in industrial production, a 10.6 percent rise in agriculture, a 13.6 percent increase in trade turnover, a 13.4 percent rise in passenger transport, a 13 percent increase in paid services, an 11.5 percent growth in freight transport, and increased investment in fixed assets.

Zavqizoda highlighted that over the past five years, the country's GDP has grown by



Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan, Zavqi Zavqizoda, speaking at the meeting of the ministry.

the Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan, Zavqi Zavqizoda, during a meeting of the ministry. He noted that the average growth rate reached 8.5 percent when excluding the year 2020, which was marked by the spread of corona. The minister also reported that in 2024, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Despite external factors, the average growth rate of the national economy was 7.7 percent.

74.3 billion somoni, effectively doubling. Meanwhile, household monetary income reached 99 billion somoni, which is three times higher than before. The inflation rate in 2024 stood at 3.6 percent, which is 0.2 percentage points lower than in 2023 (3.8 percent). "Inflation during this period was mainly driven by a 3 percent increase in food prices, a 4 percent rise in non-food goods, and a 4.8 percent increase in service costs," Zavqizoda stated.

Azerbaijan's fertilizer trade: growth and strategic shifts

In the first two months of 2025, Azerbaijan's fertilizer exports surged, while imports also saw a rise. According to the State Customs Committee, exports increased to \$36.15 million, a 71.8 percent rise compared to the same period in 2024. This represents a significant increase in Azerbaijan's role as a fertilizer exporter. Azerbaijan exported over 122.3 thousand tons of nitrogen fertilizer valued at \$36 million in January-February 2025. This is a 71.9 percent increase in value (\$15 million more) and a 5.4 percent rise in volume (6.3 thousand tons more) compared to the same period in 2024.



In the first two months of 2025, the State Customs Committee reported that fertilizer exports reached \$36.15 million.

Imports increased to \$10.93 million, a 24.4 percent increase compared to the same period in 2024. This suggests a growing reliance on imported fertilizers to meet the agricultural sector's needs. In January 2025, Azerbaijan imported 13,020 tons of fertilizer at a cost of \$5.15 million. The surge in both imports and exports indicates a shift in Azerbaijan's role in the global fertilizer market, with the country becoming a growing producer and exporter while still relying on imported fertilizers. Fertilizer imports accounted for 0.26 percent of Azerbaijan's total imports, while exports made up 0.76 percent of total exports in 2024.

Glacier preservation talks set for Dushanbe

A high-level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation will be held from May 29 to 31, 2025 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, to highlight the vital role of glaciers in maintaining global ecological balance and addressing water-related challenges. Glacier preservation is crucial for climate stability, resilience, and sustainability. This event will raise awareness and advocate for urgent collective action. This conference will emphasize the crucial connection between glaciers and sustainable socio-economic development, focusing on how glacier preservation is essential to safeguarding livelihoods, ensuring water availability, minimizing related hazards, recognizing the role of indigenous peoples and knowledge, and achieving long-term development goals for vulnerable regions and populations. The conference aims to reinforce the global agenda on glaciers and the urgent need to halt their melting, calving and retreating. It will foster collaborative action, scientific innovation, and policy alignment to address glaciers melt and its widespread consequences.



Tajikistan's capital city Dushanbe.

The conference will support the implementation of UN resolutions on the "International Year of Glaciers' Preservation 2025" and the "Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences, 2025–2034," by mobilizing resources and fostering international co-operation. It seeks to strengthen global partnerships among governments, scientists, civil society, and other stakeholders, with a focus on enhancing transboundary collaboration to preserve glaciers and their socio-economic benefits.

INSTC supply chain route doubles transit volumes in 2024

TRADE BETWEEN INDIA AND RUSSIA using the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) almost doubled in 2024, according to Russian Railways. New Delhi is increasing the volume of exports via the route as it looks to reduce its substantial



Transportation of Russian coal to India via the INSTC.

trade deficit with Moscow. The net cost of the service along the eastern route of the INSTC in 2024 is reduced by more than 56 percent, while the volume of transportation across this route increased by 1.7 times. An Indian government report also noted a significant increase in maritime activity, with a 43 percent rise in vessel traffic and a 34 percent growth in container traffic during the financial year 2023-24. It is worth to note here that logistics improvements are also being made.

Currently, it takes more than a fortnight for goods from Moscow to reach the port of Bandar Abbas in Iran, with the need to speed up railway delivery times from Russia through Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to Bandar Abbas being a significant shortcut for the Eastern branch of the INSTC. The INSTC originates in Mumbai, traversing through Iran's Bandar Abbas, Bandar-e-Anzali, and Chabahar, before crossing the Caspian Sea to reach Astrakhan in South Russia. It then connects to Moscow and St. Petersburg via rail and road links.

The INSTC facilitates trade between India and Russia, with India exporting goods such as construction supplies, clothing and footwear, rice, plastics, rolled iron, confectionery, seasoning, and food concentrates to Russia. Russia exports paper products, lumber, hygiene products, furniture, roofing materials, food, and other types of goods, while the INSTC can help diversify bilateral trade between Russia and India, with the pharmaceutical industry being a promising area for growth. The eastern route of the corridor is now equipped to handle Indian pharmaceutical products that require "specialized transportation conditions" and is particularly "significant given that India became the largest supplier of pharmaceuticals to Russia in 2023." Russia and India have achieved a significant milestone in their bilateral trade, reaching a record \$66 billion in 2024. The two countries are poised to meet their ambitious target of \$100 billion in trade by 2030, having already made substantial progress.

President, First Lady at Sea Breeze Resort

On April 18, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, and their family members visited the Sea Breeze Resort in Baku to review ongoing development projects. This phase of development features ten seven-storey buildings comprising 1,260 apartments. Notably, during COP29, Sea Breeze hosted nearly 4,000 guests, many of whom were accommodated in these residences. Located along the Caspian

Sea, just 30 minutes from Baku's city center, Sea Breeze spans 500 hectares. Over 1.5 million square meters of resi-



dential and commercial space has been developed. More than 150 hectares are dedicated to recreational areas,

parks, and beaches. The resort's main projects are concentrated along the coastline and are expected to significantly enhance Azerbaijan's tourism appeal. Among them is the flagship project, Caspian Dream Liner, an 11-storey structure designed in the shape of a massive liner, which will be built on an artificial island. It will include an apart-hotel, shopping center, and swimming pools, further establishing Sea Breeze as a standout destination on the global tourism map.



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

# Kazakhstan emerges as leading tech hub

DEALROOM.CO REPORT RELEASED on March 25 highlights Kazakhstan's remarkable transformation from a resource-based economy to one of the fastest-growing tech hubs globally, with significant growth in its startup ecosystem and government-backed initiatives supporting technology and AI development. "In just six years, Kazakhstan has evolved from a resource-driven economy to become one of the world's fastest-growing tech hubs, now worth \$26 billion, an eighteen-fold increase since 2019. Over the same period, tech sectors globally have grown 2.6 times," reads the report.

Driven by the rise of companies including Kaspi and Freedom Holding Corp, the country's most successful, billion-dollar unicorns, Kazakhstan's startup-to-unicorn rate now sits at 2.9 percent, putting it comfortably ahead of growth levels across the world's tech leaders Israel (2.3 percent), China (2.0 percent) and the United States (1.3 percent).

**From fintech to AI, Kazakhstan is positioning itself at the forefront of the region's digital future, making it an exciting destination for technology and investment alike.**



Payments, marketplace and fintech platform Kaspi recently surpassed the \$10 billion valuation milestone, while Freedom Holding Corp has been one of the best-performing tech stocks in the world, up 775 percent since 2019 and outperforming tech giants like Meta, Apple, Amazon, Microsoft and Google. Freedom generated revenues of \$1.6 billion in 2024, while Kaspi generated \$5 billion in 2024.

Another metric of success for Kazakhstan's emerging ecosystem is the percentage of funded companies with \$10 million or more in revenues. In Kazakhstan, 2.8

*A team of physician-researchers from Kazakhstan presented the groundbreaking Alem innovation for donor organ preservation and transportation at the World Expo 2025 being held from April 13 to October 13 in Osaka, Japan.*



A person downloads the Kaspi application on their smartphone in Almaty.

percent of companies achieve this annual revenue rate, compared with rates in Sweden (1.05 percent), Israel (1.0 percent), and Germany (0.81 percent). Kazakhstan's unprecedented growth comes from betting big on tech and AI, with buy-in at the highest political level. A new International AI Center, alem.ai, is set to open in 2025, providing a hub for AI research, innovation, and global collaboration. The center aims to attract top-tier talent, foster breakthrough developments, and position Kazakhstan as a leader in AI-driven solutions. This follows work by the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations, and Aerospace Industry, which has led in initiatives like an e-Government portal and e-Licensing, vastly speeding up the process of starting a business.

In a collaboration between the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations, and Aerospace Industry and Astana Hub, a \$1 billion Fund-of-Funds was announced at the end of 2024. Launching this year, the fund will target \$1 billion in private investment in the medium term," according to the report.

Additionally, the government actively supports founders of such companies through initiatives provided by Astana Hub, which offers tax incentives, mentorship programs, and access to international markets. Collaborations with global platforms like Dealroom.co further enhance Kazakhstan's startups' visibility, attracting international investments and facilitating growth.

SURYA

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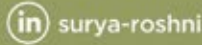
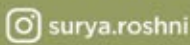
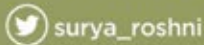
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## Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War

### The most unforgettable memories

THE MOMENTS THAT DEFINED OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE

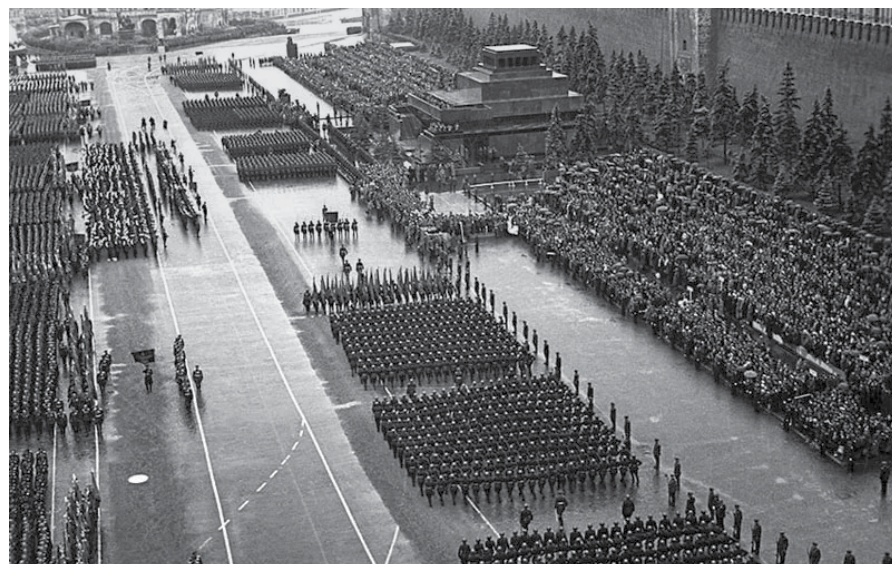
ON MAY 8, 1945, THE GERMAN Instrument of Surrender was signed near Berlin. The same day, Joseph Stalin signed the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR declaring the 9th of May the Victory Day. "On the night of May 9, 1945, the citizens of Moscow did not sleep. At 2:00 am, the radio announced that an important announcement will be made. At 2:10 am Yuri Levitan read the German Instrument of Surrender and the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on declaring May 9 the Day of national holiday – Victory Day. People ran out of their houses on the streets... congratulated each other with a long-awaited victory. Banners appeared. More and more

people were gathering, they moved towards the Red Square. A spontaneous demonstration began. Joyful faces, songs, dances to the accompaniment of accordion. In the evening a salute was fired: thirty salvoes from thousands of guns in honor of the Great Victory," Alexander Ustinov, a military correspondent, recalled. On that day "Pravda" wrote: "The Ninth of May! Never would a Soviet person forget this day. As well as the day of June 22, 1941. Seems like a century between these two dates. And the way it happens in the national epic; a Soviet person had grown incredibly during the period. He had grown the way that a Red Army man standing near a flying banner in Berlin is seen by the whole world. We did not expect June 22. But we craved for the day when the last blow would overthrow the black monster of the life itself. And we struck this blow... What a joy we feel today. And the night sky over Moscow seems to be reflecting the same joy which fills the Soviet land. We had witnessed the events which would take volumes of texts to describe. But today there is one word containing them all: Victory!.." On June 24, 1945 the first Parade of



Red Army Soldiers raising the Soviet flag over the Reichstag in Berlin on April 30, 1945.

Victory was held on the Red Square in Moscow. Marshal Zhukov accepted the parade commanded by Marshal Rokossovsky. The regiments of Belorussian, Leningrad, Karelia and Ukrainian fronts, as well as combined regiment of the Navy marched through the parade ground on the Red Square. The columns were headed by the regiments' commanders. The Heroes of the Soviet Union carried flags and banners of the units which had distinguished themselves during the war. At the end of the parade 200 soldiers carried the Nazi banners turned toward the ground and threw them on the special platform at Lenin Mausoleum pedestal. From 1948 to 1964 the day of May 9 was an ordinary working day. In the year of the 20th anniversary of Victory the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree declaring the day of May 9 a holiday; for the first time since the end of war, a parade of troops and military hardware of Moscow garrison took place on the Red Square. Until 1995 the parades on the Red Square on Victory Day were held only in jubilee years: 1965, 1985 and 1990. Then they were held annually; since 2008 parades include the military hardware again.



The first Parade of Victory on the Red Square in Moscow, June 24, 1945.

## Memorable facts of the Great Patriotic War

REMEMBERING THE COURAGE AND SACRIFICE

ACCORDING TO THE DATA FROM modern historiography and the results of the work of the commission led by Colonel General Grigory Krivosheev in the 1980s and 1990s, and confirmed in 2009 by an interdepartmental commission established on the initiative of the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, the total number of irretrievable losses among the Armed Forces of the USSR from June 22, 1941 until May 9, 1945 was 11.4 million people. This includes 1.8 million prisoners of war who returned to the USSR after the war, and 940 thousand people who were drafted for a second term in the Red Army during the liberation of Soviet territories in 1942-1945. Therefore, the remaining 8.6 million people constitute the total number of irrecoverable losses suffered by the USSR's armed forces during the war. The death toll among the civilian population of the USSR was more than 13.68 million people. Of these, 7.42 million people were deliberately killed in the occupied territories, 4.1 million people died due to the harsh conditions of the occupation (hunger and disease), and 2.16 million people died while working in forced labor camps in Germany. Overall, the irrecoverable human losses of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War were estimated at 26.6 million people.

**The immense sacrifice of Soviet citizens, military and civilian, is a testament to the resilience and unity of the nation.**

The Battle of Moscow was a series of defensive and offensive operations by Soviet troops, conducted from September 30, 1941 to April 20, 1942 in the western strategic direction with the aim of defending Moscow.



Here's a more detailed look at some key events:

**Operation Barbarossa** (June-September, 1941): The German invasion of the Soviet Union, a massive military operation that marked the beginning of the Eastern Front of World War II.

**Battle of Moscow** (September 1941 - April 1942): A crucial battle where the Red Army successfully defended the Soviet capital against a major German offensive, halting the initial German advance.



The feat of Leningraders and Red Army showed the whole world the greatness of the spirit of people, courage and love for the Fatherland.

**Siege of Leningrad** (September 1941 - January 1944): A prolonged and devastating siege of the city of Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg), where the city and its surrounding armies were encircled by German forces.

**Battle of Stalingrad** (July 1942 - February 1943): A pivotal battle where the Soviet forces decisively defeated the German army, marking a turning point in the war on the Eastern Front.

**Battle of Kursk** (July-August 1943): The largest tank battle in history, where the Soviet forces repelled a major German offensive and regained the initiative.

**Liberation of Kiev** (November-December 1943): The Soviet forces liberated the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, from German occupation.

**Operation Bagration** (June-August



"Storming of Berlin" was the last and hardest battle. On May 2, 1945, the Red Army captured the capital of Nazi Germany by declaring "Berlin is ours."

1944): A major Soviet offensive that resulted in the liberation of Belarus and parts of Eastern Europe from German occupation.

**Battle of Berlin** (April-May 1945): The final major battle of the war in Europe, where the Red Army captured the German capital, Berlin, leading to the end of the war in Europe.

# How the Soviet Union won World War II

UNYIELDING SPIRIT, AND  
HEROIC DETERMINATION

BY BORIS EGOROV

NAZI GERMANY MANAGED to attract human and material resources from almost all of Europe to fight the Soviet Union. Italian, Romanian, Hungarian and Finnish troops, as well as military contingents from Spain, Slovakia and Croatia and volunteers from occupied France, Benelux and Scandinavian countries, fought alongside the Wehrmacht against the Red Army. Several times during the war, the USSR found itself teetering on the brink of military disaster. In the Fall of 1941, the Germans stood at the gates of Moscow and, in the Summer of 1942, they were a step away from almost completely depriving the country of the “lifeblood of war” - oil.

It was only after the triumph of the “Battle of Stalingrad” that the Soviet Union could breathe more easily. Nevertheless, it still had to endure another two and a half years of bloody warfare.



Visitors from near and far visit the The Motherland Calls monument in Volgograd on the anniversary of the Great Patriotic War.

**1941: Disaster for Soviet troops and collapse of the German blitzkrieg**  
At 4 am on June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany forces breached the borders of the Soviet Union in ‘Operation Barbarossa’ and advanced in the direction of the country’s three main cities: Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. The enemy offensive managed to achieve almost complete operational and tactical surprise.



Despite the Soviet troops’ fierce resistance, the Wehrmacht relentlessly advanced: On June 24, Vilnius was captured; on June 28 - Minsk; on July 1, the Nazi troops took Riga; on September 8, they completed the encirclement of Leningrad; and, on September 15, a large “cauldron” was formed around Kiev. It seemed that nothing could stop the Germans from taking Moscow; however, on the approaches to the capital, they were destined to suffer a complete reverse.

**1942: The USSR on the verge of defeat**  
As a result of a sudden large-scale counteroffensive by Soviet troops outside Moscow, the stunned enemy were pushed several hundred kilometers back from the city. The country’s political leadership decided that the moment had come to seize the initiative in the war. As subsequent events showed, however, it was too early to write the Germans off.  
In Winter-Spring 1942, the Red Army attempted to go on the offensive along the whole front line, but, in spreading its forces thinly, it achieved only limited success. Despite the fact that the Germans were partially forced to abandon their positions, they retained an important bridgehead in the Rzhev area from which the Wehrmacht could continue posing a threat to Moscow, they repelled attempts to lift the siege of Leningrad and they held on to a large part of the Crimean Peninsula. A May offensive in the Kharkov area ended in complete disaster for the USSR - about 200,000 Soviet soldiers found themselves trapped in a “cauldron”. It was largely because of this defeat that the German blitzkrieg in the south of the country gained a new lease of life.

**1943: The great turning of the tide**  
In the Battle of Stalingrad, the Red Army managed to turn imminent defeat into brilliant victory. It not only destroyed a large German grouping, but also inflicted a crushing defeat on the Italian, Romanian and Hungarian allies of the Nazis.  
Pressed by Soviet troops, the Germans withdrew from the banks of the Volga and from the Caucasus (waving goodbye forever to their dream of Soviet oil) and abandoned the Rzhev Salient, thus, conclusively lifting the threat to Moscow. In addition, the Red Army took advantage of the situation and finally broke the Siege of Leningrad.  
After the Soviet-German front stabilized in the spring, the sides started to ready themselves for a decisive confrontation in the area of the Kursk Salient. The offensive known as “Operation Citadel” undertaken there in the summer was Hitler’s last attempt to regain the initiative in the war on the Eastern Front.

**1944: Soviet strategic initiative**  
After the triumph at Kursk, the Soviet troops were unstoppable. In early 1944, they conclusively raised the siege of Leningrad and, by spring, they had completed the liberation of Crimea and almost the whole of Right-Bank Ukraine (west of the River Dnieper). On March 26, the Red Army reached the USSR’s state border with Romania.  
In Summer 1944, the Red Army demonstrated to the Wehrmacht that it had taken on board the bitter lessons of 1941 and was now capable of making effective use of the strategy of blitzkrieg. On June 23, almost exactly three years after the start of the German invasion of the USSR, the Belarusian Offensive, also known as “Operation Bagration,” was launched.

**HONORING PERFORMANCE:** As part of the anniversary celebrations marking the Soviet Union’s historic victory over Nazi Germany, students from schools and universities take to the streets of Moscow dressed in authentic World War II-era costumes. In a moving tribute to the past, they perform the graceful and symbolic Victory Waltz, bringing history to life through music and dance.

In just two months, the Red Army executed a rapid push 550-600 km westwards, destroying 17 German divisions and liberating the whole of the territory of Belarus and a significant part of eastern Poland. Overall, German losses were estimated at around half a million.

**1945: In the lair of the Fascist beast**  
The Red Army saw in the start of the final year of World War II conducting heavy urban fighting in Budapest and preparing for the liberation of Warsaw and for an offensive in East Prussia. The enemy, severely battle-scarred in the course of 1944, still retained a fairly high operational capability. Despite the loss of important industrial regions and almost all their key allies, the Germans were ready to fight to the end.  
In the Vistula-Oder Offensive in early February, the troops of Marshal Georgy Zhukov’s 1st Belarussian Front reached the distant approaches to Berlin - just 70 km lay between them and the capital of the Third Reich. While preparations were being put in place for a decisive assault on the city, the Germans mounted their final large-scale offensive of the war.



Servicemen and servicewomen proudly take part in the anniversary celebrations of the Great Patriotic War, honoring the legacy of heroism and sacrifice that shaped modern history.

Around 400,000 German and Hungarian troops took part in “Operation Spring Awakening” in the area of lakes Balaton and Velence in March 1945, but they only managed to drive a wedge several dozen kilometers deep into the Soviet defenses. After the collapse of the German offensive, the road to Vienna was open to the Red Army.

# The Great Patriotic War, a saga of sacrifice and bravery

THE UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT OF A NATION

### The Siege of Leningrad

Leningrad's horrific siege was one of the most lethal and brutal in the world history. It lasted for 900 days, from September 1941 to January 1944. The city's civilian population of almost three million refused to surrender, even though they were completely surrounded. By the first winter of the siege there was no heating, no water supply, almost no electricity and very little food. Despite non-stop air and artillery bombardment, the city's greatest enemies were hunger and bitter cold. The only life-line to the mainland was the ice of Lake Ladoga – known as the “Road of Life.” The city survived, its heroic resistance summed up in the motto: “Troy fell, Rome fell, Leningrad did not fall.” The blockade took the lives of at least 670,000 people, although some estimates suggest that as many as 1.5 million people died. The city became the symbol of Soviet resilience and invincibility. The siege was commemorated by the Green Belt of Glory, a unique complex of memorials along the historic front-line. You can still see warnings in St. Petersburg advising which side of the street is safe from the German shelling.

**Leningrad standing tall through the horrors of siege, it became the ultimate symbol of Soviet resilience and unyielding strength.**



On May 9, Moscow will host grand military parade marking the 80th anniversary of Victory, a proud tribute to the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War. As tradition holds, the parade will begin with the ceremonial presentation of the Russian national flag and the assault banner of the legendary 150th Idritskaya Rifle Division. The President will deliver a speech honoring the heroism and sacrifice of the wartime generation, and millions who gave their lives for peace and freedom.

### Defending the capital

Meanwhile the Germans advanced as far as Moscow, reaching the outskirts by early December 1941. Hundreds of young recruits were preparing to defend the capital. But none could imagine that before going to battle they would march on Red Square in front of Joseph Stalin. The parade on November 7, 1941 was kept secret until the last moment. That day the Soviet air force managed the unimaginable – not a single bomb was dropped on the capital. The troops left Red Square to head straight to the frontline. The parade had a tremendous impact on morale in Moscow and throughout the Soviet Union, becoming the turning point of the war. The capital never surrendered and for the first time the Germans were thrown back.

### The Battle of Stalingrad

Slowly, the industrialization of the 1930s, driven by the USSR's vast resources and workforce, started paying off. The tide turned in February 1943, when the Germans suffered a devastating defeat in the battle of Stalingrad. A major industrial center on the Volga River in southern Russia, Stalingrad (now Volgograd), was a coveted prize in itself. Control over it opened the way to the vital Caucasus oil fields. The city's very name drove Hitler's obsession with it. Seizing Stalingrad – “Stalin's City” – would deal a disastrous blow to Soviet morale, something Stalin couldn't afford. His order to the troops was: “Not One Step Back.” The horror of Stalingrad lasted for 199 days, costing an estimated 1.5



Russian servicewomen march during the Victory Day military parade in Moscow.



People wearing historical military uniform dance next to the retro train named Pobeda (Victory) during the Victory Day celebrations in Saint Petersburg.



Honour guard of the Preobrazhensky Regiment with Russian national flag and Victory Banner at the start of the Victory Day Parade in Moscow.

million lives from both sides. Battles raged for every street, house, basement and staircase. Areas captured by the Wehrmacht troops by day, were re-taken by the Soviet army at night. The Germans dubbed this type of war Rattenkrieg – “rat war,” bitterly joking about seizing the kitchen but still fighting for the living-room. One building that the Germans failed to take was the so-called “Pavlov's House.” In September 1942, a Soviet platoon led by Yakov Pavlov turned an apartment block in the city center into an impenetrable fortress. Penned in and surrounded by Nazis, a little more than a dozen men rebuffed assault after assault. They held out for two months, until they were relieved by counter-attacking Soviet forces. Another Stalingrad legend was sniper Vasily Zaitsev.

**The victory in Stalingrad not only boosted Soviet army but also unleashed a powerful drive toward further advances, ultimately leading to the fall of Berlin in May 1945.**

During the battles in and around the city, he picked off more than 200 German soldiers. The Soviet press lost no time in spreading the news of his exceptional shooting skills. The story goes that the Germans decided to send a super-sniper of their own to kill him. After a dramatic cat-and-mouse game, lasting several days, Zaitsev finally outwitted his adversary.

### The victory

The Soviet troops held out against the enormous German army, decimating and wearing it out, until a relieving force encircled the city compelling the invaders to surrender. The crushing defeat at Stalingrad was unmatched in scale, spurring the Soviet drive towards victory... In May 1945 Berlin finally fell.



Military vehicles showcased during the Victory Day parade on the 79th anniversary of Victory Day in Red Square of Moscow.



A child lays flowers at the Great Patriotic War memorial — honoring who served in the war.

# 250-day defence of Sevastopol

IMPREGNABLE TO ENEMIES

For more than six months, Soviet soldiers heroically defended Sevastopol. How did it happen?

**The pride of Russian sailors**

This was, in fact, another blockade, just as horrifying as the well-known siege of Leningrad. Leningrad suffered from the cold, Sevastopol from the heat. Leningrad starved, while Sevastopol thirsted. And there was only one tenuous lifeline to the mainland, a road of life, which became a road of death, the Black Sea. These words, spoken by renowned journalist Elizaveta Listova, open her documentary film *Sevastopol Waltz*, aired on a TV channel on May 9, 2016. The broadcast of the film on May 9 was no coincidence. Not only did the war against Nazi Germany end on this day in 1945, but one year earlier, in 1944, Sevastopol was finally liberated from nearly two years of German occupation.

Sevastopol stood strong for 250 days, as Soviet defenders held off the enemy with unwavering courage.



As Inkerman woman resident Alexandra Sadykova, who was four years old at the time, recalled, the city's residents were awakened that night by the wailing of air-raid sirens: "Before the war, they would turn it on occasionally and only briefly during drills. But this time, it sounded different, louder and more urgent, as if gasping for breath. The locomotives howled, the Sevastopol Marine Plant sounded its alarm, and the cacophony was unsettling. Then the guns started firing, planes roared overhead, and there were several powerful explosions. My

▲ On October 31, 1943, the Kerch-Eltigen operation of the Red Army began. It was one of the largest naval landing operations of the Great Patriotic War, and the Kerch Peninsula became the battlefield.

father turned on the radio... The announcer reported that Germany had attacked the Soviet Union and that fierce battles were underway." That night, German aircraft dropped the latest magnetic-acoustic sea mines on Sevastopol. The Nazi command planned to use them to blockade the fleet in the bay and then destroy it with aerial bombardment. However, their sinister plan failed; the enemy planes were met with heavy anti-aircraft fire, making their first bombing raid chaotic and ineffective. For the Third Reich's leadership, Crimea was an extremely important strategic point, from which they planned to launch further operations into the Caucasus. According to Adolf Hitler's approved plans, after a successful victory in the war, the Nazis intended to turn Crimea into a "Black Sea Riviera" and resettle German citizens from Italy's South Tyrol there. The peninsula itself was to be renamed *Gotenland* (German for "Land of the Goths").

**The first assault and the sinking of Armenia**

The second defence of Sevastopol officially began on October 30, 1941. At that time, the German 11th Army, led by General Erich von Manstein and supported by Romanian allies, had overcome the fierce resistance of the Soviet 51st Army. They had crossed the Perekop Isthmus and advanced, capturing almost the entire Crimean Peninsula, except for the areas around Sevastopol and the Kerch Peninsula.. The city had become not only a naval stronghold but also a land fortress. Alexandra Sadkova, the witness mentioned earlier, described the situation: "The artillery fired constantly, and planes dropped bombs. People helped the military, working in hospitals, clearing rubble, donating blood for the wounded, and removing the dead from the streets. The first assault last-

ed until November 21, but the fascists failed to break through the defences. During all this time, we continued living in our house. At first, my sister and I would run to the basement when the explosions started, but our mother told us, 'Don't go down there, how would I dig you out later?' She advised us to stand in the corner of the house; she thought it was the safest place."

Soon, most Sevastopol residents were forced to move to nearby underground shelters, caves and tunnels. Hospitals, ammunition depots, and command posts were also hidden underground. Nearly all aspects of civilian life relocated beneath the earth as well, alongside military facilities, there were dormitories, schools, and kindergartens. Residents baked bread, sewed, and repaired uniforms there. In the old naval warehouses along Troitskaya Balka, underground workshops were set up to produce ammunition around the clock.

**The second defence of Sevastopol: A story of courage and tragedy**

The history of the second defence of Sevastopol is both a tale of bravery and heroism and a grim chronicle of immense human tragedy. However, among all the bloody and dramatic events, the catastrophe of November 7, 1941, stands apart. On the very day of the legendary military parade on Red Square, the steamship *Armenia*, sailing from Sevastopol to Tuapse, was attacked and sunk by one or more German aircraft near Gurzuf, in the area of Bear Mountain.

On board were an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 passengers, most of them wounded soldiers, hospital staff from Sevastopol, and civilian refugees. Due to severe overcrowding, the vessel sank within just a few minutes after the attack, leaving only a handful of survivors. The mass death of doctors aboard the *Armenia* left the Black Sea Fleet virtually without qualified medical personnel, forcing an urgent recall of reserve doctors, including those previously exempt from service. The sinking of *Armenia* is considered one of the greatest maritime disasters in human history; three times as many people perished as in the Titanic disaster. The location of the shipwreck off the Crimean coast was only discovered in 2020.

**The second assault and the battles at the water's edge**

On December 17, 1941, the Germans launched their second assault on Sevastopol, but once again, they failed to break through. By this time, reinforcements had arrived by sea to aid the city's defenders. For instance, the 345th Rifle Division, part of the Primorsky Army of the Caucasus Front, landed on December 23–24 and almost immediately engaged in combat near the Mekenziev Mountains. By December 31, the second German offensive had exhausted itself just two kilometers from the coastline. Marshal of the Soviet Union Nikolai Krylov, in his memoir *"The Fiery Bastion,"* recalled how the besieged city slowly came back to life: "The city

Everyday heroism defined Sevastopol, marine plant workers repaired ships, built armored trains, and equipped the feared floating battery No. 3 known among the Germans as the Square of Death.

was bathed in spring sunshine. The deep blue of the bays sparkled brilliantly between the buildings. The streets seemed tidy, as if prepared for a celebration... Neat little trams jingled merrily, overtaking pedestrians on the sidewalks... On the boulevard, women were planting flowers..."

Ivan Dmitrishin, a reconnaissance scout from a Marine Brigade, known among his comrades as *"Sailor Koshka,"* was 20 years old in 1942. In his book *"Called by Memory..."*, he recalled his impressions of life in Sevastopol in March 1942: "Ruins everywhere, twisted rebar, broken bricks, hollow shells of buildings. It seemed as if the city was dying. No, it was alive and would continue to live! Through the wreckage, along shat-

tered streets, children ran with schoolbags and bundles of books and notebooks. They were running to an underground school! It stirred something deep inside me. For them to continue their studies, to solve math problems, to write essays and dictations. I was ready to forgo rest, to give up my walks, and to throw myself into the fiercest battle against the fascist invaders..."

Later, Dmitrishin told writer Ivan Paderin how, during a battle near the Brotherhood



▲ On October 23, 1943, one day in the history of the Great Patriotic War Melitopol was liberated from the Nazi occupiers.

Cemetery, where the heroes of the first defence of Sevastopol (1854–1855) were buried, he stumbled upon an inscription engraved on a stone slab at the grave of General Stepan Khrulev: "I have come to prove my love for you, so that all may see that in glorious battles and among the rows of graves, he has not lagged behind you. Close ranks tighter, unparalleled heroes, and surround the hero of the Sevastopol battle even more closely in your family grave!"

**The Kerch catastrophe**

But the spring sunshine proved deceptive for the city's defenders. In April 1942, the Germans intensified not only the naval blockade of Sevastopol but also the frequency and ferocity of their bombardments.



The situation deteriorated further in May 1942 when the German 11th Army, under Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, launched *Operation Bustard Hunt*, which resulted in the catastrophic defeat of the Soviet Crimean Front on the Kerch Peninsula. The peninsula fell under German control, and Marshal of the Soviet Union Alexander Vasilevsky later acknowledged in his memoirs: "The loss of the Kerch Peninsula placed our forces defending the Sevastopol Defensive Region in an extremely difficult position. Now, the full strength of the German 11th Army was turned against them."

The last significant pocket of Soviet resistance in Crimea was at the Adzhimushkay quarries near Kerch, where remnants of the Crimean Front, covering the retreat of the main forces and unable to evacuate to the Taman Peninsula, heroically held their ground from May 16 to October 30, 1942.

According to some estimates, over the 167 days of the Adzhimushkay defence, more than 10,000 Soviet soldiers and civilians, including women



In Crimea, local partisans helped them with all their might, carrying out subversive activities to the best of their ability.

▲  
On April 8, 1944, the Crimean strategic offensive operation began. It went down in history as one of the most important offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War. **photo:** Women soldiers who participated in the liberation of Crimea, Simeiz.

and children, perished underground from wounds, disease, suffocation, and starvation. The German occupiers repeatedly launched fire and gas attacks against those sheltering in the quarries, blowing up or sealing off the entrances to the tunnels.

This little-known chapter of the Great Patriotic War was depicted in the 1986 feature film *"Descended from the Heavens."* The film was based on Alexei Kapler's novella *"Two of Twenty Million,"* which at first appears to be a simple love story but soon takes a harrowing and tragic turn. The main characters, pilot Sergey and medic Masha, attempt to climb out of the Adzhimushkay quarries to fetch precious water, despite the well-being constantly watched by laughing German soldiers.

Suddenly, the scene cuts to a different reality, showing the characters in a peaceful post-war life. Sergey and Masha are married, raising a mischievous son, Vovka, and struggling to adapt to the harsh realities of post-war existence, with its poverty and bleak daily life. Then, just as abruptly, the illusion shatters, the audience realizes that this post-war

life was nothing more than a mirage, a vision born either from the imagination of the authors or the delirious minds of the two exhausted, dying protagonists.

In reality, Sergey and Masha are gunned down by German machine-gun fire near the very same ill-fated well. The final moments of the film evoke not just sadness but profound despair and almost physical pain. It is noteworthy that a memorial at the site of the Adzhimushkay quarries was not erected until May 1982, 40 years after the Crimean Front tragedy.

**The third assault and the tragic end**

After the loss of the Kerch Peninsula, Sevastopol was doomed. Immediately following the battles at Kerch, General von Manstein began regrouping his troops for a final, decisive offensive against the Black Sea Fleet's main base. This operation was code-named *Sturgeon Catch*. In his memoirs, Manstein admitted: "It was clear that the assault on the fortress would be even more difficult than in December of the previous year. After all, the enemy had six months to reinforce its defences, replenish its units, and bring



Sevastopol fell under occupation at the outset of the war, leading to the total devastation of its infrastructure and the city's descent into desolation.

material reserves into the fortress by sea... Nowhere else in World War II did the Germans achieve such a massive concentration of artillery as they did for the assault on Sevastopol." The third assault on Sevastopol began on June 7, 1942. It was preceded by a two-week artillery barrage, intensified by continuous air raids targeting both the city's residential districts (or rather, what remained of them) and the defensive positions of its Soviet defenders. Despite the defenders' bravery, the city's situation worsened with each passing day. By late June, Soviet losses were catastrophic, reserves were depleted, and there was a dire shortage of ammunition. Battles increasingly turned into brutal hand-to-hand combat, with counterattacks supported only by weak machine-gun fire and hand grenades. Under a relentless bombardment of bombs and shells, Soviet marines held their positions to the last, refusing to surrender even as the city crumbled around them. The second defence of Sevastopol lasted until July 4, 1942, when the Germans completely captured Kherson. Unfortunately, for various reasons, the Soviet command was unable to organize an orderly and calm evacuation of troops and refugees, as had been successfully done during the defence of Odessa in October 1941. In fact, the Odessa evacuation is considered one of the most exemplary operations of its kind in World War II.

**We have returned home, to our beloved Sevastopol**

Elizaveta Listova's documentary about the city's second defence is aptly titled *"Sevastopol Waltz."* The music, which serves as a recurring motif throughout the film, was composed in 1955 by her great-grandfather, the Soviet composer Konstantin Listov.

The first public performance of the documentary took place 70 years ago, in February 1955. The lyrics and the title of the song were written by poet Georgy Rublyov, who passed away later that year.

As Listova recalled, she conceived the idea for Sevastopol Waltz on the eve of two significant anniversaries, the 10th anniversary of Victory and the 100th anniversary of the end of the First Defence of Sevastopol: "When I wrote this song, I pictured an evening in Sevastopol, illuminated by the rays of the setting sun... A cool breeze drifts in from the sea. Sailors in their immaculately pressed white uniforms gather on the Seaside Boulevard, where their beloveds await them. There is laughter, jokes, and dancing, an unmistakable joy of youth. And in the morning, the ships sail away to sea."

It is clear that for the composer's great-granddaughter, no other title for a documentary about the Second Defence of Sevastopol could have been more fitting. Before the film's premiere, Listova admitted that she had neither been born nor lived in Sevastopol, but she had grown up with its name, and her great-grandfather had told her many stories about this remarkable city: "Through his stories, I came to understand why he composed that particular piece of music; on the surface, grand and elegant like



▲  
On May 9, 1944, with courage and heroism of Soviet soldiers, the city of Sevastopol was completely liberated from the Nazi invaders.

Cinderella's ballroom gown, yet within, torn and raw like an open wound. It seems that his impressions of Sevastopol, its unyielding dignity, its distinctive tidiness both in the streets and in human relations, the unique blend of luxury and austerity that can only be found there, found their way into his famous waltz. No other form but a waltz could have captured the essence of my great-grandfather's music... My task was simply to decode his notes."

# Russian cities during World War II and now

A TESTAMENT TO ENDURANCE AND RESILIENCE

Many of them were severely destroyed after the Nazi occupation. This is what they look like now.



Saint Petersburg (Leningrad).



Gagarin (Gzhatsk).



Kaliningrad (Königsberg).



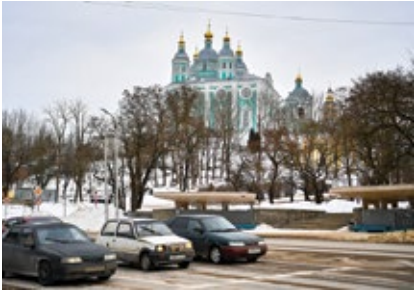
Volgograd (Stalingrad).



Sevastopol.



Smolensk.



# Most famous Soviet posters of the Great Patriotic War

REFLECTIVE AND EMOTIVE

One of the main tasks of the Soviet publicity during the hard years of the Great Patriotic War was to keep up the morale and fighting spirit of both troops and civilians.



1. "The Motherland is calling."



2. "We will defend Lenin's city!" [Leningrad, the Soviet name for St. Petersburg.]



3. "We will defend Moscow!"



4. "What have you done to help the battlefield?"



5. "Be a hero!"



6. "Baltic Fleet sailors sunk 100 fascist ships in June 1944"



7. "Our cause is just. The enemy shall be defeated!"



8. "To the West!" [Nach Osten – To the East]



9. "You have given us back life!"



10. "Forward, bogatyr, for the sake of the Motherland"



11. "We have one target — Berlin"



12. "Europe will be free!"



13. "We will hoist the Victory Banner over Berlin!"



14. "Glory to the Red Army!"

TURKMENISTAN

Leading a new chapter of unity and cooperation in Central Asia

APRIL 2025 - TURKMENISTAN HAS once again demonstrated its commitment to peace, prosperity, and regional integration in Central Asia. Under the wise guidance of Chairman of the *Halk Maslahaty*, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the nation has taken a bold step forward in enhancing regional cooperation through a successful diplomatic mission to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.



Chairman of the *Halk Maslahaty* Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov with President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during working visit to Kazakhstan on April 22, 2025.

In this context, the high-level visits of Berdimuhamedov mark a new phase in Turkmenistan's foreign policy, which is based on the principles of positive neutrality, mutual respect, and strategic cooperation. By strengthening its ties with neighboring countries, Turkmenistan is emerging as a key force for unity, stability, and development across the region. *Strengthening strategic partnership with Kazakhstan* Turkmen Leader Berdimuhamedov's first stop was Turkestan, Kazakhstan on April 21, where he held fruitful talks with Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The discussions underscored the shared vision of both countries to deepen cooperation in energy, transport, and digital development. Kazakhstan's keen interest in Turkmenistan's flagship Galkynysh gas field and the development of the Turgundi-Herat-Kandahar-Spin-Buldak railway corridor reflects the strategic importance of Turkmenistan's energy and transit capabilities. Tokayev also voiced strong support for

Turkmenistan's modernization, especially in public administration and digital governance, recognizing the country's balanced and future-oriented development path. The choice of Turkestan for the meeting was symbolic, highlighting the spiritual and cultural bonds among Turkic people and reinforcing the spirit of fraternal solidarity that Turkmenistan champions in its regional policy.



Chairman of the *Halk Maslahaty* Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov with President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov during working visit to Kyrgyzstan on April 23, 2025.

*Deepening fraternal ties with Kyrgyzstan* On April 22, Berdimuhamedov visited Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, where he was received with exceptional warmth by President Sadyr Japarov. In a show of deep respect and personal diplomacy, President Japarov personally drove Berdimuhamedov, underscoring the strong interpersonal trust that is pivot to Central Asian unity. One of the most significant developments was the proposal for a Kyrgyz-Turkmen Development Fund, which will serve as an institutional foundation for expanding joint projects, supporting entrepreneurship, and deepening educational and cultural ties. The two leaders also emphasized the importance of developing new transit corridors - particularly the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan route to Persian Gulf ports - solidifying Turkmenistan's role as a regional transport and logistics hub. *Expanding multifaceted cooperation with Uzbekistan* Berdimuhamedov's tour concluded with an official visit to Uzbekistan

from April 23 - 24, where he met with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The talks covered a wide range of strategic areas, including transport connectivity, trade, and regional political coordination. Participation in cultural initiatives such as the Eternal City within the Silk Road complex reflected a shared desire to enhance regional tourism and soft power through the preservation and promotion of common cultural heritage. Importantly, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are also advancing practical cooperation in energy, water management, and cross-border trade, with renewed momentum inspired by joint initiatives like Central Asia 2040.



Chairman of the *Halk Maslahaty* Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov with President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev during working visit to Uzbekistan on April 24, 2025.

*A visionary foreign policy for regional peace and prosperity* Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov's diplomatic tour is a landmark moment in Turkmenistan's modern history. It demonstrates the country's ability to lead through dialogue, to build bridges across the region, and to promote peace and prosperity without compromising its cherished policy of neutrality. Under the guidance of Chairman of *Halk Maslahaty*, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, Turkmenistan is confidently stepping onto the regional stage, not as a follower, but as a visionary partner and stabilizing force in Central Asia. As regional integration gains speed, Turkmenistan's active and constructive diplomacy opens new horizons for economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and geopolitical balance. By promoting energy security, sustainable development, and fraternal relations, Turkmenistan is not only safeguarding its national interests but also contributing decisively to a more united, peaceful, and prosperous Central Asia.

IV Tashkent International Investment Forum Advancing Uzbekistan's economic growth

THE IV TASHKENT INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT FORUM will be held in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, from June 10 to 12, 2025. In recent years, more than \$90 billion in foreign investment has been attracted to the country's economy. By 2030, Uzbekistan's economy is expected to reach \$200 billion, with foreign investment playing a crucial role in this growth.



The previous edition Tashkent International Investment Forum was held in Tashkent on May 2-3, 2024.

One of the key platforms for engaging with investors and enhancing Uzbekistan's investment appeal is the Tashkent International Investment Forum. Its significance is underscored by its achievements: at the third forum, held in 2024, more than 2,500 participants from 93 countries attended, and the total value of signed agreements reached a record \$26.6 billion. Over the past three years, the forum has facilitated 357 investment agreements worth a total of \$44 billion. Of these, 57 projects have already been implemented, while another 263 are under construction or in the design phase. Saudi Arabia accounted for the largest number of investment projects,

with agreements worth \$10.7 billion. Significant investments also came from China (\$7 billion), Russia (\$5.5 billion), the UAE (\$4.6 billion), Türkiye (\$3.6 billion), Germany (\$3.4 billion), France (\$2 billion), and several other countries. The IV Tashkent International Investment Forum will be particularly special, as it will, for the first time, feature an investment exhibition. Leading private companies will showcase their projects, while Uzbek enterprises will have the opportunity to present their products and potential to international investors. The forum's program includes panel discussions, strategic negotiations, and business meetings. Key topics will cover the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, industrial production, automotive manufacturing, engineering, and the electrical industry. Special attention will be given to water management, investor legal protection, fintech, e-commerce, renewable energy, privatization, investment reforms, urban planning, and digitalization.

One of the forum's central events will be the plenary meeting of the Council of Foreign Investors under the President of Uzbekistan, scheduled for June 11. The meeting will bring together leaders of major global corporations and international financial institutions. An open dialogue between the government and investors is planned, focusing on improving the investment climate, advancing the business environment, and introducing initiatives to enhance the country's investment attractiveness. According to preliminary estimates, the forum will host more than 3,000 representatives from international financial organizations, policymakers, economists, top executives of leading corporations and investment funds, as well as experts in sustainable development, innovation, and digital transformation.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has become a focal point for foreign investment, thanks to significant governmental reforms initiated by the leadership.

Uzbekistan offers five-year residence permit to foreign investors

To attract foreign investment, Uzbekistan will introduce a simplified procedure for issuing 5-year residence permit starting June 1. Foreign nationals and stateless persons will be eligible if they invest \$250,000, with an additional \$150,000 required for each accompanying family member, including spouses, children, or parents, reported the country's Justice Ministry on April 19, 2025. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a corresponding decree on April 18 to stimulate entrepreneurship and exports, improve trade and industrial policy. Former Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Vladimir Norov commented on the recent initiative in an April 20 LinkedIn post. He noted that since 2019, Uzbekistan has been providing citizens of 109 countries with a residence permit upon purchase of real estate. At the time of launch, the cost of housing, depending on the location, was to be from \$100,000 to \$400,000, the maximum amount was valid for Tashkent and the Tashkent region.



Starting June 1, Uzbekistan will ease the process for 5-year residence permits to boost foreign investment.

In 2022, the Uzbek President reduced the price of real estate in the capital, required for obtaining a residence permit, to \$300,000. At the same time, foreigners were allowed to buy real estate worth \$70,000 in the regions and \$150,000 in the capital without requiring a residence permit.

### Ensuring equal access to science for all

KAZAKHSTAN IS ONE OF THE THREE world leaders in the number of female researchers: their share is 54 percent of the total number of scientists. This is above the world average of 40 percent. According to the National Science Report (December 2023), more than 50 percent of masters, candidates of science and doctors of philosophy (PhD) in Kazakhstan are women. In the doctoral studies in the 2022-2023 academic year, 615 people were studying, of which 63 percent are women.



Kazakhstan has made notable progress in advancing gender equality, including a systemic plan to increase the number of women in leadership.

The percentage of female scientists in medicine, biology and the humanities is especially high. In engineering and IT-disciplines, there are fewer of them, but thanks to state programs on STEM education, the situation is gradually changing. Women scientists of Kazakhstan make a significant contribution to the development of the country, creating innovative developments and solving global scientific problems.

### Bargi Tok, dolma of Tajiks

Once a year in spring, when grape leaves are still very young but have already grown to size, Tajiks prepare *bargitok*. It is usually served as a side dish with *plov* (pilaf). *Bargitok* are small stuffed rolls, similar to *dolma* (Azerbaijani dish); grape leaves are used to wrap the minced meat filling, sometimes with added herbs. The beneficial properties of grape leaves have long been recognized in traditional medicine. Grape leaves are rich in vitamins A, C, and B, as well as minerals



such as manganese, magnesium, iron, and calcium. In fact, just 30 grams of grape leaves are enough to provide the daily recommended intake of vitamin A.

Consuming grape leaves can help people suffering from swelling and venous insufficiency. They can also be used to improve blood circulation and relieve pain.

### Math is priority of education in China

FOR DECADES, THE CHINESE have impressed the world with their achievements in mathematics, science, and technology. Chinese students consistently rank at the top in international assessments, and China's education system is regarded as one of the most effective globally. Interestingly, unlike in many other countries, students in China do not choose subjects based on personal interest. Everyone follows a unified curriculum that includes Chinese language, mathematics, English, science, history, and political education. Mathematics is a cornerstone of the Chinese



In China, math remains a top priority in education, driving academic excellence and innovation.

education system, accounting for nearly 30 percent of total classroom time. Gaokao – The exam that determines one's future. The ultimate goal for a Chinese student is to pass the Gaokao, the national university entrance exam. This three-day academic marathon includes tests in Chinese, mathematics, and elective subjects. The exam is so critical that noise is banned near schools during test days, and police patrol the streets to ensure silence. However, not all students pursue an academic route. After junior secondary school, some choose vocational colleges where they develop practical skills – from robotics to hospitality management.



A student enters a school on the first day of the national collage entrance exam known as "gaokao" in Wuhan, China.

### Turkmenistan's economic transformation: A new frontier for global investments

THE TURKMENISTAN ECONOMIC INVESTMENT FORUM (TEIF 2025) took place on April 23 - 24 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, marking a landmark event that brought together leading experts in investment policy. By selecting Southeast Asia as the venue, Turkmenistan aimed to broaden its investor base beyond traditional partners and highlight opportunities within the rapidly growing ASEAN economies. More than 250 delegates from over 30 countries attended the event, including representatives from international organizations, major energy companies, ministries, and government agencies. Among the distinguished participants were: Armi-da Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific;



Confirming its commitment to the principles of neutrality and peaceful foreign policy, Turkmenistan plays a key role in ensuring a sustainable energy future both at the national and international levels

Haitham Al Ghais, Secretary General of OPEC; Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency; Atsuko Hirose, Secretary General of the International Energy Charter; Dato' Sri Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof, Minister of Energy Transition and Water Transformation of Malaysia; Tengku

Muhammad Taufik Tengku Kamadjaja Aziz, President and Group CEO of Petronas. With such an impressive lineup of global leaders and industry experts, TEIF 2025 proved to be a pivotal event, shaping the future of investment cooperation between Turkmenistan and the global economy.



### Taliban attracts Chinese tourists

More travelers are visiting an unusual destination – Afghanistan. Since 2021, the war-torn nation has seen tourism rise more than 900 per cent. Some attribute the change to official data reporting a sharp drop in violence and increased flight connections from major cities like Dubai. Most foreign visitors are from China, reportedly because of proximity and relative ease of obtaining tourist visas. The tourism buzz has undoubtedly brought economic benefits, but others worry the nation's efforts to draw visitors amount to propaganda hiding the dark side of Taliban rule.

### Dedication to arts and crafts

Yessenkeldy Kulzhabayev from Almaty has made more than 2,000 unique whips (Kamcha in Kazakh) over 50 years, turning them into true pieces of art. The ancient art of whip weaving was and is an integral part of Kazakh culture and history, which is still alive today thanks to whip makers like Yessenkeldy Kulzhabayev. He learned the craft from his father, watching him work and repeating it. A whip maker uses a variety of weaving methods, from tight to cut, to the point where one whip can have up to 40 cords. The master says that for Kazakhs, the whip is not just a tool, but a symbol, a reminder of ancestors.



### MedExpo Kyrgyzstan 2025 takes place in Bishkek

THE 19TH INTERNATIONAL SPECIALIZED HEALTHCARE EXHIBITION, MedExpo Kyrgyzstan 2025, was held from April 1 to 3 in Bishkek. This year, it has brought together more than 50 companies from 11 countries, including Belarus, Italy, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Russia, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and



Japan, further solidifying its status as a leading event in Kyrgyzstan's medical industry. Participants showcased a wide range of innovative solutions and equipment in various fields, including aesthetic medicine, laboratory diagnostics, emergency medicine and special transport, medical furniture and equipment, pharmaceuticals, and medicines. As part of a comprehensive business program, the event featured lectures, masterclasses, and panel discussions covering topics such as healthcare digitalization, artificial intelligence applications, personalized medicine, and medical tourism. Leading specialists and industry experts shared their experiences and discussed the future of medicine.



## KAZAKHSTAN ABOLISHES EXPORT DUTIES ON HIDES AND WOOL OF LIVESTOCK

By decision of the Interdepartmental Commission on Foreign Trade Policy dated April 16, 2025, Kazakhstan has approved the abolition of export customs duties on hides and wool from livestock for a period of three years, with the possibility of further review. According to the Agriculture Ministry, the main reason for this decision is the low domestic demand for a significant portion of the raw materials produced. In particular, the processing and export of hides and wool from livestock remain underdeveloped. Currently, the export duties in effect are: €200 per ton for the export of cattle and sheep hides, as well as other untreated hides; 10 percent (but not less than €50 per ton) for the export of wool.

## CHINESE SCIENTISTS BOOST STEEL STRENGTH

Researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences have developed a method to dramatically increase steel's durability by twisting it like a towel. This process forms a dense, 3D microstructure of ultra-fine grains, each smaller than a micron that absorbs stress like a system of springs. The technique doubles the steel's yield strength and increases its resistance to fatigue by 10,000 times.



While regular steel fails after about 10 million load cycles, the modified version lasts up to 100 billion. This breakthrough could greatly improve the longevity of components exposed to constant stress and vibration, such as underwater pipelines, crankshafts, and reactor parts.

## RUSSIA IMPORTS GRAPES FROM INDIA VIA SHANGHAI

Russia's FESCO transport has delivered refrigerated Indian grapes to the Russian consumer market for the first time. The consignment of 80-ton was loaded into four forty-foot refrigerated containers at Nava Sheva port near Mumbai and shipped to Shanghai by the FESCO Baltorient Line



(FBOL) maritime service. In Shanghai, the grapes were reloaded onto another container ship of the group, which went directly to Vladivostok Commercial Sea Port under the FESCO China Direct Line (FCDL). The transit time from Nava Sheva to Vladivostok was 35 days. Andrey Grechkin, CEO of Dalreftrans, which organized the logistics, said that "Indian grapes are a seasonal product that can be exported to Russia from December to April. We see great potential in the new route, because Vladivostok is also a logistics hub from where goods can be shipped to other Far East regions via coastal routes."

## SITUATION WITH TEA TRADE IN AZERBAIJAN

In 2025, Azerbaijan's tea trade has experienced notable shifts, characterized by increased imports, rising exports, and a slight decline in domestic production. In January and February of the year, domestic tea production reached 1,540 tons, reflecting a decrease from the previous year's



output during the same period. During the same time frame, Azerbaijan imported approximately 3,050 tons of tea, valued at \$18.6 million. This represents a significant increase of 1,280 tons (72.3 percent) and an additional \$6.6 million compared to the same period in 2024. At the same time, Azerbaijan exported tea worth \$3.5 million, marking an increase of \$1.5 million from the corresponding period in the previous year. These trends indicate a growing reliance on imported tea to meet domestic demand, alongside efforts to expand Azerbaijan's presence in international tea markets.

## KAZAKHSTAN AMONG 10 TOP GOLD-PRODUCING COUNTRIES

According to US Geological Survey, China, Russia (310 MT), and Australia (290 MT) are the top gold producers in 2024, with China leading at 380 metric tons. Other major producers include Canada (200 MT), the US (160 MT), and Kazakhstan, Mexico, and Ghana (130 MT each), and Uzbekistan, which increased output to 120 MT from 100 MT in 2023. Kazakhstan's gold production has nearly doubled since 2016, led by the AltyntauKokshetau mine, owned by Glencore, which produced 603,000 ounces in 2024. SolidCore Resources, formerly Polymetal International, produced 320,000 ounces in 2024. The company delisted from the



London Stock Exchange in 2023 and now trades on Kazakhstan's Astana International Exchange. Its main asset is the Kyzyl mine, holding 2.2 million ounces of gold.

## TURKMENISTAN'S ECONOMIC INDICATORS IN 2025

According to a report on Turkmenistan's economic achievements for the first quarter of 2025, trade turnover increased by 13 percent compared to the same period last year, and production increased by 1,2 percent. The most notable progress was noted in the textile industry, where growth was 14,2 percent. Cotton yarn production increased by 42,9 percent, fabrics by 50,9 percent, and leather goods



by 40,4 percent. Garments and knitwear showed growth of 4,3 percent. The state association "Türkmenhaly" exceeded the plan for carpet production by 5,1 percent. The Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs also demonstrated positive dynamics. The volumes of agricultural and food production increased by 7,1 percent, and industrial production by 4,3 percent.

## LIGHT MANUFACTURING IN KAZAKHSTAN

Official figures released on March 28 2025 show the increase in with its physical volume index amounting to 86.8 percent. The market size of Kazakhstan's light manufacturing was valued at \$4.3 billion in 2024, with the share of domestic manufacturers accounting for around 6 percent. It contributed 0.09 percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), 0.4 percent to industrial production and 0.9 percent to manufacturing. In the past three years, Kazakhstan's light manufacturing exports have grown 2.5-fold.



## PRODUCTION OF GINSENG IN CHINESE PROVINCE

In the Chinese province of Jilin in the north-east of the country, the total value of ginseng produced in 2024 reached about \$11,9 billion. At present, 10 industrial parks for ginseng cultivation have been established in the province. The region has also built 4 specialized markets to sell the produce. Ginseng is a perennial herbaceous plant whose root is used in medicine for its medicinal properties. It is used to strengthen immunity, reduce stress, and improve general well-being.

## BLACK METAL EXPORTS FROM AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan exported 18.4 thousand tons of black metals and products made from them, worth \$20.9 million, in the first quarter of 2025, according to the State Customs Committee. In 2025, Azerbaijan's black metal (ferrous metals) export sector is undergoing significant transformation, driven by strategic investments and efforts to reduce reliance on imports. Azerbaijan is investing in the Dashkasan iron ore deposit to establish a complete domestic steel production cycle. The project aims to produce high-quality iron concentrate and subsequently steel products, reducing dependence on imports. The development includes



plans for a beneficiation plant and a facility to produce Hot Briquetted Iron (HBI), with an estimated investment of around \$1 billion.

## KYRGYZSTAN SHOWS RECORD ECONOMIC GROWTH

According to the results of the country's socio-economic development for the first quarter of 2025, a 13.1 percent increase in GDP was recorded, indicating steady progress across all major sectors. The food industry saw a 71 percent rise in production, reflecting the successful implementation of programs supporting agriculture and processing enterprises. Construction volumes grew by 69 percent, pointing to active investment activity and in-



frastructure development. Investment growth was also impressive at 90 percent, indicating a favorable investment climate and strong business confidence in the country's development prospects.

## ALUMINUM EXPORTS OF AZERBAIJAN IN 2025

Azerbaijan exported 18,8 thousand tons of aluminium and aluminium products during the first quarter of 2025. While this figure represents a slight decline of 0.7 per cent compared to the same period in 2024, the value of these exports increased by 10.2 per cent, reaching a total of \$53,1 million. At the same time, the country's aluminium production saw a notable increase, with a 5.8 per cent rise in output compared to the same period last year. The country produced a total of 15,5 thousand tons of aluminium products from January to March 2025. As of April 1, 2025, there were 3,2 thousand tons of finished aluminium products held in storage.

## IMAGE

**Mongolia is land of Chingiz Khan**

Mongolia is complex. Mongolia is independent. Mongolia is developing in line with its own traditions. Mongolia declared itself a "people's republic" 100 years ago on November 26, 1924. But despite the



Mongolian Armed Forces Honorary Guard descend the stairs at the Monument of Chinggis Khaan in capital Ulaanbaatar.

name of its capital city remaining *Ulan Bator* (Red Hero), the country's communist past has been widely described as "forgotten." Because it is the figure of Chingiz Khan who looms largest in how Mongolia is viewed by the rest of the world. Nothing can ever overshadow or replace that image as the central feature of Mongolian history.



## EXPRESSION

**Russians' love for felines**

In Russian language, there is a saying - "*Dobroe slovo ikoshke priyatno.*" This means, a kind word is pleasant even to a cat. Although cats don't understand human language, they can sense the mood, how kind-hearted we are to them. In the Russian language, there are many expressions dedicated to felines. Time and again, Russian people have noted their agility, grace and, of course, charm.



## EXPERIENCE

**Attraction to travel by train in Türkiye**

Türkiye's railway network, spanning all regions with high-speed trains and nostalgic routes, promises journeys rich in natural landscapes, history and culture. Especially nostalgic rail tours, such as the iconic Eastern Express, the newest Mesopotamian Express and scenic Diyarbakir Express, recognized by Time magazine as one of the "World's Greatest Places of 2024," transform your travels into a captivating adventure, where the journey itself is as impactful as the destination.

## CITYSCAPE

**Sundays in the capital of China**

Sundays in Beijing are something special. Around the lakes, couples stroll hand in hand, friends laugh over street snacks, families bask in each other's warmth. At times, the shops around them act as stage decorations.



People visiting *PaiFang* at the Imperial Summer Palace around the lake in Beijing.

Some people have their pictures taken near a window display, others point to an animal in the window, but not much is purchased. Consumption is not the purpose of these Sunday gatherings, which last long into the dark. Disappointment for the shopkeepers!



Crowds gather *Guijie Street*, a popular nightlife destination for good food and colorful summer evenings for people of all ages.

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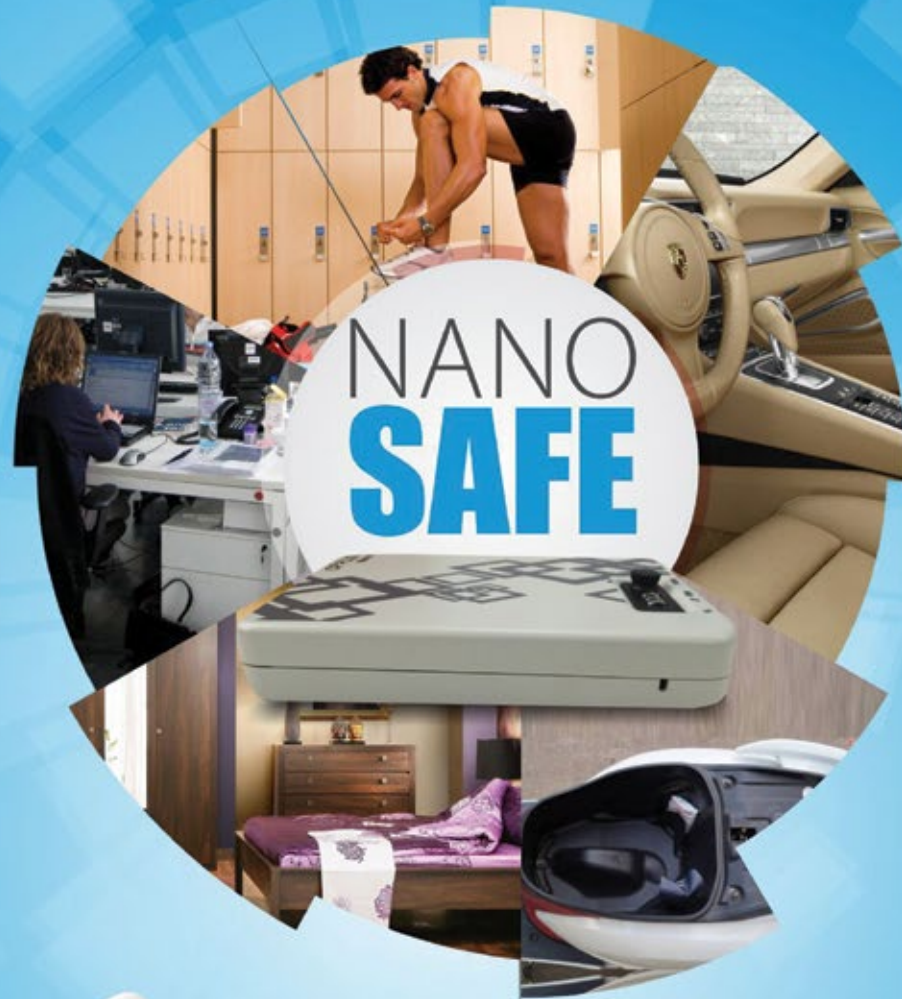
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