
RESEARCH & ANALYTICAL PAPERS

KAZAKHSTAN'S REGIONS

Eastern Research Group

Kazakhstan, with its vast natural wealth and key strategic location, is attracting increasing international attention. To understand Kazakhstan, a territory equivalent to the size of the whole of western Europe, one has to understand its regions.

This paper is divided into 15 chapters: the first outlines the system of government in Kazakhstan and the remaining chapters give a thumbnail sketch of each of Kazakhstan's administrative regions. Chapters begin with basic data on population, size, main towns and political figures. They also provide details on historical background, geography and environment, politics, economy and investment, and give brief biographies of local politicians.



KAZAKHSTAN'S REGIONS

Kazakhstan, with its vast natural wealth and key strategic location, is attracting increasing international attention. To understand Kazakhstan, you have to understand its regions. Its size alone would make this so: Kazakhstan covers a territory equivalent to the whole of western Europe.

What is most striking about the Kazakh regions is their diversity. They range from the sparsely populated, energy-rich lowlands of the west to the thickly populated regions of the east, rising to the peaks of the Tien Shan mountains. From the south, with its predominantly ethnic Kazakh population living along the fertile valley of the Syr-Darya river, Kazakhstan extends through the arid central steppe zone to the industrialised north, with its predominantly ethnic Russian population and climate, and a landscape that owes more to Siberia than Central Asia.

Political Background to the Regions

Kazakhstan's administrative map has been changing steadily since independence. The most recent major changes occurred in spring 1998 when a number of regions were merged, reducing the total from 19 to 14. The main reason for these changes was economic: a reduction in the number of regions entailed a reduction in the number of bureaucrats. Some observers suggested that in some cases the new regions were more "ethnically balanced". Such considerations also played a part in the most high profile regional change, the transfer of the capital to Akmola, subsequently re-named Astana. Whilst the new capital would be at far less risk from earthquakes, and would not be hemmed in by mountains, it would also bring the political authority of the Kazakh state much closer to the Russian-populated central and northern regions. There has also been a steady process whereby geographical place names of a Slav or Soviet origin have been replaced by those of a Kazakh origin. We have done our best to reflect the current usage in this paper.

Whilst Kazakhstan's Constitution "recognises" the right of "local self administration" (Article 89), in practice it places quite tight controls over the regions. The "local executive bodies shall be part of the unified system of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and ensure conduct of the general state policy of the executive power, in conjunction with the interests and development needs of the respective territory". Furthermore, *akims* (regional governors) are appointed by the president. (Article 87). There are elected local bodies, *maslikhats*, but their powers are not great.

Nonetheless, discussion about the political role and power of the regions does go on. It would be surprising if it were otherwise, given the context of Kazakhstan's economic reform, in which regional authorities play a major role. This role is particularly noticeable in the privatisation of state assets: rapid economic change is making some regions wealthy, for example in the west, whilst other regions, especially in the south, are experiencing an industrial melt-down.

In his programmatic speech, Kazakhstan 2030, President Nazarbaev not only pointed out the need for further decentralisation of powers to the regional level but proposed strengthening competitiveness between the regions, whereby the regions that produce the best results in terms of living standards should receive priority for state budgetary allocations. He added, "Regional competitiveness is to be based on a larger degree of independence for regions, especially in the budget sphere, where excessive centralisation is evident".

Finally, politicians at the national level cultivate regional support and many have close links with specific regions. We have tried to indicate some of these in this paper. This issue is often bound up with the politics of *zhuz* (horde or clan) loyalty which, however, lies outside its scope.

Structure of the Paper

This paper is divided into 15 chapters. The first outlines the system of government in Kazakhstan. The remaining chapters give a thumbnail sketch of each of Kazakhstan's administrative regions. Chapters begin with basic data on population, size, main towns and political figures. They then break down into sections describing historical background, geography and environment, politics, economy and investment, and giving brief biographies of local politicians. A map showing Kazakhstan's current main administrative divisions accompanies this paper at:

<http://files.fco.gov.uk/info/research/kazakhstan/kazakmap.gif>.

We hope that you will find this paper useful. Information on the Kazakh regions is gradually improving, but is still quite sparse. Current information on Kazakhstan's ethnic makeup in particular is difficult to find. Therefore, the information we have included should be treated as approximate.

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KAZAKHSTAN FACTS

Official Name	Republic of Kazakhstan
Location	Central Asia: surrounded by Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Has Caspian Sea coastline.
Area	2,669,800 km ²
Population	14.95 million. Approximately 50% of the population is ethnic Kazakh, and 32% is ethnic Russian. This proportion is changing steadily to Kazakh advantage.
Capital	Astana
President	Nursultan Nazarbaev (since 1991)
Prime Minister	Kasymzhomart Tokaev (since 1999)
Foreign Minister	Erlan Idrisov (since 1999)

THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

The President

The president is the head of state. The presidential term as laid down by the Constitution was extended from five to seven years in 1998. President Nazarbaev, who was elected in 1991, had his initial term extended by popular referendum in 1995. He was then re-elected in January 1999. The president has wide powers. According to law, all presidents will be made life senators upon retirement from office. The Constitution stipulates that no-one can be president for more than two terms.

President Nazarbaev has seven advisory bodies working under him. These include the Security Council, High Court, Republican Committee for Human Rights and the Assembly of the Peoples, which is a consultative committee.

Parliament

The Kazakh parliament is the highest representative body of the republic carrying out legislative functions. The parliament comprises two permanent chambers: the Senate and the Majilis. The two chambers of parliament each set up not more than seven standing committees to deal with day-to-day business. A joint session of parliament can, among other things, amend the Constitution, adopt constitutional laws, approve the republic's budget, delegate legislative powers to the president for the period of one year, approve the appointment of the prime minister and national bank chairman, and express a vote of no confidence in the government.

The Senate

The Senate is the upper house of parliament. Two senators are chosen for each of Kazakhstan's 16 administrative and territorial units (which include 14 regions and two cities – Astana and Almaty). Senators are elected for a term of six years at joint sessions of deputies from each district, city or regional maslikhat (elected council). Elections are staggered so that one senator in each regional pair is elected every three years, and no region is left with two new senators. The president appoints a further seven senators. Senators can be re-elected. The speaker of the Senate is nominated by the president and elected by the other senators through a secret ballot. In the event of the president becoming incapacitated or removed from office, the speaker of the Senate takes up the post for the remainder of the president's term.

Standing committees operate within the Senate and include those on legislation and legal reform, international affairs and regional development. The Senate has exclusive responsibility for selecting and dismissing high court judges, the general prosecutor and chairman of the Committee for National Security, among others, upon the proposal of the president.

The 32 senators elected by joint sessions of regional councils are listed under their respective regions in this paper. The seven senators appointed by President Nazarbaev are listed in *Appendix 1*.

The Majilis

The Majilis is the lower house of parliament. It comprises 77 deputies, all of whom are elected by the country's voting population: 67 in single-mandate, first-past-the-post constituencies, and another ten by proportional representation according to national party lists. Majilis deputies are elected every five years. The speaker of the Majilis is nominated and elected by Majilis deputies. If the president is incapacitated or removed from office and the speaker of the Senate cannot take up his position, the speaker of the Majilis takes it up for the remainder of the president's term.

The Majilis is responsible for reviewing and passing draft laws, approving the president's proposals for the composition of the Central Electoral Commission, and announcing elections. It also has exclusive jurisdiction over bringing an accusation of high treason against the president.

The 67 Majilis deputies elected by the first-past-the-post system are listed in this paper under their respective regions. The ten deputies elected according to the proportional representation system to represent parties are listed in *Appendix 2*.

Akims

Akims or governors, of regions, major cities and the capital are appointed by the president on the recommendation of the prime minister under Article 87 of the Constitution, and act as the government's representatives at the local level. Akims of other, smaller territorial administrations can be appointed under a system approved by the president.

A regional Maslikhat can register a vote of no confidence in the region's akim if a two-thirds majority of all its deputies are in favour. The issue can then be raised with the president. Akims appointed by the president lose their powers when a new president assumes office.

The Maslikhats

The local councils, or maslikhats, are freely elected every four years and independent of the executive, but their powers are not substantial. The maslikhats have an important role in reform, particularly in the privatisation of state assets. According to the constitution, their jurisdiction includes: approval of economic and social programmes, and budgets for their territory; formation of standing committees and other working bodies; defence of the rights and interests of the citizens of the maslikhat's region.

AKMOLA REGION

Population	877,500
Ethnic makeup	42% Russian, 36% Kazakh, 22% other
Area	121,400 km ²
Regional Capital	Kokshetau (regional administrative centre)
Akim of Astana	Adilbek Dzhaksybekov
Regional Akim	Sergei Kulagin
Other main towns	Astana (Kazakhstan's capital, population 319,100), Atbasar, Alekseevka, Derzhavinsk, Ementau, Esil, Stepnogorsk, Makinsk
MPs	Valery Kotovich, Vladislav Kosarev, Kuanysh Alpysbekov, Zaure Kadyrova, Tatiana Muzhchil

Historical Background

Russia annexed the northern Akmola steppes in the late sixteenth century. A Cossack fort was built on the site of contemporary Astana in the 1820s, and peasants from Russia and Ukraine gradually settled the region. The fort was named Akmola, meaning white tomb, and by the 1860s it had developed into a bustling local town. By the end of the nineteenth century, Akmola town had a population of over 6,000 and boasted a number of churches, schools and factories.

Khrushchev's Virgin Lands project in the 1950s had an immense impact on the region. Great swathes of the Kazakh steppe were ploughed up to make way for grain production, and waves of workers from the western USSR were brought in to the region. To mark the importance of the project, the region and town were re-named Tselinograd, meaning virgin lands city, in 1961.

The town and the region regained the name of Akmola after Kazakhstan became independent in 1991. The region was enlarged in 1997 to include parts of Northern Kazakhstan Region and the Derzhavinsk, Zhaksynsk, Zhandalinsk, Esilsk and Kiiminsk districts of the former Turgay Region. Kokshetau, made part of the region in April 1999, is its official administrative centre.

President Nazarbaev announced that Akmola would become Kazakhstan's new capital city in 1994. The decision to move the capital probably reflects a desire to reinforce the ethnic Kazakh presence in the north of the country. Some government ministries began the move to Akmola in autumn 1997, and the town was inaugurated as the new capital in December of that year. The name Akmola was changed to Astana, meaning capital in Kazakh, in May 1998, but the name of the region remains unchanged. Formal celebrations to open the new capital were held in June 1998, in the presence of a number of CIS leaders.

Astana is home to the Gumilyov Eurasian University, and a number of museums and theatres. Plans for Astana's development include the construction of a new administrative

centre, a national library, a modern art gallery, a business centre and a branch of the National Academy of Sciences. The government forecasts that the city's population will reach 450,000 by 2005.

Geography and Environment

Akmola Region is situated towards the north of central Kazakhstan, in the north-western reaches of the lower Sary-Akar hills. The river Ishim runs through the region. In the south east lie the Ermentau and Jeldyardyr Mountains. The area's climate is sharply continental with strong steppe winds, harsh winters, and very hot summers. Wind erosion has turned some of the region's arable land back into steppe. Lake Borovoye and Lake Burabay, south east of Kokshetau, are local tourist spots. Kokshetau has reasonable rail connections to the Urals, Siberia and the central and southern regions of Kazakhstan.

Astana is a large but rather run-down provincial town. The city centre was given a face-lift for the June 1998 celebrations and is undergoing rapid development, but its infrastructure remains generally poor. Astana's central location and relatively good road and rail links were important factors in the decision to make it the new capital. The city has an international airport, which recently had its runway extended to take bigger jets. However, very large aircraft still have to use the airport at Karaganda, 175 kilometres away.

Astana suffers from fewer environmental problems than Almaty: smog is less of an issue, and there is a much smaller seismic risk. However, there are problems. A rise in cases of hepatitis in 1996 was attributed to poor hygiene after power cuts hit sewerage pumping stations, leading to flooded yards and cellars. In 1998, the city found itself on the verge of serious a tuberculosis outbreak.

Political Background

Astana has a mixed political makeup, with movements uniting ethnic Russians, Cossacks and Muslims all active in the area. Ethnic Russians make up around 65% of the city's population, which is reflected by the fact that the *Lad* movement, a national organisation that aspires to represent the interests of the Slav population, originated in Astana. Its local leader, Viktor Khasin, is also a member of the Kazakh Assembly of Peoples (a presidential advisory body). Cossacks from Akmola Region belong to the Union of Cossacks of the Steppe Region. There is a local Kazakh Muslim Language and Culture Revival movement.

Much of Kazakhstan's remaining Chechen and Ingush population (deported to Central Asia by Stalin in 1944) lives in Astana. During 1999, Kazakhstan took in over 2,500 refugees from Chechnya. Representatives of the tens of thousands of ethnic Chechens still living in Kazakhstan say that relations with the other ethnic groups there are generally good. However, Akhmed Muradov, head of the Association for Cultural Development of Chechen and Ingush Peoples in Kazakhstan, said that refugees were being turned back at the border in early 2000 due to "Chechnyaphobia".

Economy, Trade and Investment

Local industries include mining for gold, bauxite, antimony, copper and hard coal, agricultural machine building and mineral fertiliser production. Astana city was a Special Economic Zone between January 1997 and the end of 1998: imports and exports from the city were free of duty, and company taxes, especially on construction, were reduced.

Akmola Region's main exports to the west are uranium oxide, molybdenum and fertilisers. Its biggest customers are the USA, China, France and Germany.

The Tselinnyi Mining and Chemical Combine, one of the largest producers of uranium in the CIS, was sold to Sabton Limited, an Israeli company, in May 1999. Two previous attempts to sell the Stepnogorsk-based company had failed for a lack of interested buyers.

The large Tsesna Corporation dominated Astana's commercial life for a long time, and still maintains a number of interests including wheat, a local bank and local newspaper.

Akmola Region is an important agricultural centre, with arable and livestock farming. Grain and cereals make up about half of agricultural production, and the region produces one fifth of all Kazakhstan's grain. Akmola Region exports grain, meat, flour and milk products to other CIS countries. The Know-How Fund has sponsored some local agricultural projects.

Construction is the biggest industry in Astana. The government intends to spend \$650 million on new construction and road-building in 2000, most of the funding being supplied through foreign loans and grants. New facilities to be built on the left bank of the Ishim river include offices for Kazakhoil and Kaztransoil (the state oil and gas producer and oil and gas transporter), a new international airport and a "diplomatic village", commonly referred to by the expat community as the "*diplag*".

Local Politicians

Sergei Kulagin, akim of Akmola Region, was appointed in March 1999. He is a former minister of agriculture of Kazakhstan, and was also deputy prime minister responsible for food production and distribution in the early 1990s. He also served as akim of Turgay Region, which was divided between Akmola and Kostanay regions in 1997. Kulagin is an ethnic Russian, born in Akmola Region in 1952.

Adilbek Dzhaksybekov, 46, was appointed akim of Astana city in December 1997. He is a local businessman who served on the Senate Committee for Legislation and Legal-Juridical Reform until October 1996. Dzhaksybekov graduated from the All-Union Institute of Cinematography and the Moscow Institute for the National Economy.

Senators

Amangeldy Syzdykov was elected as a senator for Akmola Region in September 1999. He is an agricultural economist by training and for twenty-five years was director of a collective farm. He was secretary of the Akmola Region maslikhat from 1994 until 1999.

Fedor Dobryshin has been a senator for the region since 1995. He is a lawyer by training and reached the rank of colonel in the police. Before becoming a senator he was deputy head of Akmola Region's Department of Internal Affairs. He was born in 1951.

Amanzhol Bulekpaev is a senator for Astana city. He is an engineer by training and spent twenty years as the head of a transport enterprise (1964-1983). He then moved into the regional administration. In 1992, he was made akim of the town of Akmola, and in 1977 he became head of customs for the city. He is the president of the Akmola Region Chess Federation.

Beibit Zhusupov has been a senator for Astana city since 1998. He is a lawyer by training. Zhusupov served as akim of Akmola Region from 1992 until 1998. He was born in 1948 on Kostanay Region.

Majilis MPs

The following MPs were elected to represent the region at the October 1999 national elections.

Valery Kotovich, an ethnic Russian aged 48, was elected to represent the Akkolsky constituency. Kotovich is the chairman of a local committee of the Kazsabton Union in Stepnogorsk.

Vladislav Kosarev, an ethnic Russian, was elected to represent Astana constituency No 1 after the second round of voting. Kosarev was born in 1937 and is the director of the Interteach Corporation in Kokshetau.

Kuanysh Alpysbekov, a former first deputy akim of Akmola Region, was elected to represent Tselinograd constituency No 3. He was previously elected to the Majilis in 1994. Alpysbekov was born in 1944.

Zaure Kadyrova was re-elected to represent Astana. Kadyrova is chairwoman of the Majilis Committee for Social and Cultural Development. She was born in 1940. Kadyrova served as Minister for Social Security in 1994.

Tatiana Muzhchil, 52, was elected to represent Astana's Stolichny constituency No 63. Muzhchil, an ethnic Russian, is executive director of the Akbota children's fund. Muzhchil is the deputy who represents Astana city itself.

AKTYUBINSK REGION

Population	724,300
Ethnic makeup	56% Kazakh, 24% Russian, 10% Ukrainian (also Germans, Tatars, and various other nationalities)
Area	300,629 km ²
Regional Capital	Aktobe (population 279,800)
Akim of Aktobe	Elesin Saginoykov
Regional Akim	Aslan Musin
Other main towns	Novoalekseevka, Shubarkudyuk, Shalkar, Komsomolsk, Khromtau, Oktyabrsk
MPs	Sania Kaldygulova, Amangeldy Aitali, Bulat Abishev

Historical Background

The town of Aktobe, or Aktyubinsk as it was known officially until 1999, was founded in 1869 as a fort. Standing on the left bank of the River Ilek, the city is an important communications hub. Aktyubinsk Region was formed in 1932. Before the 1917 Revolution, there were only three towns of any size in the region. Aktobe is one of the regions to which Kazakhs living in Turkey have been free to return since 1993.

Geography and Environment

Aktyubinsk Region is in western Kazakhstan. The town of Aktobe is only 100 kilometres from the Kazakh-Russian border, and is the last Kazakh town on the railway line to Moscow. It has been described as a rather glum and grey place. The climate is harshly continental and prone to drought. There are many small salt lakes in the region, some of which dry up completely in the summer. Regional agriculture depends on fresh water from underground springs.

Industrialisation in the region has caused problems: the concentration of chromium compounds in the Ilek river is 250 times the standard level due to leakage from the Aktobe Chromium Compound Plant.

Economy, Trade and Investment

More than 244 viable mineral deposits have been discovered in Aktyubinsk Region. The region's main industries are oil extraction, ferrous metallurgy, fertilisers, raw materials for the chemical industry, heavy engineering and mining. The Donskoy Ore Concentrate and Processing Enterprise in Khromtau is one of the largest producers of chrome ore in the world. It accounts for almost all of CIS chromium production.

The Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) owns a 60% stake in the Aktohemunaigaz oil company. In 1997, CNPC agreed deals with the Kazakh government worth \$9.5 billion, which included developing the Aktobe and Uzen oil fields and building a pipeline from the fields to north-eastern China. The pipeline plan has been temporarily

shelved, but development of the oil fields began in 1998. CNPC has said it plans to invest \$120 million in the company in 2000, and forecasts crude oil production reaching 2.5 million tonnes. CNPC caused controversy in 1999 when it laid off 2,000 Aktobemunaigaz employees and allegedly failed to pay them promised compensation.

Kazakhoil Aktobe, a regional branch of the state oil company, is planning to begin development of three new fields in Aktyubinsk Region in 2000. The company is hoping to invest \$960 million in the Alibek and Kozhasay fields over the next six years, and is also planning to develop the Urikhtau gas condensate field.

The Dutch-British-Kazakh joint venture Shell Temir and German-Kazakh Veba Oel Kasachstan GmbH began pilot production at the Saigak-2 well in the region's Temir field in late 1999. Development of the entire field is expected to begin in 2000. Shell Temir got the licence to develop the field in 1997.

Aktyubinsk Region is one of Kazakhstan's primary agricultural centres. The total crop area is about 2.5 million hectares, 1.7 million of which is given over to cereal cultivation.

The former Soviet civil aviation school in Aktobe re-opened in 1995 to train Kazakh pilots for the national air force.

Local Politicians

Aslan Musin, the akim of Aktyubinsk Region, is a trained economist who made his early career in the local Communist Party administration. He later chaired the regional anti-monopoly committee and economic directorate. He became deputy akim in 1994 and akim in 1995.

Senators

Idelbai Imankulov, who was formerly the deputy akim of the region, was elected as senator for Aktyubinsk Region in September 1999. He spent his early career in construction and then moved on to regional administration. He was born in 1953.

Boranbai Kusainov was first elected to represent Aktyubinsk Region in 1995, and has since been re-elected. He has worked in trading co-operatives and was president of a private company before being made a senator. He was born in 1952.

Majilis MPs

The following MPs were elected during the October 1999 national election.

Sania Kaldygulova was formerly the first deputy akim of Aktobe. She was elected to the Majilis to represent one of the constituencies of the town of Aktobe. Kaldygulova was born in 1956.

Amangeldy Aitali was elected to the Majilis from an Aktobe constituency. Aitali formerly worked at the Faculty of Philosophy and Culture at the University of Aktobe. He was born in 1939.

Bulat Abishev is the former akim of Temir district and was elected to the Majilis to represent the Mugalzhar constituency. Abishev was born in 1950.

ALMATY REGION

Population	1.63 million
Ethnic makeup	45% Kazakh, 30% Russian
Area	224,000 km ²
Regional Capital	Almaty (population 1.06 million – 01/01/97)
Akim of Almaty	Viktor Khrapunov
Regional Akim	Zamanbek Nurkadilov
Other main towns	Kapchugai, Kaskelen, Talgar, Issyk, Taldy-Kurgan
MPs	Omirgali Kenzhebek, Ualikhan Kalizhanuli, Bolat Takeno, Ermek Kelemseit, Zheken Kaliuly, Serik Adbrakhmanov, Maria Zhuiriktaeva, Gani Kasymov, Isakhan Alimzhanov, Sharip Omarov, Valentin Makalkin, Sergei Dyachenko,

Historical Background

Almaty lies on the site of an old Silk Road oasis called Almatu. The Russians established a Cossack fort called Verny at Almatu in 1854. The area was devastated by an earthquake in 1887, and again in 1911. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Almaty was a place of exile: its involuntary residents included Leon Trotsky, among others. In 1921 the town was renamed Alma-Ata, meaning father of apples – a Soviet version of Almatu, which refers to the region's rich fruit orchards. Alma-Ata became the capital of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic in 1928. The town expanded rapidly after it was reached by the Turkestan-Siberia railway in 1930, and again during the Second World War, when factories were evacuated to Alma-Ata from the western USSR. Large numbers of Slavs came to work in the factories, as did deported Koreans and Germans.

Alma-Ata was renamed Almaty in 1994. Almaty Region was enlarged in April 1997 to include the former region of Taldy-Kurgan. Despite the transfer of the capital to Astana in December 1997, Almaty is expected to remain the country's commercial and economic centre. It is often referred to as the "southern capital", and retains its own administrative structure.

Geography and Environment

Almaty Region lies in south-eastern Kazakhstan, bordering Kyrgyzstan and China. The snow-capped Tien Shan and Zaili Alatau mountains lie to the east. The mountains are a popular resort area, and provide rainfall and cool breezes to counteract the heat of the plains. The region has a number of fresh- and salt-water lakes: Lake Balkhash is Asia's largest mixed salt-and fresh-water lake, with an area of 17,400 square kilometres, but is shallow. Copper smelters built on its shores in the 1930s have harmed local wildlife, but there is still a local fishing industry.

The 100-kilometre-long Lake Kapchagai is one of the former USSR's largest man-made lakes. It was formed when the Kapchagai hydroelectric power station was built on the river Ili. In addition to generating energy, Lake Kapchagai irrigates the surrounding farmland.

The Syrbulak reservoir, close to Almaty, is gradually being poisoned by waste from the city. Ecologists have warned that it could overflow and damage a huge area, including Lake Balkhash and the Ili river.

Almaty Region is Kazakhstan's third largest in terms of population.

Political Background

Mass protests rocked Almaty in December 1986 when an ethnic Russian was appointed to head the Kazakh Communist Party. Several people were killed and hundreds injured when police opened fire on the crowds. This was the first serious incident of unrest during the Gorbachev era. The riots spread to other parts of Kazakhstan, and martial law was imposed.

On 21 December 1991, the city was the venue for the signing of the "Alma-Ata Agreements", which effectively put an end to the USSR.

Azamat, a Kazakh opposition movement, is based in Almaty, as is the Republican Peoples Party of Kazakhstan (RPPK), headed by the now-exiled former prime minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin. Both parties complained of misconduct by the authorities during the October 1999 Majilis elections. Almaty is also the base for most of the Kazakh opposition's media outlets. Although Almaty is no longer the country's capital, it is still a venue for rallies and demonstrations, and home to the majority of Kazakhstan's "intelligentsia".

The Semirechye Cossacks of southern Kazakhstan have their headquarters in Almaty, and a branch in Taldy-Kurgan.

Economy, Trade and Investment

The most important local industries are engineering, mining, non-ferrous metallurgy, light industry, food processing, logging and woodworking. The gas pipeline from Bukhara in Uzbekistan to Almaty is of vital importance to the region's economy. A number of former Soviet defence factories are located in the town of Balkhash. The former Taldy-Kurgan Region has large reserves of mixed metallic ores, marble and limestone and also deposits of hard and brown coal, oil shale, peat, gypsum, salt, tungsten and molybdenum.

Almaty Region is very fertile, famous for its cattle, sheep and horse breeding. It also supports arable farming with irrigation.

Almaty is the regional hub for air and rail transport, and there are regular flights to London, Moscow, Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Istanbul. Almaty airport, which is currently managed by Air Finance Europe, is seeking funds to reconstruct some of the airport's buildings, damaged by fire in 1999. Germany's Tossehl rebuilt the airport's runways.

Almaty Power Consolidated, a joint venture 55% owned by Tractabel, ran Almaty's electricity and heating stations until spring 2000, when Tractabel pulled out after lengthy problems. The company made losses of 208 million Belgian francs in 1998, and in 1999 demanded that it be allowed to raise tariffs. This drew a swift negative response from Akim Viktor Khrapunov, who said he would like to see the power stations re-nationalised, via the regional government. Tractabel lodged a complaint with the

International Arbitration Court in Stockholm to try to force the Kazakh government to allow it to raise tariffs, but to no avail.

The Saudi Central Asian Investment Company is planning to build a trading centre and hospital complex in Almaty, costing \$28 million. Work will start in 2000.

A plan to put French company Generale Des Eaux in control of the city's water supply system has been approved by President Nazarbaev. Under a contract signed late in 1999, Generale Des Eaux will invest \$100 million in developing Almaty's water supply infrastructure.

Work on Almaty's underground train network is planned to begin in 2000. The city was due to receive the first tranche of a credit from Philip Holtzman for the project in spring 2000.

Gallaher, a British company, has built a new cigarette factory close to the city.

Local Politicians

Regional Akim **Zamanbek Nurkadirov** has previously served as akim of Almaty (1992-1994) and in the Majilis, where he was a member of the Committee on Agrarian Issues. He has been akim of Almaty Region since 1997. In early 2000 he announced the end of a local campaign to collect people's jewellery and savings for a "gold fund", designed to support the region's budget. He received representatives from the British Foreign Affairs Committee in 1999.

Almaty City Akim **Viktor Khrapunov** built his career in the local energy industry before being appointed to the Almaty Communist Party organisation and the municipal administration. He served as Kazakhstan's Minister for Energy for a time, and was appointed akim of Almaty in 1997. In September 1999 he received representatives of the British Interparliamentary Union to discuss the upcoming parliamentary election. Khrapunov is an ethnic Russian and was born in East Kazakhstan in 1948.

Senators

Nusupzhan Nurmanbetov, 62, was re-elected for Almaty Region in September 1999. He has held this post since 1995. He is a member of the Committee for the Economy, Finances and the Budget. Nurmanbetov is also director of a local state farm.

Mars Battalov, born in 1950, has been a senator for the region since 1995. He is a teacher of Russian literature and language by training, although he spent a large part of his pre-senate career in the regional administration.

Zhaibaikhan Abdildin, a professor of philosophy, is a senator for the city of Almaty. He was re-elected in September 1999. Abdildin is chairman of the Presidential Committee on Human Rights and the Senate Committee on International Affairs, Defence and Security. During his time as vice rector of Kazakhstan's Academy of Sciences (1986-95), he was responsible for nationalities policy and the development of culture and language.

Saken Seydualiev was elected in 1998 to be one of Almaty City's representatives in the Senate. He is an economist by training. Before becoming a senator he was director of a private company. He was also chief consultant on international legal issues to the Kazakh Ministry of Finance during the mid-1990s. Seydualiev was born in 1946.

Majilis MPs

The following MPs were elected at the October 1999 national parliamentary election.

Omirgali Kenzhebek was elected to represent the Ili constituency. Kenzhebek is the director of a company called *Zdravo-okhraneniye* (Healthcare), based in Enbekshi, Almaty Region. Kenzhebek was born in 1942.

Ualikhan Kalizhanuli was elected to represent the Talgar constituency. Kalizhanuli, who was born in 1948, was formerly the press secretary and head of the press service of the Kazakh Senate.

Bolat Takenov, who is a former senator for Astana city, was elected to represent an Almaty Region constituency. Takenov is a construction engineer by profession and a former local government official and member of the Senate Committee for the Economy, Finances and the Budget.

Ermeke Kelemseit, an agricultural engineer by profession and former agricultural enterprise director, was re-elected to represent the Gvardeisky constituency. Kelemseit is a member of the Majilis Committee on Agrarian Issues. He was born in 1952.

Zheken Kaliuly, president of an economic and political association based in Almaty, was elected to represent Sarkandsky constituency. Kaliuly was born in 1931.

Serik Adbrakhmanov was elected to represent the Bugutinsky constituency. Adbrakhmanov is 49 and is president of the ELIM-AI international ecological fund.

Maria Zhuriktaeva, born in 1940, has been re-elected to represent constituency No 11 in Almaty Region. She has served as a local government official and a member of the Presidential Pardons Commission. She has also been a member of the Majilis Committee for International Affairs, Defence and Security.

Gani Kasymov, aged 50, represents the Auezovsky constituency No 63. Kasymov was formerly the chairman of the Kazakh Customs Committee, and an adviser to President Nazarbaev. He is also an associate and former colleague of Nazarbaev's son-in-law, Rakhat Aliev. He graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations in 1974. Kasymov ran in the January 1999 presidential elections, and gained 4.6% of the vote. He has gained a high national profile thanks to his flamboyant election campaigning.

Isakhan Alimzhanov was elected to represent the Al-Farabiisky constituency No 67. Alimzhanov is 41 and chairman of the board of the ALSI joint venture, Almaty.

Sharip Omarov, aged 52, was re-elected to his Almaty city seat. Omarov is a former first deputy akim of Almaty. He became chairman of the Majilis Committee on International Affairs, Defence and Security in 1996. He opposed ratification of a Russian-Kazakh agreement on the Russian use of four weapons test centres in Kazakhstan citing the damage from nuclear testing.

Valentin Makalkin has been elected to represent an Almaty city constituency. Makalkin was born in 1937, is an ethnic Russian, and works for Almatyenergo, a power company.

Sergei Dyachenko, elected to an Almaty city seat, is deputy chairman and executive director of the Almaty branch of Otan, a pro-Nazarbaev political party. Dyachenko was born in 1952 and is an ethnic Russian.

ATYRAU REGION

Population	455,900
Ethnic makeup	79.5% Kazakhs, 15% Russians, also Ukrainians, Tatars, Koreans, Germans and Belarusians
Area	118,600 km ²
Regional Capital	Atyrau (population 144,700)
Akim of Atyrau	Zhalgas Tkembaev
Regional Akim	Imangali Tasmagambetov
Other main towns	--
MPs	Fariza Ungarsynova, Khakim Kushkaliev

Historical Background

The town of Atyrau was founded in 1640 by a Russian trader, Gureev, whose name it bore until 1992. Before oil was discovered during the Soviet era, the region's main source of income was caviar. The discovery of oil led to an influx of Russian workers, and ethnic Russians now make up about a third of Atyrau town's population.

In September 1999, Atyrau was the centre of celebrations commemorating 100 years since the first oil was found on Kazakh soil. The then prime minister, Nurlan Balgimbaev, said, "I believe Atyrau is the third capital of Kazakhstan – the oil capital. Astana is the administrative capital, Almaty the commercial capital, and Atyrau the oil capital".

Geography and Environment

Atyrau Region straddles the northern coast of the Caspian Sea. It covers an area slightly smaller than England. The Volga river separates it from Russia's Astrakhan Region in the west.

The town of Atyrau is over 2,600 kilometres west of Almaty and lies on the banks of the river Ural. Atyrau has seen an influx of western companies in recent years, attracted by the prospect of investing in Kazakh oil. There is a growing threat from the rising level of the Caspian Sea: spring floods in recent years have brought the shoreline closer to the town.

In 1998 a customs force based at the ports of Atyrau and Aktau began extending Kazakh control over the area of the Caspian Sea that Kazakhstan regards as its territorial waters.

Atyrau Region is Kazakhstan's second smallest in terms of population.

Economy, Trade and Investment

The region's economy is dependent upon oil extraction and refining. There are huge deposits of oil and gas in the west of the region around Tengiz and Atyrau. The Tengiz oil field is being developed by Chevron Oil in a multi-billion dollar joint venture called Tengizchevroil, which is moving ahead despite a number of problems. Chevron has a 45%

stake in the joint venture, the other partners being Kazakhoil (25%), ExxonMobil (25%) and LUKarco (5%). The Tengiz oil field reached a production level of 26,000 tonnes of crude per day in early 2000. The international Caspian Pipeline Consortium is currently working on a pipeline to link the Tengiz field with Russia's Novorossiisk port on the Black Sea.

Phillips Petroleum Co. has committed to building a liquefied gas plant in the region. Agip and British Gas have pledged to build a plant to process the gas and gas condensate they recover from the Karachaganak oil and gas field (in neighbouring Western Kazakhstan Region).

The Atyrau oil refinery was opened in 1943 and originally equipped under the US Lend-Lease programme. It has diversified from aviation fuel to petrol, diesel and fuel oils, oven coke, white spirit and various forms of gas. It runs on Kazakh feedstock from the Emba and Mangistau oil fields. However, the refinery ran at just 38% of capacity in 1999. The Japanese Bank of International Co-operation recently approved a \$450 million loan for a project to modernise the refinery.

The Offshore Kazakhstan International Operating Company (OKIOC), a consortium exploring Kazakhstan's sector of the Caspian, moved its headquarters from Almaty to Atyrau in 1999 following pressure from Atyrau's akim, Imangali Tasmagambetov.

Away from oil, the Kazakhstan Caspian Shelf Company allocated \$4.5 million to the Bulgarian firm Glavbulgarstroi to build a fish farm on the northern shore of the Caspian Sea. Engineering works for the manufacture and repair of equipment for the oil and fishing industries are becoming more common in the region. There are massive reserves of salt and phosphates in the desert and semi-desert to the west and south of Atyrau.

The Kazakh Ministry of Finance has approved plans for the region to make an issue of 700 million tenge (\$4.9 million) in municipal bonds. The region plans to spend proceeds from the placement on road building and installing gas lines.

Local Politicians

Imangali Tasmagambetov is the akim of Atyrau Region. He is a well-known politician and "local boy made good". Born in 1956, he graduated from the Pushkin Pedagogical Institute in Uralsk as a secondary school teacher in the 1970s. He became heavily involved in youth work, and the Komsomol (young Communist league). He joined the government in the early 1990s, and rose to the height of deputy prime minister in charge of the press and culture. He was President Nazarbaev's chief aide before being appointed akim of Atyrau in spring 1999.

Senators

Askar Kuzhagaliev was elected senator for Atyrau Region in September 1999. Kuzhagaliev is a railway engineer by training. From 1994 until 1999 he was deputy director of the Atyrau office of the Kazakhstan Caspian Shelf Company. Kuzhagaliev took a study placement at Oxford University in 1999.

Ermekkali Bigaliev has been a senator for the region since 1995. Originally trained as a mining and oil extraction engineer, he has spent the bulk of his career in oil and gas

production. He has been secretary of the Senate Committee on the Economy, Finances and the Budget since early 1999. Bigaliev was born in 1954.

Majilis MPs

The following MPs were elected as a result of the October 1999 national parliamentary election.

Fariza Ungarsynova, a writer and editor by profession, was re-elected to represent Embinsky constituency. Ungarsynova was a member of the Majilis Economy, Finances and Budget Committee in the previous Majilis. She was born in 1939.

Khakim Kushkaliev was elected to represent the Kurmangazy constituency. Kushkaliev, born in 1962, was formerly the head of the State and Law Department of the Regional Administration of Atyrau Region.

Others

Former Atyrau MP **Gaziz Aldamzharov**, 52, became the informal leader of the opposition in the 1994-1995 parliament. He is now Chairman of the Republican People's Party (RPPK), an opposition party led by former prime minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, and a co-chairman of the Forum for Democratic Forces.

EASTERN KAZAKHSTAN REGION

Population	1.63 million
Ethnic makeup	60% Russian, 38% Kazakh
Area	283.300 km ²
Regional Capital	Ust-Kamenogorsk; Kazakh name Oskemen (population 314,800).
Akim of Ust-Kamenogorsk	Yury Kudinov
Regional Akim	Vitaly Mette
Other main towns	Semey, (population 345,200), Ayaguz and Chara
MPs	Aleksandr Milyutin, Askar Kabanbaev, Nikolai Shcherbinin Alimpiada Cherkashina, Viktor Egorov, Erzhan Rakhmetov Daulet Turlykhanov

Historical Background

The region's capital, Ust-Kamenogorsk, was founded as a steppe fort in 1720. It remained small and unimportant until 1939, when waves of Russians and Ukrainians began arriving to mine and smelt local heavy metals for the Soviet defence industry. Later, production turned to enriched plutonium and uranium, which was tested at the now infamous site at Semipalatinsk, or Semey, to give it its Kazakh name. Ust-Kamenogorsk was closed to all foreigners, including those from Eastern Europe, until 1991.

The town of Leninogorsk (now Irtysh) grew up around a small ore deposit, discovered in 1786 by an army officer named Ridder, and the town was known as Ridder until 1941. The first ore mine was opened there in 1791.

Eastern Kazakhstan Region was almost doubled in size in 1997 to include Semipalatinsk Region. The town of Semey remains an important regional centre, and is larger than Ust-Kamenogorsk. It was founded as a Russian fort in 1718. Semey has strong links with literature: it was a place of exile for Dostoevsky, and several major Kazakh writers and teachers were born in the region, including Olzhas Suleimenov, Abay Kunanbaev and Mukhtar Auezov. Semey became the capital of the short-lived Alash-Orda independent Kazakh state in 1917. The scientists who worked at Kurchatov, the town that serviced the Soviet nuclear-testing site, maintained the area's intellectual tradition to a certain extent.

Geography and Environment

Eastern Kazakhstan Region borders China and Russia. Its climate is severe and is prone to drought. Ust-Kamenogorsk is notorious for high levels of pollution in its air and water. It is situated on the rivers Ulba and Irtysh, the latter being navigable. Ust-Kamenogorsk is known as the "Gateway to the Altai" and is an important railway and freight transport junction.

Semey, Kazakhstan's fourth largest town, is 200 kilometres west of Ust-Kamenogorsk, close to the Russian border. The Soviet nuclear testing site, or Polygon, lies 150 kilometres south west of Semey. It covers an area of about 15,000 square kilometres. In total, almost 500 nuclear bombs were tested there from 1949 until the break up of the Soviet Union, at a rate of 12-15 a year. The explosions were atmospheric until 1956, after which tests were conducted underground. A shallow underground nuclear explosion created Lake Shurgan, on the nuclear testing site. Rates of cancer and genetic mutation in Semey are far higher than the CIS average. The test site's basic equipment was destroyed in 1999 in accordance with the Agreement on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Armament between the US and Kazakhstan. The last test mine at the site is due for closure in 2000. The Japanese government recently allocated \$20 million to Kazakhstan to help clean up the Semey area and implement healthcare projects.

Nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk was halted in 1990, partly as a result of mass protests organised by the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement, led by the writer and publicist Olzhas Suleimenov. President Nazarbaev banned further tests in 1991.

Eastern Kazakhstan Region is Kazakhstan's second largest in terms of population.

Political Background

The population of Ust-Kamenogorsk was once predominantly Russian, but Kazakh numbers have risen fast since 1991. Many ethnic Kazakhs have immigrated from Mongolia. There is some tension between East Kazakhstan's Kazakh and Russian populations. In 1994, a Russian organisation, the Slav Culture group, met in Ust-Kamenogorsk to call for dual citizenship and recognition of Russian as the second state language.

Twenty-two people, including eleven Russians and a Moldovan, were arrested in Ust-Kamenogorsk in November 1999 and charged with plotting to overthrow Kazakh rule in East Kazakhstan Region. The Ust-Kamenogorsk city court found a local newspaper, HBC-Press, guilty of attempting to incite the coup by printing an article that included an appeal for independence by a group of ethnic Russians and Russian citizens. Publication of the paper was suspended for three months.

The Upper-Irtysh Cossack Community, led by its ataman, Boris Tolmachev, said that the alleged coup attempt had nothing to do with the local Cossack community, and condemned the use of terrorist tactics.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Eastern Kazakhstan has an ageing and entrenched industrial base with non-ferrous metallurgy at its heart: uranium processing is a more recent addition. There are significant metal deposits in Irtysh (formerly Leninogorsk), Zyryanovsk and Priityshsky. Many of Ust-Kamenogorsk's factories produce specialised metals for the defence and nuclear industries, civil aircraft and the space programme. Much of the production is now sold to Russia or exported and sold on the London Metals Exchange.

One of the region's oldest metal producers, the Irtysh Copper Works, was recently taken over by Kazakhmys (Kazakhstan's biggest copper producer, 40% Samsung and 35% state-owned). The works had been declared bankrupt by its previous owner, a joint

venture including Dayton Associates Ltd (UK), in 1998. While the works have now restarted production, a long-running court case between Dayton Associates and the receiver is continuing. Working conditions at the plant are acknowledged to be very poor.

Kazakhmys announced in early 2000 that it intends to begin exploration of a number of new copper deposits in Eastern Kazakhstan Region, including the Yubileino-Snegirichin and Anisim Klyuch fields. The company has applied for licenses to explore and develop the former Semey nuclear test ground. The company has also started building a plant at Balkhash to produce zinc concentrate.

The Irtysh Copper Works, the Ust-Kamenogorsk Lead-Zinc Integrated Plant and the Irtysh Polymetal Plant use local raw materials, including lead, zinc, copper, cadmium, bismuth, stibium, antimony, gold, silver and mercury. Other Ust-Kamenogorsk enterprises specialise in rare metal production: the Ust-Kamenogorsk Titanium and Magnesium Plant, the Belogorsk ore mining and processing enterprise, and the state holding company, Ulba. The Bakyrchik gold field is run by Bakyrchik Gold, which in 1997 sold a 65% stake to the mining company Indo-China Goldfields, based in Singapore.

The Semey area has deposits of graphite, salt and manganese. There are also coal and other mineral deposits.

The Ulba Metal Works, which processes uranium, beryllium and tantalum, is a constituent part of the national atomic company, Kazatomprom. Kazatomprom received a \$25 million credit from Westdeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale in early 2000. The company hopes this will enable it to increase uranium extraction and modernise facilities at the Ulba plant. The Ulba Metal Works recently signed two US contracts: the first with General Electric, to process its radioactive materials, and the second to ship beryllium products to the US market.

Other factories in the region include those producing cement, condensers, ceramics, pneumatic control components, bricks, wood fibre, silk, furniture and dairy products.

Agriculture plays an important role in the region. Semey is one of the most important livestock breeding regions in Kazakhstan, and its meat-processing complex is among the largest in the former Soviet Union. Production has been slashed in recent years, however. There are orchards and vineyards on the southern slopes of the Tarbagatay hills and also crop farming with irrigation.

The US-Israeli joint venture AES-Suntree owns five thermal power stations in Eastern Kazakhstan Region and has 20-year concessions on the Shulba and Ust-Kamenogorsk hydroelectric plants. East Kazakhstan's akim, Vitaly Mette, has harshly criticised AES-Suntree for failing to turn the companies around. AES-Suntree has also come in for criticism from the Kazakh government.

Local Politicians

Regional Akim **Vitaly Mette**, an ethnic German, is a local industrialist and former deputy prime minister of Kazakhstan. He was involved in privatising state enterprises, including the Ulba works in Karaganda, where he was a former director, during his time in

government. Mette has close links with Oleg Soskovets, a former first deputy prime minister of Russia, who also made his early career in the Kazakh government.

Senators

Zauresh Battalova became a senator for Eastern Kazakhstan Region in September 1999. She is a primary school teacher by training. She became head of the Semipalatinsk Regional Education Department in 1995 and was director of the Balausa children's fund from 1997-1999. She was born in 1961.

Yury Okshin has been a senator for the region since 1998. His early career was spent in regional administration. He then became chairman of the Eastern Kazakhstan Region TV and Radio Company from 1988 until 1997. He was born in 1938.

Majilis MPs

The following members of the Majilis parliament were elected during the October 1999 national elections.

Aleksandr Milyutin, an ethnic Russian born in 1960, was elected to represent the Semey constituency. Milyutin is vice-president of a company named Zerger.

Askar Kabanbaev, president of a company named Aksu, was elected to represent the Zaisansky constituency. Kabanbaev was born in 1949.

Nikolai Shcherbinin was elected to represent the Zyryanovsky constituency. Shcherbinin is a retired official of the Ministry of Defence and formerly served as a Majilis deputy for Southern Kazakhstan Region. He is an ethnic Russian and was born in 1949.

Alimpiada Cherkashina, an administrator for the Ulba Metal Works, was elected to represent the Oktyabrsky constituency. She is an ethnic Russian and was born in 1936.

Viktor Egorov was re-elected to the Majilis in October 1999. Fifty-one year old Egorov, an ethnic Russian, is an economist by profession and former chief engineer at a pig farm in Ust-Kamenogorsk.

Erzhan Rakhmetov was elected to represent the Abaisky constituency. Rakhmetov, born in 1961, was general director of a private company in Almaty prior to his election.

Daulet Turlykhanov won medals at the Seoul and Barcelona Olympic Games. He is now head coach of the National Greco-Roman Wrestling Team. Turlykhanov has been President of the National Sports Fund since 1996. He was re-elected to the Majilis in October 1999 and remains Chairman of the Majilis Ecology and Nature Committee.

Others

Aleksandr Lukin, a former akim of Ust-Kamenogorsk, resigned his post in early 1999, saying the move was due to his "credo for life". He now heads the aptly named Semey, a financial-industrial group in Semey.

Garri Shtoik, a former Minister of Trade and Industry, is a local industrialist and maintains close links in the region. Shtoik is an ethnic German: his family was exiled to Kazakhstan from European Russia during the Soviet era.

Galimzhan Zhakiyanov, who is now akim of Pavlodar Region, was formerly akim of Semey and is a well-known local businessman.

In his youth, former Kazakh prime minister and now RPPK leader **Akezhan Kazhegeldin** worked for the KGB in Semey.

Influential politicians born in Eastern Kazakhstan Region include: the akim of Almaty and former Kazakh energy minister, **Viktor Khrapunov**; former key figure in Russia's privatisation campaign **Alfred Kokh**; former Russian deputy prime minister **Aleksandr Zaveryukha**; Russian nationalist politician **Sergei Baburin**; and president of the Russian firm Norilsk Nickel **Vsevolod Generalov**.

KARAGANDA REGION

Population	1.53 million
Ethnic makeup	45% Russian, 43% Kazakh, 10% Germans
Area	428,000 km ²
Regional Capital	Karaganda, Kazakh name Qaraghandy (population 452,600)
Akim of Karaganda	<i>Nikolai Filatov</i>
Regional Akim	Kamaltin Mukhamedzhanov
Other main towns	Abai, Karkaralinsk, Saran, Temirtau, Shakhtinsk, Zhezkazgan.
MPs	Shaimerden Urazalinov, Tagir Sisinbaev, Sergei Drozhin, Rauail Shaekin, Mukhambet Kopei, Erlan Nigmatulin

Historical Background

Karaganda town was founded in 1926. The inmates of local labour camps, who later also provided a workforce for its coal mines, built it. There is a cemetery for 4,000 of those who died in the camps at the village of Spassk, on the outskirts of Karaganda. Karaganda had an ethnic German population of about 150,000 in Soviet times – German prisoners of war and their descendants. At least half of these ethnic Germans are believed to have emigrated since 1991.

Karaganda Region, often called Central Kazakhstan (or Sary-Arka in Kazakh), was formed in 1932. The region was enlarged in 1997 to include the former region of Zhezkazgan.

Geography and Environment

Karaganda Region is in central Kazakhstan and has borders with many other regions. The addition to it of the region of Zhezkazgan in 1997 brought a vast expanse of sparsely populated desert steppe within its borders.

Karaganda is Kazakhstan's second-largest conurbation. It is a rather bleak city, with a skyline dominated by metal works and mine-heads. About 30,000 miners work locally, in generally poor conditions: they reportedly have an average life expectancy of only 49 years.

The Irtysh-Karaganda canal supplies almost all the region's water. Problems with energy supplies to canal pumping stations in 1997 led to fears, not borne out, that it would freeze over. Karaganda Region suffered devastating forest fires and severe drought in 1997.

Karaganda has reasonable rail links. A new international airport was opened in 1996 which hosts charter flights to Germany, Turkey, the UAE and Pakistan.

Political Background

Independent Kazakhstan's first communist organisation, the Union of Communists, was registered in Karaganda in 1993. That same year, the regional authorities violently suppressed a strike by local journalists protesting against the dismissal of an independent-minded local TV and radio director.

In November 1999, the Karaganda authorities tried to ban a rally by the *Pokoleniye* pensioners' movement. The ban was overturned by the district court.

Cossacks from Karaganda are members of the Union of Cossacks of the Steppe Region. The Semirechye Cossacks of Southern Kazakhstan have a branch in Zhezkazgan.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Karaganda is very much an industrial region, rich in minerals and raw materials. It has about 30% of Kazakhstan's hard coal reserves and 100% of its proven coking coal reserves. Local coal is used to produce electricity. Important deposits in the region include iron, copper, lead and zinc. Kazakhstan's largest coal producer, JSC Borly, is located in the region. Local engineering enterprises turn out equipment for the region's heavy industry, centring on mines, concentrate plants and metallurgy.

Karaganda Region boasts Kazakhstan's largest steel mill, Ispat Karmet. The Anglo-Indian company Ispat International bought the Karmet Steel Works, 15 local coal mines and a power station in late 1995. In 1998, Ispat-Karmet became the first private company to sign a loan agreement with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Mill production increased in 1999 over 1998 and efforts have been made to upgrade equipment and make the company competitive. The mill exports to 65 countries around the world, and its most significant client is China.

Kazakhmys, the country's largest copper producer, is based at the Zhezkazgan ore field in Karaganda Region. The company is 35% state-owned, with South Korea's Samsung Corporation also owning a 40% stake. The Zhezkazgan copper smelter is Kazakhstan's largest copper processing works. Kazakhmys recently agreed a \$100 million loan with France's Credit Lyonnais bank.

UK National Power (50%) and Israel's Ormat Industries (50%) own the Karaganda Power and Karaganda Distribution companies, which provide the city with electricity.

The Zhairim-Atasuiskaya Special Economic Zone is situated within Karaganda Region. Goods are exempt from VAT on import and from customs duties within the zone. Corporate income tax is also reduced from 30% to 20%. These conditions will remain in place until 2006.

Russia is to lease the Saryshagan rocket test ground in Zhezkazgan for \$20 million a year, paid partly in cash and partly in weapons technology and military education for Kazakhs in Russia.

Local Politicians

Kamaltin Mukhamedzhanov is the regional akim. Mukhamedzhanov has trained both as an engineer and, more recently, as an economist. He spent his early career in public

transport and then moved in to local administration. He was akim of Kokshetau from 1997-1998. Mukhamedzhanov was born in 1948.

Senators

Ualikhan Kaisarov was elected to represent Karaganda Region in the Senate in September 1999. He is a lawyer and economist by training, but spent the earlier part of his career as director of a private company. He was born in 1965.

Duman Abildinov, born in 1944, is an agronomist who made his career in local agriculture, then in local government. He was first elected to the Senate in 1995. He is a member of the Senate Economy, Finances and Budget Committee.

Majilis MPs

The following MPs were elected to the Majilis as a result of the October 1999 national elections.

Shaimerden Urazalinov was elected to represent the Central constituency. Urazalinov is a former Akim of Karaganda city and chairman of Karaganda Region's disciplinary council. He was born in 1942.

Tagir Sisinbaev, a judge in the Almaty Regional court, was elected to represent Maikukusky constituency. Sisinbaev was born in 1948.

Sergei Drozhin, an ethnic Russian born in 1938, was elected to represent Temirtaisky constituency. Drozhin was a senior rolling mill operative at Ispat-Karmet's No. 2 workshop before his election.

Rauan Shaekin, the president of a company called Concern Asia-Centre, was elected to represent the Bukhar-Zhyraisky constituency. Shaekin is an ethnic Russian and was born in 1962.

Mukhambet Kopei, formerly the akim of a local town, was re-elected to the Majilis to represent Zhezkazgansky constituency. He is now deputy speaker of the Majilis. Kopei was born in 1949.

Erlan Nigmatulin, a businessman from Balkhash, was elected to represent Balkhash constituency. Nigmatulin was born in 1962.

Others

Kazakhstan's **President Nazarbaev** met his wife whilst working at the Karaganda Metal Works.

The president of Chechnya, **Aslan Maskhadov**, was born in Karaganda, as were former Kazakh deputy prime minister and foreign trade minister **Syzyk Abishev**, and former dissident **Erkin Sultanbekov**, who at one time was chairman of the Democratic Movement of Kazakhstan. The former deputy chairman of the National Security Committee, **Bulat Baekenov**, graduated here and worked in the local *Komsomol* (young communist league).

Alikhan Baimenov, appointed chairman of the Agency for State Service Affairs in 1999 and former head of the president's administration, was once deputy akim of Zhezkazgan Region.

KOSTANAY REGION

Population	1.12 million
Ethnic makeup	43% Russian, 17% Kazakh, 15% Ukrainian
Area	196,000 km ²
Regional Capital	Kostanay, Kazakh name Qostanay (population 219,100)
Akim of Kostanay	Vasily Kornev
Regional Akim	Umirzak Shukeev
Other main towns	Turgay, Arkalyk, Jetygara, Rudny and Lisakovsk
MPs	Viktor Vesnin, Khamit Amerguzhin, Serikbay Bisetaev, Sergei Zhalybin, Ramazan Sarpekov

Historical Background

The town of Kostanay was founded in 1883 and became the capital of Kostanay Region when the latter was formed in 1936. In the 1950s, Kostanay (like Astana) was a regional centre for Khrushchev's Virgin Lands scheme. It developed into a major industrial centre after the Kostanay basin's vast iron-ore deposits were discovered, by chance, in the 1950s.

Kostanay Region was enlarged in April 1997 to include the Amantogai, Amangeldy, Dzangeldinsk and Oktyabrsk districts of the former Turgay Region. Arkalyk, the former capital of Turgay Region, was also assigned to Kostanay.

Geography and Environment

Kostanay Region is situated in northern Kazakhstan. It borders the Kurgan, Chelyabinsk and Orenburg regions of Russia and a number of Kazakh regions. Kostanay can be divided into two distinctly different areas: the northern wooded steppe, rich in iron-ore and asbestos deposits, and the agricultural south. The capital, Kostanay, lies on the Tobol river. The nearest large city is Chelyabinsk, in Russia. There is a rail link to Almaty.

In early 1999, Russian Unified Energy Systems cut off the power supply to Kostanay Region as a result of non-payment.

Political Background

Ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and Germans dominated Kostanay's population until the inclusion of Turgay Region in April 1997 made it more ethnically balanced. The Cossack town of Troitsk lies 180 kilometres north of the town of Kostanay. A large Cossack community in Kostanay has its headquarters inside a Russian air force base on the outskirts of the town. The local Cossack leader has spoken openly of reuniting the region with Russia. The Cossack revival has created resentment among local Kazakhs, whose ancestors were driven from the fertile land by the Cossacks.

In August 1996 the co-chairmen of the Almaty-based Azamat opposition movement were detained while campaigning in Kostanay, during a visit by President Nazarbaev.

Pensioners held rallies in Kostanay in early 1999 to protest pension arrears.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Kostanay Region is rich in raw materials including magnetite and iron ores, bauxite, brown coal, asbestos, brick clay and building stone. A new coal deposit was discovered in Kuibyshev district in 1996. There are substantial reserves of bauxite around Arkalyk that feed the Pavlodar aluminium plant.

Metallurgy, power production and the construction industry are concentrated in the northern part of the region, where there is also some mixed farming. Kostanaykhimvolokno produces protective overalls and various industrial and decorative fabrics. The iron ore mining town of Lisakovsk is a Special Economic Zone in which goods are exempt from VAT on import and from customs duties. Corporate income tax here is reduced from 30% to 20%. These conditions will remain in place until 2010. Despite these measures, the Lisakovsk iron ore mining and processing complex went into bankruptcy towards the end of 1999. Karaganda Region's Ispat-Karmet steel producer has acquired the troubled works.

The Kazakhstan Minerals Corporation, otherwise known as KazMinCo, is based in Woking. It has several joint venture exploration projects in Kazakhstan, including copper and gold deposits in Karaganda Region. However, its primary viable deposit is Varvarinskoye, 130 kilometres south of Kostanay.

In the south of the region, grain cultivation and livestock rearing are the economic mainstays. With the opening of the Virgin Lands in the 1960s, Kostanay became the granary of Kazakhstan, with nearly six million hectares under crops.

Russia's Moked Trading Ltd recently acquired the bankrupt Kazogneupor factory, which makes fire-resistant materials. The factory is relatively modern and uses locally produced raw materials. Its main clients are Russian steel mills.

Local Politicians

The regional akim, ***Umirzak Shukeev***, is a former deputy prime minister and assistant head of the presidential administration. He has also served as minister for trade and the economy. Shukeev was born in 1964 and graduated from the Moscow Institute of Economics and Statistics.

Senators

Evgeny Aman was elected senator for Kostanay Region in September 1999. He is a member of the Senate Committee on Economics, Finance and the Budget. Aman, an agronomist by training, was president of the firm Kostanay-leasing from 1992 to 1999. He was also chairman of the Kostanay branch of the Nazarbaev support group in the run up to the 1999 presidential elections.

Beksultan Tutkushev is a surgeon and the deputy head doctor of the Kostanay hospital. He was elected to the Senate in 1995 and has served on the Senate International Affairs Committee and the Defence and Security Committee. He is now a member of the Senate Committee on Issues of Regional Development and Local Self-government.

Majilis MPs

The following Majilis MPs were elected as a result of the October 1999 national elections.

Viktor Vesnin was re-elected to the Majilis to represent Rudny constituency. Vesnin was born in Russia but studied mining in Rudny and then worked at the Sokolov-Sarbay Ore Production Association from 1973 until 1996. He has served as a member of the Majilis Economy, Finances and Budget Committee.

Khamit Amerguzhin was re-elected to the Majilis to represent the Denisovsky constituency. Amerguzhin has served as deputy chairman of the Majilis Village Deputies Group and as a member of the Agricultural Committee. He studied agriculture in Moscow before beginning work in agricultural administration and then moving into academia. Between 1994 and 1995 he was dean of the Chemical-Biological Faculty of Kazakhstan State University.

Serikbay Bisetaev, president of the Bisko Holding Company, was elected to represent the North Kostanay constituency. Bisetaev was born in 1938.

Sergei Zhalybin, an ethnic Russian born in 1950, is a former deputy minister of justice of Kazakhstan. Zhalybin was elected to represent the South Kostanay constituency. He began his career in the textile industry, then became a lawyer. He chaired the Kostanay Collegium of Lawyers from 1984 until 1996. He has formerly served as a senator in the upper house of the Kazakh parliament. Zhalybin has been a member of the *Azamat* political party in the past. He is now chairman of the Majilis Committee on Law and Legal Reform.

Ramazan Sarpekov was elected to represent Arkalyk constituency. Sarpekov, born in 1955, has spent most of his career in legal work. He was a judge at the Kostanay Regional Court before being elected to the Majilis.

Others

Luminaries from Kostanay include the former vice-president, **Erik Asanbaev**, former first deputy prime minister **Nigmatzhan Isingarin**, the Kazakh writer and now senator (appointed by the president) **Ivan Shchegolikhin**, and former secretary of the Kazakh Security Council **Baltash Tursunbaev**.

KYZYLORDA REGION

Population	614,000
Ethnic makeup	88.4% Kazakhs, 7.8% Russians, 1.08% Ukrainians, also Koreans, Germans, Tatars, Belarusians, Uzbeks and Chechens
Area	249,000 km ²
Regional Capital	Kyzylorda (population 158,000)
Akim of Kyzylorda	Kozhakhmet Baimakhanov
Regional Akim	Serikbay Nurgisaev
Other main towns	Aralsk and Kazalinsk
MPs	Uzakbay Karamanov, Bakyt Kuppenova, Abdizhalel Bakir

Historical Background

Kyzylorda is one of the oldest cities in southern Kazakhstan. It was originally known as Ak-Mechet and was part of the Kokand Khanate's northern frontier defences. It fell to Russia in 1853 and was given the name Perovsk. It was renamed Kzyl-Orda in 1925 and briefly became the capital of Soviet Kazakhstan. It was abandoned as capital in favour of Almaty in 1928 as the climate was found to be too hot. The current Kyzylorda Region was formed in 1938. The spelling of the region's name was changed in 1997.

Geography and Environment

Kyzylorda is situated in the *Jeti Su*, or Seven Rivers, region of southern Kazakhstan. The region is divided by the Syr-Darya river, which brings with it a fertile valley and abundant water supplies. Huge subterranean reserves of fresh water have been found in the desert regions.

Kyzylorda Region also borders the Aral Sea – the scene of one of the former Soviet Union's worst environmental disasters. The sea has shrunk to one third of its original size over the past thirty years, while its mineral content has risen three times. Two million hectares of arable land have been lost as a result of the ensuing drought and pollution, and regular dust storms now affect an area of over 500 square kilometres. The region has been designated an Ecological Disaster Area by the United Nations.

A \$7 million project, financed by the World Bank, has just been completed to supply 11 villages in Kyzylorda Region with clean drinking water. For the last decade, local villagers have had to rely on highly polluted deep wells for their water supplies. The project pipes water from artesian wells at Aral-Syrbulak to the region.

Political Background

Eighty percent of Kyzylorda's population is Kazakh – the highest percentage of any town in Kazakhstan. Consequently, use of the Kazakh language in official business is much more common than in other regions. Since 1993, Kazakhs living in Turkey have been free to return to Kyzylorda Region.

The Semirechye Cossacks of Southern Kazakhstan have a branch in Kyzylorda Region.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Kyzylorda is a Special Economic Zone. Import duties and goods taxes have been abolished and company taxes reduced. These conditions will remain in place until 2006.

Local oil company Yuzhneftegaz is the most important enterprise in the region. It has formed an oil production joint venture with Canada's Hurricane Hydrocarbons. Apart from oil and gas, the company is involved in road building, construction, farming, meat processing, dairy products and retailing. Geological surveys of only a small part of Kyzylorda's territory have shown huge mineral reserves including oil, natural gas, lead and gold.

The Baikonur cosmodrome, the launch-point for Soviet and then Russian space flights since 1961, is located 250 kilometres north west of the city of Kyzylorda. After disputes over the ownership of Baikonur led to riots by Kazakh soldiers in 1992 and 1993, Kazakhstan agreed in 1994 to lease the cosmodrome and the nearby town of Leninsk to Russia for 20 years for a rent of \$120 million per year. Payments have been patchy. The cosmodrome has been the source of more controversy recently, following the crash landing of two Russian rockets launched from the site.

The region's agriculture flourishes in the fertile valley of the Syr-Darya river, where rice, grapes and melons are grown and food processing is an important industry. Wool processing is also important: camel and sheep (karakul and fine-fleeced sheep) are reared.

Salt extraction is increasing due to the shrinkage of the Aral Sea.

A new railway line is planned to run north from Kyzylorda to Arkalyk via Zhezkazgan.

Local Politicians

Serikbay Nurgisaev is the akim of Kyzylorda Region. He was appointed in 1999, having been deputy akim for three years. Nurgisaev is an economist by training and has spent most of his career in regional administration, primarily in Almaty. He was born in 1956.

Senators

Bakbergen Dosmanbetov was elected to serve as senator for Kyzylorda Region in September 1999. He is a doctor of economics and former rector of Kyzylorda Pedagogical Institute. He is a former akim of Kyzylorda city.

Onalbek Sapiev has been a senator for the region since 1997. He is a lecturer by training and spent most of his pre-senate career teaching or in regional administration. He was born in 1944.

Majilis MPs

The following MPs were elected as a result of the October 1999 national parliamentary election.

Uzakbay Karamanov, a former prime minister of Kazakhstan (1990-1991) and state adviser, was elected to represent the Pri-Aralsky constituency. Karamanov, born in Kyzylorda city in 1937, is now president of the Kazakhstan Builders' Union.

Bakyt Kuppenova was elected to represent Kyzylorda constituency. Kuppenova was born in 1948 and is the deputy head of Kyzylorda Region's Department of Internal Affairs.

Abdizhalel Bakir was re-elected to the Majilis, to represent the Sheilisky constituency. Bakir is a Kazakh language and literature teacher by profession. He formerly worked in the *Komsomol* (young communist league) and the Kazakh Communist Party, and was chairman of Kyzylorda TV and Radio between 1991 and 1995. Bakir has served as a member of the Majilis Committee for Socio-Cultural Development.

MANGISTAU REGION

Population	346,400
Ethnic makeup	51% Kazakhs, 33% Russians, (also Ukrainians, Lezgins, Armenians, Chechens, Belarusians, Ingush, Germans, Ossetians)
Area	165,600 km ²
Regional Capital	Aktau (population 176,000)
Akim of Aktau	Serikh Ospanov
Regional Akim	Lyazzat Kiinov
Other main towns	Bautino, Eraliev, Zhana-Ozen
MPs	Kaurolla Erezhepov

Historical Background

Mangistau Region was formed in 1973 as Mangyshlyak Region, receiving its present name in 1990. Oil exploration in the region began in the 1950s, and the first well went into production in the 1960s.

The regional capital is Aktau, originally named Shevchenko, after a nineteenth century Ukrainian poet exiled to Kazakhstan. The city was founded in 1953 as a centre for uranium processing, and operated as a closed city funded by the USSR Ministry of Defence during the Soviet era. Aktau was also a popular holiday resort during this time. Since the end of the USSR its fortunes have changed however, and, with an end to Soviet subsidies and no market for its uranium, it has had to look to oil for its future.

Geography and Environment

Situated in south-western Kazakhstan, Mangistau borders the Karakalpak Republic of Uzbekistan to the east and Turkmenistan to the south.

The major Caspian port of Aktau is the capital of Mangistau Region. Over 3,000 kilometres from Almaty, the town suffers from poor road and trail connections. The Kazakh government is currently looking for \$16.5 million in investment to build a new airport and airfreight depot. The town will start repaying a \$54 million loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development this year. The money has been used for renovation and modernisation, and to build a new grain store. A desalination plant on the shores of the Caspian supplies the town's water.

The Kazakh government recently agreed to shut down Aktau's plutonium-producing nuclear reactor, built in 1971, which had originally been due to go out of commission in 1996. As this is the only fast breeder atomic reactor in Kazakhstan, and provides all the region's power, alternative power-generators will have to be found. The decommissioning process began in early 2000.

In 1998, a customs force based at the ports of Atyrau and Aktau began operating to extend Kazakh control over the area of the Caspian that Kazakhstan regards as its

territorial waters. The Kazakh Navy, which has four coastal patrol boats donated by the United States, is based at Aktau.

Mangistau Region is Kazakhstan's smallest in terms of population.

Political Background

Aktau has a mixed population with a relatively high percentage of Caucasians, primarily Armenians, Chechens and Ossetians. The port's ferry service to Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, was recently re-opened after having been suspended for nine years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, the service was again suspended over the winter of 1999-2000 by the Kazakh authorities, who cited the risk of the arrival of Chechen terrorists posing as refugees.

Kazakhs living in Turkey and Iran have been free to return to Kazakhstan since 1993, and some of the first groups to return have settled in Mangistau Region. The Kazakh Revival Party, a fairly weak, apolitical group formed in 1995 to represent "intelligentsia" interests, finds a high proportion of its supporters in the region.

President Nazarbaev visited Aktau in autumn 1997 to persuade workers at its nuclear power plant not to strike – despite the fact that they had not been paid for two years.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Mangistau is an oil-rich region. It has four large oil fields: Uzen, Zhetubai, Kalamkas and Karazhanbas, and numerous smaller fields. Local oil company Uzenmunaigas, in which the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) owns a large stake, owns and operates the Uzen field, while state-owned Mangistaumunaigas is responsible for, or has joint ventures in, the other fields. CNPC has agreed to invest \$9.5 billion in the Aktobe and Uzen fields, and to build a pipeline from the fields to north-eastern China. The pipeline idea has yet to get off the drawing board.

The Mangistau fuel-oil complex accounts for much of Kazakhstan's oil extraction and natural gas. Mangistau Region does not currently have an oil refinery, and crude is sent out of the region for refining. Many of the onshore fields are experiencing environmental and quality problems owing to poor maintenance.

CNPC, Canada's Triton Vuka and the US/Kazakh joint venture Kerr Magee are all involved in Mangistau's oil and gas fields. Karazhanbasmunai, a US-controlled company that operates the Karazhanbai oil field in the region, has recently been investigated by a government working group concerned by lay-offs, wage arrears and environmental problems.

Mangistau Region's old uranium and tourism industries are both now in decline. In 1998 Mangistau was reported to be one of three regions with the highest debts to the central government. However, development of the oilfields and the prospects of offshore oil in the Caspian Sea have brought a steady flow of Western investment and interest.

Aktau port has recently undergone a \$54 million development programme, paid for by an EBRD development loan. The port has been deepened to accommodate 8,000 dwt tankers. It has also been raised two metres, so that any increase in the sea level will not affect it. A new grain terminal, warehouses and port buildings have also been built. A

Bechtel/Enka (Turkey) joint venture won the tender to carry out the development. Before this development programme, the port concentrated on dry cargo – mainly steel from the Ispat-Karmet factory in Karaganda Region. Other cargoes included zinc, copper and asbestos.

Aktau's chemical and fertiliser plant, which had been mothballed for two years, restarted production in summer 1999. It is hoped that the plant, which employs 1,700 people, may begin to use raw materials provided by Southern Kazakhstan Region's Karatau phosphate deposit in the near future.

Mangistau Region has deposits of phosphates, coal, manganese, various salts and building stone. Its power stations are both oil- and nuclear-powered.

Many of Aktau's factories and amenities are still owned by Kazcor, a now privately owned company that was formerly run by the Soviet Ministry of Defence.

The towns of Fort Shevchenko and Bautino are host to large fish-processing plants, which process the catch of the floating fish factories that operate in the Caspian Sea.

Local Politicians

Former ecology minister **Nikolai Baev** was appointed regional akim in December 1997. Baev is an ethnic Russian who was born in the Saratov region of Russia. He is a mining engineer by profession and was formerly akim of Aktau, minister of ecology and biological resources and deputy chairman of the State Committee for the Defence Industries.

Senators

Mashanist Abylkhan became senator for Mangistau Region in September 1999. He is a mining engineer by training. Prior to becoming a senator, he served for five years as akim of the town of Zhanaozen. He was born in 1954.

Leonid Burlakov, an ethnic Russian born in 1947, is a former akim of Aktau. He first became a senator for the region in 1995. He is an economist by training and spent most of his pre-senate career in regional administration.

Majilis MPs

Kaurolla Erezhepov, already a sitting Majilis MP, was elected to the Mangistau constituency in October 1999. He is a former deputy chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Kazakhstan. Erezhepov was born in 1947.

NORTHERN KAZAKHSTAN REGION

Population	1.1 million
Ethnic makeup	60% Russian, 30% Kazakh
Area	123,200 km ²
Regional Capital	Petropavlovsk (population 216,700)
Akim of Petropavlovsk	Petr Khadeev
Regional Akim	Kazhmurat Nagmanov
Other main towns	Bulaevo, Krasnoarmeisk, Mamlyutka, Schuchinsk, Sergeevka and Stepnyak
MPs	Ivan Chirkalin, Mikhail Troshikhin, Zeinula Makashev

Historical Background

Petropavlovsk was founded in 1752 as a Cossack settlement to protect the Russian Siberian frontier. The settlement grew into the busy trade town of Petropavlovsk. The Trans-Siberian railway reached Petropavlovsk in the late nineteenth century, and the town became an important regional centre.

Petropavlovsk became a centre for heavy engineering during the Second World War, when whole factories were evacuated to the region from European Russia. Petropavlovsk was a closed city following the war, and still hosts a large number of defence factories.

The next great upheaval in the region's history was the Virgin Lands project, begun in spring 1954, which saw large areas of the local steppe ploughed up for grain production.

Northern Kazakhstan Region was enlarged to include the former region of Kokshetau in 1997. However, in early 1999 the town of Kokshetau and a number of its surrounding districts were made part of Akmola Region.

Geography and Environment

Northern Kazakhstan Region borders on the Kurgan, Tyumen and Omsk regions of Russia. The region has a severely continental climate, with harsh, long winters and short, hot summers.

Petropavlovsk lies on the river Ishim and feels very much a part of Siberia, being just 60 kilometres from the Russian border and over 1,800 kilometres from Almaty. The region includes a resort area known as "Little Switzerland" because of its forests, lakes and hills in an otherwise flat steppe.

It also has an extensive road network. Petropavlovsk is one of Kazakhstan's busiest rail freight terminals, lying at the junction of the Trans-Siberian and central Kazakhstan railway lines.

Northern Kazakhstan Region suffered a number of forest fires in 1999, which destroyed upwards of 1,300 hectares of forest.

Political Background

The population of Northern Kazakhstan Region and Petropavlovsk itself is predominantly Slav. Relations between local Slavs and Kazakhs went through a difficult period in 1994-95. The tension was caused by rumours that Petropavlovsk would be renamed Kereku, its old Kazakh name, coupled with a local refusal to register *Lad* (a movement designed to represent the interests of the Slav population) and a perceived government campaign against Boris Suprunyuk, an ethnic Russian activist. Suprunyuk was sentenced in 1995 to two years in gaol for slander and issuing "fascist propaganda". While at the time there was talk of creating a "Republic of Southern Siberia", more recently the situation has become calmer, with an acceptance of the validity of Slav ethnic influences. Petropavlovsk council refused the proposal to change the city's name, and it ended the practice of renaming streets and parks.

In 1997, the Ministry of Justice registered the Union of Cossacks of the Steppe Region. The Union includes Cossacks from the Akmola, Karaganda and Northern regions.

Ethnic Kazakh families began arriving in Northern Kazakhstan Region from Mongolia in 1993.

Economy, Trade and Investment

The economy of Northern Kazakhstan is mixed, with agriculture and industry playing equally important roles. The region's once-substantial defence industry has withered, and some former military factories have begun producing transistor radios and other consumer goods. Local factories also produce agricultural machinery, farm vehicles and food processing equipment.

The Petropavlovsk Heavy Machinery Plant has seen production and profits tumble in recent years. The plant now concentrates on making machinery for the oil and gas extraction business.

Northern Kazakhstan is one of the country's leading grain producers, cultivating spring wheat, barley, oats and buckwheat. The region's harvested area totals 4.4 million hectares. There is also flour milling, meat processing and a dairy industry. Locally bred sheep supply wool for local mills. The region's agricultural base was strengthened by the addition to it of the former Kokshetau Region, the economy of which was particularly strong in this sector.

The region has deposits of hard coal, dolomite, gold, platinum, uranium, limestone and common salt. A new coal deposit was discovered in Kuibyshev district in 1996, near the conjunction of Northern Kazakhstan, Kostanay and Akmola regions.

Petropavlovsk airport began servicing international flights in 1999. It now hosts flights to the UAE, Cyprus, Turkey and Germany.

An American company, Access Industries, now owns Petropavlovsk No 2 power station and the North Kazakhstan power distribution company.

Local Politicians

Kazhmurat Nagmanov is the akim of Northern Kazakhstan Region. Nagmanov, born in 1948 and a railway engineer by training, is a former Majilis deputy and akim of East

Kazakhstan Region. He left his post in East Kazakhstan in 1997 following a scandal, and was then hospitalised with a heart complaint. Little was heard of him until his appointment as akim of Northern Kazakhstan Region in October 1999.

Senators

Tasbai Simambaev was re-elected senator for Northern Kazakhstan Region in September 1999. He is an agronomist by training and spent most of his pre-senate career in regional administration and state farming. Simambaev is also secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on International Affairs and Security.

Kairulla Eskendirov has served as a senator for the region since 1997. He is a lawyer by training and a colonel in the police force. His career has included stints in the army, as a town deputy prosecutor, and as head of the Kokshetau Department of Internal Affairs. He was born in 1940.

Majilis MPs

Ivan Chirkalin, born in 1947, was deputy akim of Northern Kazakhstan Region before being voted in to the Majilis to represent Petropavlovsk constituency. Chirkalin is an ethnic Russian. He now chairs the Majilis Committee for Economic Reform and Regional Development,

Mikhail Troshikhin, an ethnic Russian born in 1949, is a local government official. He chairs the Majilis Committee on Agriculture.

Zeinula Makashev, aged 50, is a lawyer by training and a former head of the Justice Department of Northern Kazakh Region. Makashev represents constituency No. 52.

Others

Former akim **Daniyal Akhmetov** was made deputy prime minister in charge of the industrial sector in October 1999. He was born in Pavlodar and studied economics at the local Industrial Institute. He made his career in the Pavlodar construction industry and in the local Communist Party administration. He was akim of Pavlodar from 1993 until he transferred to Northern Kazakhstan in December 1997.

Asygat Zhabagin, a former Kazakh minister for energy, industry and trade and a former deputy prime minister, was Communist Party leader of Northern Kazakhstan from 1988 until 1991. He is now a successful businessman.

Another former akim, **Zhanybek Karibzhanov**, went on to serve as deputy prime minister in charge of CIS relations, agricultural reform, migration and demographic issues.

PAVLODAR REGION

Population	873,900
Ethnic makeup	45.4% Russians, 28.5% Kazakhs, 10.1% Germans, 9.2% Ukrainians
Area	124,800 km ²
Regional Capital	Pavlodar (population 321,000)
Akim of Pavlodar	Vladimir Pykhtin
Regional Akim	Galimzhan Zhakiyanov
Other main towns	Ekibastuz, Ermak and Irtysh
MPs	Vladimir Dvoretzky, Serikbay Alibaev, Tito Syzdykov, Yury Lavrinenko

Historical Background

Pavlodar Region takes its name from the regional capital. While the region is a fairly modern invention, formed in 1938, the city of Pavlodar dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. As its name suggests, it was founded by Russians. Pavlodar was developed as an industrial town during the Soviet era, and was closed to foreigners until 1992. Despite its intense industrialisation, the city is older and more architecturally diverse than most other northern Kazakh towns.

Geography and Environment

Pavlodar Region lies in north-east Kazakhstan. The region has a severely continental climate, and is prone to drought. The town of Pavlodar lies on the middle course of the river Irtysh, over 1,700 kilometres from Almaty, but only 110 kilometres from the Russian border. An important rail junction, at the meeting point of the north-south and the Trans-Siberian lines, it has one of the busiest freight terminals in Kazakhstan. The surrounding area is renowned for its lakes and forests.

Pavlodar Region is suffering the consequences of industrialisation, in the form of environmental pollution. The town of Ermak (Aksu) is one of Kazakhstan's dirtiest: the Aksu Ferrous Smelting Plant discharges lead, chrome, zinc, nickel and phosphorous into the air. The regional government has recently unveiled plans for a \$12 million programme to prevent mercury pollution of the Irtysh river. The Pavlodar Chemical Plant, built in 1973 as part of the Soviet military industrial complex, is planning to spend \$5.8 million over the next two years to clean up 970 tonnes of mercury that has accumulated on the plant's territory.

Political Background

The political organisations active in Pavlodar Region reflect its multi-ethnic population. They include the Slav cultural association *Slaviya*, which has links with *Lad*, a national movement set up to protect the interests of the Slav population, and the ethnic German

Wiedergeburt (Rebirth) organisation. Ethnic Kazakhs immigrating from Mongolia have been encouraged to settle in Pavlodar. Kazakh nationalist organisations such as Alash and Azat are active in the region.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Pavlodar is a highly industrialised region. It provides 60% of Kazakhstan's electric power. The mainstays of the regional economy are the Bogatyr opencast coal mine (one of the world's largest opencast mines), the Ekibastuz power stations, aluminium smelting, oil refining and metallurgy. The Bogatyr mine and one of Ekibastuz's power stations are now majority-owned by an American company, Access Industries. The local Kazakh branch of this company is called Bogatyr Access Komir. However, Access Industries has established a joint venture with Russian Unified Energy Systems, named UralTEC, which it hopes will include the Bogatyr mines in the future.

A once-powerful regional defence industry has crumbled since the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Pavlodar is home to Aluminium of Kazakhstan, which owns the Pavlodar aluminium smelter, two bauxite mines, one limestone mine, and a power station. The company has over 10,000 employees. The Askur Ferroalloy Plant is Kazakhstan's only ferroalloy producer. It recently launched a new iron chip grinder which could save the company \$500,000 a year in production costs.

The Pavlodar oil refinery, now known as the Petroleum Refinery-CCL Joint-Stock Company, was put under the management of the US-registered company CCL Oil in 1997. However, a legal wrangle has since arisen over ownership of the refinery's assets, which have been passed over to Mangistau Region's Mangistaumunaigas, in lieu of receivables from CCL Oil. The refinery performed poorly in 1999, having been closed for the first half of the year due to lack of crude supplies (itself the result of ongoing cash flow problems). Formerly, the refinery depended on crude oil supplies from Siberia, but more recently it has been looking to Kazakh oil supplies, and barter deals, for its crude.

Pavlodar's coal fuels the Ekibastuz power stations, and is also exported in large quantities to Russia. The regional government is planning to build a new rail link between Pavlodar and Russia's Omsk Region, which will cut coal transport costs and increase exports. Mining output in 1999 was 84% of 1998 levels.

Agriculture has been intensively developed since Khrushchev's Virgin Lands projects of the 1950s and early 1960s. Most of the cultivated land lies in the north of the region and is used for grain production. Fine-fleeced sheep are the most common livestock. There is hunting in the semi-arid desert regions, and a substantial timber industry in the forest along the river Irtysh.

Kazakhstantractor, an agricultural machinery producer based on the bankrupted Pavlodartractor, has been promised a \$8.8 million loan from the Kazakh government. The factory produced only 453 tractors in 1998, compared with a projected possible annual production rate of 55,000.

Local Politicians

The regional akim, ***Galimzhan Zhakiyanov***, is a young businessman with a pro-reform reputation. He was akim of Semey from 1994 until 1996, and headed the National Agency for Control over Strategic Resources during from 1996 until 1997. President Nazarbaev appointed him Akim of Pavlodar in December 1997. He was born in 1963 in Eastern Kazakhstan Region.

Senators

Sagyndyk Esimkhanov was elected to represent the region in the Senate in September 1999. He is an economist and engineer by training. He was chairman of the Asar Association of Young Entrepreneurs from 1992-1993 and director of the Pavlodar branch of Kazcommertzbank from 1993-1997. Esimkhanov then became head of the region's financial department. He was born in 1959.

Ernek Zhumabaev, born in 1949 and a lawyer by profession, has been a member of the Senate since the end of 1995. He is head of the Senate Legislation and Legal-Juridical Reform Committee. He is also a member of the Commission on Human Rights under the president.

Majilis MPs

The Majilis MPs listed below were all elected or re-elected during the October 1999 national election.

Vladimir Dvoretzky, a businessman and general director of a limited company, was elected to represent Pavlodar constituency No 47. Dvoretzky is an ethnic Russian, and was born in 1946.

Serikbay Alibaev was elected to the Ekibastuzsky constituency. Alibaev, who was born in 1947, is chairman of the Pavlodar Region Committee for Regulating Natural Monopolies and Protecting Competition.

Tito Syzdykov, born in 1948, represents the Aksusky constituency. Syzdykov was formerly the Akim of Aksu.

Yury Lavrinenko, a former akim of Pavlodar, minister of transport and prime-ministerial adviser, was elected to represent a Kokshetau constituency. Lavrinenko, who is an ethnic Russian, was elected after serving as deputy akim of Akmola Region.

SOUTHERN KAZAKHSTAN REGION

Population	2.0 million
Ethnic makeup	55.7% Kazakhs, 15.3% Russians, 2.4% Germans (also other nationalities, including a large Uzbek population).
Area	117,300 km ²
Regional Capital	Shymkent (population 439,800)
Akim of Shymkent	Anarbek Urmanov
Regional Akim	Berdibek Saparbaev
Other main towns	Lenger, Dzhetysai, Kentau, Turkestan, Arys, Saryagash, Chardara
MPs	Tulebek Kosmambetov, Myrzageldy Kemel, Orazaly Sabden, Nurbakh Rustemov, Amalbek Tshanov, Kuanyszbek Tulemetov, Zharmakhan Tuyakbay Erkhali Sarmanov, Nurdaulet Sarsenov

Historical Background

Shymkent city was founded in the seventh century as a staging post on the Silk Road. The town prospered from trade between steppe nomads and the settled subjects of the Kokand Khanate. Kokand built a frontier fort in Shymkent during the nineteenth century, which was captured by Russia in 1864 after heavy shelling. The town has been entirely rebuilt since the Second World War. Shymkent Region was formed in 1932. Its name was changed to Southern Kazakhstan region in 1992.

About 100 kilometres north-west of Shymkent, at the edge of the Kyzylkum desert, is the town of Turkestan (population 76,000), which is the site of the fourteenth-century mausoleum of the Sufi teacher Qozha Akhmed Yasai. Turkestan is a place of pilgrimage and is known in Kazakhstan as the "Second Mecca".

Geography and Environment

Southern Kazakhstan Region lies in the basin of the Syr-Darya river. The town of Shymkent is polluted by industries based on locally mined lead. The region has a climate favourable to agriculture.

The region's transport and communications infrastructure is relatively well developed. The government has promised \$7.1 million to the region in 2000 for the construction of a new highway that will connect Southern Kazakhstan Region with Uzbekistan.

South Kazakhstan Region is Kazakhstan's biggest in terms of population.

Political Background

Ethnic Kazakhs form a high proportion of the population in Southern Kazakhstan Region. Shymkent saw riots in 1986 after Mikhail Gorbachev appointed an ethnic Russian to head the Kazakh Communist Party and was under martial law for a year afterwards.

There is a relatively large Kurdish community in the region, numbering around 30,000. Shymkent has its own Kurdish ethnic cultural centre. Masanchi is the historic centre of Kazakhstan's Hui or Dungan (ethnic Chinese Muslim) community and it is home to a Hui Cultural Association.

A wide range of political and ethnic associations are active in the region including the opposition movement Azamat, the nationalist Kazakh party Azat, the anti-nuclear Nevada-Semei-Lop Nur movement and the Almaty/Helsinki/Paris Human Rights Committee.

There have been problems on the border between South Kazakhstan Region and Uzbekistan. In early 2000, a small group of Uzbeks with an armoured personnel carrier started unilaterally demarcating the border. Astana and Tashkent went into "intense diplomatic contact" over the event, and official border delimitation talks have commenced.

Workers at the Shymkent phosphorus plant went on hunger strike in May 1999 to protest about wage arrears. Their action sparked off a wave of protests across southern Kazakhstan.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Southern Kazakhstan Region has well-developed industry and agriculture and also a good transport infrastructure. There are important reserves of iron ore, mixed metallic ores, brown coal, marble and other minerals in the mountainous Karatau district. There are also petrochemical and pharmaceutical producers.

The region has faced periodic energy crises due to payment arrears for power supplied from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. However, in early 2000 the region ended its dependence on power imports by beginning to use power produced at Pavlodar Region's Ekibastuz station. The region has also begun a programme to increase its own power production by 2002. This will involve modernising three Shymkent power stations and rebuilding the Sharadairn hydro-electric station.

Local lead smelters traditionally make bullets from locally mined lead, giving Shymkent the nickname "ammunition city". However, the Shymkent Lead Plant was declared bankrupt at the end of 1998 and was due to be put up for auction in 1999. The plant produces gold, silver, cadmium and bismuth, as well as lead.

Shymkent is home to Kazakhstan's largest oil refinery, Shymkentnefteorgsintez, which refines oil primarily from the Hurricane Kumkol Munai field in Kyzylorda Region. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) helped fund construction of the pipeline that supplies the refinery with Kazakh feedstock. The refinery and Hurricane (Canada) are currently considering merger.

Southern Kazakhstan is the only significant cotton-growing region in Kazakhstan. Cereals, melons, watermelons and other fruit are major crops in a region famous for its orchards. Astrakhan and fine-fleeced sheep are bred to supply woollen mills and clothing factories.

The central government has promised the region \$1.4 million to rebuild Shymkent airport, which may be given international status after the work. The EBRD and the World Bank have funded a programme to develop Shymkent's municipal transport.

The international TAB fibre optic line linking Asia and Europe (to be built by Siemens and the national telecoms company) will run through Southern Kazakhstan.

Local Politicians

Berdibek Saparbaev was appointed regional akim in July 1999. Previously, he served as akim of Kyzylorda Region. He was also Kazakhstan's deputy minister of education in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Saparbaev was born in 1953 in the Kazakh village of Besaryk. He graduated from the Academy of the National Economy in economic sciences.

Senators

Kuanyszbek Bultaev was re-elected as senator for the region in September 1999. Bultaev, an engineer by training, is a long-serving politician who made his career in the Communist Party. He was secretary of the regional council from 1994 until 1995. He is a member of the Senate Committee for Legislation and Legal-Juridical Reform. Bultaev was born in 1947.

Sailaukul Zhapbarovna is a teacher of Russian language and literature by training. She began working for the local Communist Party in 1967, gradually working her way up. In 1995 she became deputy akim of South Kazakhstan Region, and in 1997 she became the region's senator.

Majilis MPs

The following MPs were elected as a result of the October 1999 national parliamentary election.

Tulebek Kosmambetov, head of the South Kazakhstan Regional Department on Migration and Demography, represents the Aryskey constituency in the Majilis. Kosmambetov was born in 1947.

Myrzageldy Kemel was re-elected to represent the Ontustiksky constituency No 58. Before becoming an MP, he worked for the Government's Foreign Investments Committee in Almaty. Kemel was born in 1949.

Orazaly Sabden, a serving Majilis deputy, was re-elected to represent the Ordabasynsky constituency No 59. Sabden was born in 1947.

Nurbakh Rustemov, president of the Eastern Trading Company, was elected to represent the Turkestan constituency. He was born in 1965.

Amalbek Tshanov, born in 1943, was elected to represent Al-Farabiisky constituency No 54. Tshanov is a former minister of construction and akim of Zhambyl Region.

Kuanyszbek Tulemetov, aged 58, is president of Shymkent Munai Onimderi. He has been elected to represent the Kazygurtsky constituency No 56.

Zharmakhan Tuyakbay was deputy prosecutor general of Kazakhstan and military procurator of Kazakhstan before being elected to the Majilis. He is now speaker of the Majilis. He was born in 1947.

Erkhali Sarmanov, aged 44, has been elected to represent his local constituency, Sairamsky. Before being elected, he was head of the region's Department of Education.

Nurdaulet Sarsenov was elected to represent the Abay constituency after re-run elections in December 1999. Sarsenov, born in 1954, is chairman of the board of the Turan Financial and Industrial Group, Shymkent.

Others

Former MPs from the region include **Nikolai Akuev**, who is a member of the Constitutional Council and **Umirzak Shukeev**, who is now akim of Kostanay Region, having been deputy prime minister and assistant head of the presidential administration. Another former regional MP is **Valentina Sivryukova**, a trade union leader.

WESTERN KAZAKHSTAN

Population	647,300
Ethnic makeup	55.8% Kazakhs, 34.4% Russians, 4.5% Ukrainians, 2% Tatars (smaller numbers of other nationalities).
Area	151,300 km ²
Regional Capital	Uralsk (Oral in Kazakh)
Akim of Uralsk	Oleg Rakhimberdin
Regional Akim	Kabibulla Dzhakupov
Other main towns	Aksai
MPs	Khairat Shalabaev, Vladimir Asanov, Valerian Zemlyanov

Historical Background

Uralsk is the largest and oldest town in Western Kazakhstan Region. It was founded as a fort in 1613 and became a staging post on one of the northern Silk Road routes. It gained its current name in 1775. It now has a population of over 213,000.

The region of Western Kazakhstan was formed in 1932. It was renamed Ural in 1962, but regained its original name in 1992. The region's prospects were transformed by the discovery of the massive Karachagank oil and gas field in 1979.

Geography and Environment

Western Kazakhstan is bordered on two sides by Russia, with Astrakhan and Volgograd to the west, Saratov and Orenburg to the north. Two-thirds of the regional population lives in the countryside. People from Mangistau and Aktobe tend to migrate to Western Kazakhstan during the winter to escape their dire living conditions.

The regional capital, Uralsk, is over 2,700 kilometres from Almaty but only 50 kilometres from the Russian border. It lies on the Ural river, which flows south from Russia's Ural mountains. The Ural river marks the dividing line between Europe and Asia.

The missile testing site of Kapustin Yar is situated in this region.

Political Background

The local branches of the Socialist Party of Kazakhstan, Azat and Democratic Urals have worked with the regional authorities on improving living and working conditions, foreign investment and other issues through a Public Consultative Council chaired by the akim.

Western Kazakhstan is home to a number of ethnic movements: the Vozrozhdenie (Revival) movement was set up in 1990 to demand that local Ural Cossacks be allowed to reunite with Russia. The movement's former Chairman, Vodolazov, was a Western Kazakhstan MP in the 1994-1995 parliament and a member of the Legal Development of Kazakhstan opposition movement. The Naryn movement was set up in 1992 to demand that the military return the Naryn-Peski lands to the indigenous population.

The national Movement of Soldiers' Mothers held its founding congress in Uralsk in 1992. The centrist Kazakh Revival Party, which aspires to represent the middle classes, has some support in the region.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Western Kazakhstan's economy is based on gas, condensate and oil reserves. The Karachaganak oil and gas condensate field, discovered in 1979 in the pre-Caspian basin, is one of the largest in the world. It lies very close to the Russian border. The field is being developed by a joint venture involving Agip, British Gas, Texaco and Russia's Gazprom, and provides employment for most of Aksai's inhabitants. Kazakhstan recently signed a multi-million dollar deal on building a 460 kilometre pipeline to connect the Karachaganak field with the Caspian Pipeline Consortium pipeline, which will link the Tengiz oilfield to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk. Kazakhstan's partners for this project are Agip/Eni, British Gas, Texaco and LUKoil.

Western Kazakhstan has deposits of oil, gas, oil shale, various salts and building materials. The region's energy comes from transported natural gas, coal and fuel oil. There are over 90 industrial enterprises in the region, including Kazakhgazprom, a state gas company created in Uralsk in 1991 to develop the gas supply industry.

Western Kazakhstan has 15 million hectares of agricultural land, used mainly for grain production. Agricultural production relies on an extensive and complicated irrigation system.

Western Kazakhstan benefits from streamlined customs and immigration procedures under a Kazakhstan/Russia border co-operation agreement. The agreement also seeks to improve transport links, promote closer co-operation in the use of natural resources and improve management of natural and industrial disasters.

Local Politicians

Regional akim ***Kabibulla Dzhakupov***, a construction engineer by profession, is also an academic adviser to the Engineering Academy. He made his career first in agricultural construction, and then in the Communist Party administration and Western Kazakhstan's local government. He was first appointed akim in 1992.

Senators

Rashid Akhmetov became a senator for Western Kazakhstan Region in September 1999. He is a member of the Senate Committee on Economics, Finances and the Budget. Akhmetov, born in 1959, is a mechanical engineer by training. He spent a large part of his pre-senate life working on the railways, before becoming president of a private company in 1994.

Amangeldy Taspikhov has been a senator for the region since 1998. He is a mechanical engineer by training and spent his early career in engineering. He was president of a private company for ten years before becoming a senator. He was born in 1959.

Majilis MPs

The following Majilis deputies were elected as a result of the national elections held in October 1999.

Khairat Shalabaev was elected to represent the Akzhaisky constituency. Shalabaev is head of the Western Kazakhstan Regional Agricultural Department.

Vladimir Asanov, born in 1951, was elected to represent the Burli constituency. Asanov is also general director of an agricultural company called Asan.

Valerian Zemlyanov was re-elected as the representative for the Uralsk constituency. Zemlyanov, an ethnic Russian, was born in 1943. He is a metal factory worker by profession, and a member of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan.

Others

Engels Gabbasov, born in 1937 in Western Kazakhstan Region and a native of Uralsk, is a writer and journalist by profession and secretary of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan. Gabbasov sponsored a parliamentary motion opposing Russian use of Kazakh weapons test centres and appealed to the president to close them down in 1997. He had published a series of articles in the Russian press describing the effects of these test centres on the local population. He ran for president in the January 1999 election and got 0.76% of the vote.

ZHAMBYL REGION

Population	1.0 million
Ethnic makeup	48.8% Kazakhs, 26.5% Russians, also Kurds, Germans, Tatars, Ukrainians, Turks, Uighurs, Kyrgyz, Belarusians, Chechens and Bashkirs
Area	144,200 km ²
Regional Capital	Taraz (population 298,200)
Akim of Taraz	Bolat Zheltisheev
Regional Akim	Serik Umbetov
Other main towns	Chui, Karatou, Zhanatas
MPs	Karatai Turysov, Sherkhan Murtaza, Zhabek Abdiev, Gani Kaliev

Historical Background

The region's capital, Taraz, was founded in the sixth century as the Silk Road settlement of Talas. During the seventh century it became a great trade and craft centre, equalling Tashkent and Samarkand in terms of size and fame. The importance of the city gradually receded, however, until its fortunes were revived in the nineteenth century when it became a northern frontier fort of the Kokand Khanate and was re-named *Aulie Ata* (holy father). The city grew quickly during this period, but fell to the Russians in 1864.

The town was industrialised and rebuilt during the Soviet era, and in 1936 was re-named Zhambyl, after the Kazakh bard Zhambyl Zhabaev, who was born there. It is now known as Kazakhstan's "chemical town", but is also reputed to be the greenest town in Kazakhstan, after Almaty. Zhambyl reverted to its historical name of Taraz in 1997.

Zhambyl Region was formed in 1939.

Geography and Environment

Zhambyl is an arid southern region of deserts and barren steppe. The largest rivers are the Chu and the Talas. The western, freshwater end of Lake Balkhash is within Zhambyl Region. The lake is the fourth largest in Asia at 17,400 square kilometres, but it is quite shallow at 26 metres. There are two large reservoirs in the region: Tasutkol and Akkol. However, the region relies on water supplies from Kyrgyzstan via the Bolshoi Chuisky canal. The Kyrgyz closed the canal in summer 1999 and restricted water supplies to Zhambyl Region for two weeks in a dispute over mutual debts between the two countries.

Gas supplies from Uzbekistan to Zhambyl Region were also halted a number of times during 1999 owing to non-payment of debts. The region relies on Uzbek gas because the gas fields of Western Kazakhstan Region are too far away for a pipeline to be currently feasible.

Taraz is a modern, Soviet-style town which used to be heavily polluted by its three fertiliser factories, two of which have now switched production for economic and environmental reasons. The region's transport and communications infrastructure is fairly well developed.

Zhambyl Region is home to the Gvardeisky Guards Garrison in the town of Otar. Approximately 10,000 staff live at the garrison, which has faced severe financial problems: during the 1999-2000 winter, the garrison was without heating fuel for weeks.

Political Background

The majority of the population of Taraz is ethnically Kazakh. There was serious rioting in Taraz in 1986 after USSR First Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev appointed an ethnic Russian to head the Kazakh Communist Party. The town was under martial law for a year afterwards. Some anti-Russian sentiment remains today. The Semirechye Cossacks of Southern Kazakhstan have a branch in Zhambyl Region.

The Kazakh special services have stated that Zhambyl Region is home to a number of illegal religious organisations. Police arrested 70 people at a Sunni Muslim summer camp near Taraz in summer 1999, confiscating religious material from them. The arrests were followed by a mass hunger strike by the families of those arrested. Some of those detained were charged with participating in the activity of an illegal public association, but all were released within a few weeks under amnesty.

Kurds living in Zhambyl Region held a rally in 1999 to protest against a death sentence passed in a Turkish court on the leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party. Taraz has a Kurdish ethnic centre.

Workers at the Taraz phosphorus plant went on hunger strike in spring 1999 in protest at wage arrears, some dating back three years. Workers from various Taraz chemical plants, who have been disabled by their work, went on hunger strike in two months later to protest arrears in special payments due to them.

Economy, Trade and Investment

Zhambyl Region's economy is based on the chemical industry, light manufacturing (leather and wool) and food processing, and these industries all use local raw materials. The region is home to a number of mines, which work deposits of phosphorites, non-ferrous metals and hard coal.

The region's chemical factories have suffered a harsh post-Soviet decline and have generally ground to a standstill. The phosphorous factory in Taraz, formerly used by the Soviet military and equipped with napalm production facilities, spent the whole of 1999 out of production due to severe financial difficulties. The Novozhambyl phosphorus plant remained in production, but turned out only 4,880 tonnes of yellow phosphorus. Workers at the Zhanatas ore dressing plant held a rally in autumn 1999 to press for new jobs and more investment. The plant has a new investor, Kazeks of Israel.

Aktal Ltd, a Kazakh company, has received a licence to begin development of the Kok-Dzhon phosphorite deposit, in a project which it is hoped will lead to the creation of 400 jobs. Phosphorite from the deposit will be processed at the Zhanatas and Karatau (South Kazakhstan Region) plants.

The region specialises in the production of leather footwear. In 1997, the National Iranian Industries Organisation bought a stake in the Zhambyl shoe and leather factory.

The international TAB fibre-optic line linking Asia and Europe (to be built by Siemens and Kazakhtelekom) will run through Zhambyl Region.

The region's agriculture is based on irrigated farming and livestock rearing. Crops include wheat, barley, millet, maize, vegetables, melons and watermelons. Fine-fleeced and other varieties of sheep are bred in the upland areas, and Astrakhan sheep in the northern desert districts. Agricultural production has fallen steeply in the post-Soviet era, owing in part to a lack of fertilisers, parts and fuel. In 1999, for example, Zhambyl's farmers received only 2% of the fertilisers they needed, and just 8% of the petrol needed.

The region's Merkinsky dairy products plant recently put a new, German-produced assembly line into production. The lakes and reservoirs are all, apparently, abundant in fish.

Local Politicians

Akim of Zhambyl Region *Serik Umbetov* is an agricultural specialist who made his career first in agriculture and then in the Almaty regional administration, rising to akim in 1996, before being demoted to deputy akim in 1997. He was appointed to Zhambyl Region in early 1999.

Senators

Omirbek Baigeldy was re-elected as a senator for the region in September 1999. He is also deputy speaker of the Senate. He was a presidential adviser and akim of Zhambyl from 1992-1995. Baigeldy visited the UK in July 1997, at the invitation of the Interparliamentary Union. He was born in 1939.

Zhandar Karibaev has been a senator for the region since 1995. Before that he was head of the Zhambyl regional cultural department. He spent the early part of his career as a teacher and then a newspaper editor, before joining the local administration. Karibaev was born in 1939.

Majilis MPs

The following Majilis deputies were elected as a result of the national elections held in October 1999.

Karatai Turysov held high positions in the Kazakh government in 1990 and 1991, then chaired the Central Electoral Commission until 1994. He now chairs the Majilis Finance and Budget Committee. Turysov was born in 1934.

Sherkhan Murtaza was re-elected to the Majilis to represent the Karataisky constituency. Murtaza, born in 1932, is a journalist by profession and is on the editorial board of the *Egemen Kazakhstsan* newspaper.

Zhabek Abdiev was elected to the Majilis for the Taraz constituency in January 2000, after the election for the seat had to be repeated owing to irregularities during the October elections.

Gani Kaliev, an academician, was elected to represent the Shusky constituency. Kaliev is president of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Kazakhstan and director of the Kazakh Scientific Research Centre for Agro-industrial Economics and Organisation. Kaliev was born in 1938.

Others

Sarybai Kalmurzaev, born in Zhambyl Region in 1949, was akim of the region from 1998 until 1999, when he was appointed head of the president's administration. Kalmurzaev is an economist by profession and previously headed the State Committee for the Management of State Property.

Myrzatai Dzholdasbekov, former Kazakh ambassador to Iran and deputy prime minister, and now director of the Diplomatic Academy, was born in Zhambyl Region.

APPENDIX 1

Senators Appointed by the President

Oralbai Abdykarimov is speaker of the Senate. Abdykarimov is a former head of the president's administration and chairman of the Supreme Disciplinary Council. He has also served as chairman of the State Commission for the Fight Against Corruption. He was born in 1944 in Karaganda Region.

Mukhtar Kul-Mukhamed was appointed senator in late 1999. He is a writer and editor by profession, and became president of the Atamura publishing house in 1992. He is a doctor of law and a member of the New York Academy of Sciences. He was born in 1960 in China.

Gulzhana Karagusova is a doctor of economics and was a professor at Kazakhstan's State University for twenty years. She was chairman of the Kazakh National Stock Market Commission in the mid-1990s and chairman of the Senate Committee on Economics, Finances and the Budget. Karagusova was born in 1950 in Almaty.

Pavel Atrushkevich is a professor of technical sciences and was rector of Kazakhstan's State Architectural and Building Academy from 1992 until 1999. He is chairman of the Belorussian National Cultural Centre in Almaty. Atrushkevich was born in 1933 in Minsk.

Shamsha Berkimbaeva is a teacher of Kazakh language and literature by profession and former deputy minister of education. Berkimbaeva ran in the 1999 Majilis elections for the Otan party but was beaten in the second round. She was born in 1942 in Almaty Region.

Ivan Schegolikhin, who lives in Almaty and was formerly a Majilis deputy for the city, was re-appointed to the Senate in December 1999. Schegolikhin, an ethnic Russian, is a former doctor and is now a well-known writer. He has served on the Senate Committee for International Affairs, Defence and Security. He is also a former member of the President's Consultative Council (later renamed State Policy Council). He was born in Kostanay Region in 1927.

Nina Kayupova – Kayupova is a professor of medical science, specialising in gynaecology. Prior to becoming a senator in November 1999, she was director of the Republican Research Centre for Protecting the Health of Mothers and Babies. She was born in 1936 in Eastern Kazakhstan Region.

Senators Elected by Joint Sessions of Regional Councils

Short biographies of these senators are given under their regional headings.

Fedor Dobryshin – Akmola Region
Amangeldy Syzdykov – Akmola Region
Beibit Zhusupov – Astana City
Amanzhol Bulekpaev – Astana City
Boranbai Kusainov – Aktyubinsk Region
Idelbai Imankulov – Aktyubinsk Region
Mars Battalov – Almaty Region
Nusupzhan Nurmanbetov – Almaty Region
Zhabaikhhan Abdildin – Almaty Region
Saken Seidualiev – Almaty City
Ermekkali Bigaliev – Atyrau Region
Askar Kuzhagaliev – Atyrau Region
Zauresh Battalova – Eastern Kazakhstan Region
Yury Okshin – Eastern Kazakhstan Region
Duman Abildinov – Karaganda Region
Ualikhan Kaisarov – Karaganda Region
Beksultan Tutkushev – Kostanay Region
Evgeny Aman – Kostanay Region
Onalbek Sapiev – Kyzylorda Region
Bakbergen Dosmanbetov – Kyzylorda Region
Leonid Burlakov – Mangistau Region
Mashanist Abylkhan – Mangistau Region
Kairulla Eskendirov – Northern Kazakhstan Region
Tasbai Simambaev – Northern Kazakhstan Region
Ermek Zhumabaev – Pavlodar Region
Sagyndyk Esimkhanov – Pavlodar Region
Sailaukul Barakhova – Southern Kazakhstan Region
Kuanyshbek Bultaev – Southern Kazakhstan Region
Rashid Akhmetov – Western Kazakhstan Region
Amangeldy Taspikhov – Western Kazakhstan Region
Omirbek Baigeldy – Zhambyl Region
Zhandar Karibaev – Zhambyl Region

APPENDIX 2

Majilis Members

The following ten deputies were elected during the October 1999 Majilis elections according to party lists.

Communist Party of Kazakhstan

Serikbolsin Abdildin – Sixty-three year old leader of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, he is also head of department and a professor at the Kazakhstan State Agrarian University. Abdildin lives in Almaty. He was born in the former Semipalatinsk Region (now Eastern Kazakhstan Region).

Boris Sorokin – born in 1950 in Tuva, he is an adviser to Abdildin. Sorokin spent most of his pre-Majilis career in the car industry. He also lives in Almaty.

Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan

Romin Madinov – born in 1961 in the then Kokshetau Region, Madinov is a former adviser to Prime Minister Tokaev. Madinov, chairman of the Agrarian Party, has spent much of his career to date in agriculture. He now lives in Astana.

Erkin Ramazanov – aged 45 and chairman of a company called Kazeksportastyk, Ramazanov lives in Astana. He has been made chairman of the Majilis Committee for Agrarian Issues. Ramazanov was born in Pavlodar Region.

Otan (Fatherland) Republican Party

Bulat Abilov – Abilov took up the seat in the Majilis left empty following the death of the deputy chairman of Otan, Marat Ospanov, in spring 2000. He is a well-known Kazakh businessman and has spent many years in the coal and oil industries. Abilov was born in 1957 in Karaganda.

Tatiana Kvyatovskaya – born in 1948 in Almaty Region, she is editor-in-chief of the *Otechestvo* (Fatherland) newspaper.

Makhtai Sagdiev – born in 1929 in North Kazakhstan Region, Sagdiev is the chairman of the Veterans' Board of Kazakhstan. He has a long history in Kazakh local and national government.

Serik Konakbaev – born in 1959 in Pavlodar, Konakbaev is the general manager of a company called Onim. Konakbaev is a former Master of Sport of the USSR in boxing. He lives in Almaty.

Citizens' Party of Kazakhstan

Rakhmet Mukashev – born in 1956 in the former Kokshetau Region, Mukashev was No. 1 on the Citizens' Party electoral list. He is a lawyer by training and has spent much of his career working with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. He lives in Astana.

Askhat Daulbaev – born in 1962 in Aktobe, Daulbaev is vice-president of Kazakhtelekom. He is a lawyer by training and former deputy minister of justice. He lives in Astana.